



Palestinian Youth Affairs in Israel

Field research

Conducted by: Mtanes Shihadeh & Himmat Zu'bi

Research assistant: Nidaa Nassar

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Research assistant: Nidaa Nassar

Translated by: Ruba Sima'an

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Contact details:

Baladna – Association for Arab Youth

Al-Bonouk St. 18

P.O.B 99604

Haifa 31996

Phone: 00972(4)8523035

Fax: 00972(4)8523427

Find us on [facebook](#) baladna and [twitter](#) baladnayouth

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Promotion and professionalization of Palestinian youth activism in Israel

This research about Palestinian youth affairs in Israel is deemed one of the recent professional achievements of Baladna. Since its establishment in 2001, this Arab youth association has been promoting and developing Palestinian youth activism within Israel through a series of educational, artistic, cultural and media projects, mainly through documenting its experience, developing professional resources that are compatible with the nature of our political reality and disseminating these resources among relevant individuals and frameworks. In the past few years, Baladna has trained hundreds of mentors on working with youth groups and has unprecedentedly published 10 educational manuals addressing significant issues like identity, gender, combating violence, promoting voluntarism, debates and so forth.

In addition to that, Baladna initiated first-of-their-kind projects; among them are the debate project, the youth media campaigns and the educational models, like the public achievement model which aims at promoting voluntarism and encouraging youth initiatives. Moreover, and due to the importance of networking, Baladna has largely contributed to establishing coalitions between the different frameworks working in the field of youth, mainly the Youth Coalition against Civil Service.

We have recently witnessed a serious shortage of information and studies concerning Palestinian youth in Israel. While ministries and relevant institutions in all «natural» democratic countries conduct researches and periodic surveys, publish papers and determine policies regarding all social segments, the Israeli intuitions, whether academic or not, do not address the Palestinian youth affairs. In the best case, these affairs have been marginally addressed.

Therefore, we deemed it urgent to conduct this research in order to study reality, monitor on the Palestinian youth affairs, suggest recommendations, and set the required plans in order to meet these recommendations, at least in part. Palestinian youth affairs, with respect to the different fields, are absent from Palestinian academic research within Israel; therefore it is difficult to conduct a new research based on previous studies and accumulated knowledge.

We initiated this constitutive research since we cannot wait for the Israeli institutions to meet our needs, mainly in light of its systematic discriminatory practices against the Arab citizens. We must establish national frameworks and NGOs and develop ourselves and our society. This can

be achieved through conducting researches that will serve as a basis for determining policies and establishing national organizations; a basis of solid knowledge that identifies reality precisely and determines its needs.

Finally, this research can be considered as a primary attempt to identify the needs of young people and comprehend the way they perceive the problems they encounter as the largest group in society. Hence, one cannot discuss the development of the economic, social and political situation of the Palestinian society in Israel, as well as the liberation from customs and traditions, without creating a change in the perceptions and practices of young people. Due to the importance and the challenging nature of this research, we deem it to be a highly significant reference for all those involved in the youth sector.

We are presenting you with the research and its findings and recommendations, which will hopefully serve as a professional tool and a compass for youth activism, pointing to the needs of young people while developing future programs.

I would ultimately like to express my sincere gratitude to the research staff and to the dozens of individuals and frameworks that contributed to accomplishing this project.

Sincerely
Nadim Nashif
Director
Baladna- Association for Arab Youth

Introduction

By the end of 2010, the Arab population in Israel consisted of 1.3 million citizens, constituting approximately 17% of the total population (not including Jerusalem and the Golan Heights). The Palestinian youth constitutes more than half of the Palestinian society in Israel, as the age group ranging between 0-29 years old constitutes 62% of the society while youngsters whose ages range between 15-29 years old constitute approximately 25%. Based on this, one cannot discuss the development of the economic, social and political situation of the Palestinian society in Israel, as well as the liberation from customs and traditions, without comprehending the reality and the needs of the youth and changing their perceptions and behaviors.

Table 1: Relative distribution of the Palestinians in Israel according to age groups (end of 2010)

Age group	Percentage
0-4	4
5-14	25
15-19	10
20-24	8
25-29	7
30-34	7
35-44	13
45-54	9
55-64	5
65+	4

All economic data and indicators point to the dire economic situation of the Arab population, versus the Jewish, in terms of participation in the labor markets, unemployment, income, participation according to professions and branches of economy and education levels, although there has been a slight improvement in part of these aspects in the past few years. Therefore, it is important to follow up on these aspects among the Palestinian society in general, and the youth in particular (based on available data) since the changes in the economic, social and political

conditions and the handling of the unemployment, violence and sectarianism phenomena commence among young people.

In 2010 the rate of the Arab citizens integrated in the labor markets reached 41% (92% employed, 8% unemployed, 68.8% employed in full-time jobs and 19.5% employed in part time jobs). The participation rate among men reached 60% (compared to 67% in 1998), with 92.3% employed and 7.7% unemployed. As for Arab women's participation rate in 2010, it reached 25% (compared to 18% in 1998), with 91% employed and 9% unemployed. It was also found that 50% of the working women are employed in full time jobs while 43% are employed in part time jobs.¹

In 2010, the average household gross income in Israel reached approximately 14,400 NIS (about 3800 USD), with 15,300 NIS for the Jewish families and 8,716 NIS for the Arab families (about 60% of the Jewish household income). As for families headed by a salaried employee, the average household income in Israel reached approximately 16,700 NIS, with 18,000 NIS for Jewish families and 9,830 NIS for Arab families (55% of the Jewish household income).

On the other hand, the average net income per a family headed by salaried employees reached 13,900 NIS, with 14,830 NIS for Jewish families and 8,895 NIS for Arab families (60% of the net income of a Jewish salaried employee).

Hence, no wonder that the Arab families are the poorest, and are at the bottom of the income scale. In 2010, the percentage of the poor Arab families reached 54% of all Arab families (constituting 38% of all poor families in Israel and 15% of the total number of families within the country). In contrast, the poverty rate among Jewish families reached 15%, and was especially high among religious-Ultra Orthodox Jews (55%) who constitute 13% of all poor families in Israel.

Regarding Arab youth, we find a decrease in the participation of the age group ranging between 15-24 years old in the labor market between 1998 and 2010 (table 2). On the one hand, this can be explained by the higher levels of education and the increased integration of the Arab youth in higher education, instead of being integrated into the labor markets from an early age. On the other hand, this might be due to the difficult integration of young generations in the labor markets.

The participation rates of older youth (25-34) in the labor markets are higher than the general rates of participation among Arab men and women. The most remarkable is the high participation rate among young Arab women, which reflects their willingness to enter the labor force.

The low participation rates among older women are due to the nature of the job opportunities offered to them; as we find that young women integrated in the domains of education, health and social services continue working until older age, while older women are employed in traditional domains like industry, agriculture and services' provision, which are un-guaranteed and difficult for women of advanced age.

Table 2: participation of youth in the labor markets (%)

	Female	Male		Female	Male
1998	47.0	16.2	1998	82.3	26.0
1999	43.7	14.6	1999	83.5	22.7
2000	42.8	17.6	2000	81.0	27.0
2005	36.8	12.3	2005	17.4	29.6
2009	37.5	14.9	2009	79.2	37.0
2010	37.8	15.6	2010	79.6	39.7

Data of the socio-economic survey conducted by Galilee Society in 2010 demonstrates that 85% of the young men between the ages of 15-24 are integrated in the labor force, while 15% are unemployed. As for young women, 76.5% of those integrated in the labor force work while 23.5% are unemployed. Concerning the age group 25-29, 94.7% of the Arab young men integrated in the labor force work, while 5.3% are unemployed; among young women 91.8% work, while 8.2% are unemployed.

Participation in the labor markets is largely influenced by the average years of schooling and by higher education. The data presented in table 3 indicates that the number of years of schooling and the number of those holding matriculation certificates have remarkably increased among youngsters between the ages 15-24, in addition to the increase in the number of youngsters between the ages 25-34 who pursued post secondary and higher education, mainly young women. The percentage of young men between the ages 15-24 holding matriculation certificates increased from 22.8% in 2005 to 30.5% in 2010, while it increased among female youth from 33.7% to 37.1%. Concerning the age group 25-34, the percentage of young men holding bachelor degrees increased from 9% to 13.3% and was approximately doubled among female youth (from 10.5% to 19.7%). Furthermore, the number of young women holding Master's degrees increased from 0.5% to 2.6%.

Table 3: Education levels among Arab youth

N	S	TG	AG	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
		El- ementary/ middle school							
Arab	Male	School	15-24	50.1	54.1	50.4	49.6	48.3	47.5
Arab	Male	Secondary	15-24	19.4	15.5	18.3	18.3	17.8	16.5
Arab	Male	Matricula- tion	15-24	22.8	24.0	25.2	26.1	17.8	30.5
		El- ementary/ middle school							
Arab	Female	School	15-24	41.5	43.1	42.3	42.3	41.7	39.5
Arab	Female	Secondary	15-24	12.7	11.7	12.7	12.9	11.8	13.2
Arab	Female	Matricula- tion	15-24	33.7	34.0	34.6	34.0	36.2	37.1
		Less than a							
Arab	Male	Bachelor degree	25-34	8.5	8.8	7.7	9.9	8.4	9.6
Arab	Male	Bachelor degree	25-34	9.0	9.1	10.0	11.2	13.8	13.3
Arab	Male	Master's degree	25-34	3.0	1.7	1.8	2.0	1.5	2.1
		Less than a							
Arab	Female	Bachelor degree	25-34	13.2	10.2	9.5	9.8	9.7	8.3
Arab	Female	Bachelor degree	25-34	10.5	14.4	14.3	16.9	16.4	19.7
Arab	Female	Master's degree	25-34	0.5	0.7	1.2	1.6	2.4	2.6

Despite the changes in the number of years of schooling and the number of those holding bachelor degrees and postsecondary education certificates, most secondary and academic specializations are still traditional, and do not contribute to changing the economic and social status of Arab youth. If this situation endures, these specializations will hinder the integration of the youth in the labor force, as the labor markets will probably be crowded with these specialties, with social sciences and Humanities.

With regard to high school specializations, we find that 37% of Arab female students specialize in old-traditional branches of technology, while 63% specialize in theoretical branches. In contrast, 47% of Arab male

students specialize in technologies branches while 53% specialize in the theoretical field. Concerning academic studies, the data provided by the unit for statistics and socio-economic surveys in the Galilee Society (2010) indicates that Arab female students enrolled in Israeli universities excel Arab male students. In 2008, Arab female students constituted 60% of the Arab students enrolled in BA studies, and 55% of the Arab students enrolled in MA studies. However, they constituted only 36% of the Arab students enrolled in doctoral studies.

When examining the distribution of the academic specializations, it appears that the current situation does not contribute to changing the economic status of Arab youth. It was found that 60% of Arab female students and 50% of Arab male students enrolled in the Israeli universities specialize in Humanities and social sciences. Moreover, 17% of the Arab students study medicine and Paramedicine, 12% study engineering and mathematics while 3% study law. This demonstrates that the academic disciplines in which the Arab students specialize are largely different from the academic disciplines of all students in the Israeli universities.

Table 4: Distribution of academics according to academic disciplines (%)

	Arab men	Arab women	Total Arab and Jewish students
Humanities	17.6	27.6	25.5
Social sciences and business management	24.3	34.0	31.8
Law	3.8	2.1	9.4
Medicine	4.4	2.3	5.6
Paramedicine	16.4	17	
Mathematics and sciences	14	11	9.3
Engineering	18.8	4.7	18
Agriculture	0.3	0.37	0.4

In addition to the structural obstacles and the governmental policies adopted towards the Arab population, this data explains the reason why

around 60% of the Arab women work in the fields of teaching, education, social work and health services while 26% of Arab men work in construction, 18% in industry, 6% in education. It also explains why 60% of Arab academic women and 27% of Arab academic men work in the field of education.

The description of the Arab youth situation, as presented in this short introduction, reflects to a large extent the situation of the whole Arab society. Therefore, there is a need to learn about the needs, challenges and obstacles which the Arab youth faces in order to start resolving these problems, part of which exist in the whole Arab society.

However, despite the importance and the heavy weight of this age group and its significant contribution to the future of the society at the individual and collective levels, there is still scarce research that address the needs, challenges and obstacles that hinder the development of the Palestinian youth, their sociopolitical positions and their perception of the general social conditions of the Palestinian society.

The needs of the Arab youth are remarkably absent from the academic research domains, particularly from in-depth qualitative research providing stage to the youth discourse and language, and to the way they perceive their reality. On the one hand, the lack of this research makes it difficult to conduct a new research based on previous studies and accumulated knowledge; and on the other hand it hinders the development of special programs and policies targeting the Arab youth and reflecting their real needs.

Though limited to specific aspects, the current research could be deemed a primary attempt to learn about the youth needs and the way they perceive the challenges they encounter in the domains of education, employment, participation in the public sphere (partisan or civil activism); in addition to identity-related aspects and the social perspectives of the youth regarding violence, drug abuse and other phenomena that are increasingly spreading among this age group.

Determining the challenges and hardships which the Palestinian youth faces, as inferred from the survey and the field (focus groups), contributes to suggesting programs and solutions to deal with these hardships, and which might help building a better future for the Arab youth in particular and the whole Arab society in general.

The current research addressed five main domains:

- The domain of education, including levels of education and specializations in high schools and universities. It also includes monitoring of the challenges and difficulties facing the youth in regards to selecting

the academic specialization, university admission, duration of studies, and the relation between the academic specialization and the labor markets.

- Youth participation in the labor markets, the selection of career and the obstacles that hinder the integration of in the labor markets.
- Youth participation in community work, political activism, volunteerism and giving.
- Identity implications among Arab youth and the status of the familial identity: family-oriented, sectarian, factional, political and nation-oriented.
- Youth perspectives on internal social issues: violence, women's equality and sectarianism.

The research adopted two main methodologies: the first research methodology was to conduct an opinion poll among twelfth graders (and in some cases among eleventh graders) from nine Arab schools covering all geographical areas . The selection of the schools took into account the diversity between public schools and private schools, and the social and religious composition of the Arab society.

862 male and female students took part in the poll and were sorted among different factors: age, gender and religion. In terms of age, 16 year old students constituted 14%, 17 year old students constituted 41% while 18 year old students constituted 30% (the remaining amount did not answer the age-related question). The female students constituted 60% of the participants while the boys constituted 36%. 75% of them were Muslim, 16.5% were Christian while 1.2% were Druze. The questionnaires were distributed in January and February 2012.

The second methodology was participation in meetings with 9 focus groups including 110 participants whose ages range from 17 to 30.

Adopting these methodologies aimed to answer the research needs and to render the adopted techniques complementary to each other. On the one hand, we aspire to reach the largest number of Arab students to learn about their needs and issues through a representative sample and with the aid of a research technique that does not require them to invest a lot of time. On the other hand, we are aware of the limited capacity to delve into the above mentioned domains through polls and of the disparities in the needs of young people of different ages and their ability to express these needs. For this reason, we utilized the poll methodology to study the younger generation, while the focus groups' methodology targeted older youth that can express their needs and discuss the research domains more deeply and more broadly, compared to

the poll methodology. Moreover, this procedure provided the groups with the opportunity to raise subjects and domains that were not previously determined.

In this report, we will present the main findings that emerged from the field research, and the focus groups and the poll, through addressing each domain separately and analyzing the findings of both methodologies.

Main results:

1. Education

Secondary education

This section utilizes the poll for identifying the challenges and obstacles faced by the Arab students in the secondary education from their own perspective, and based on their experience at school. On the other hand, and through the focus groups' analysis, it aims to deeply understand these problems and challenges from the perspective of the Arab youth after they graduate from high school and start their journey towards higher education or towards integration in labor markets. To phrase it differently, we analyze the Arab students' view regarding the problems and obstacles faced during secondary education, and the way they perceive them after experiencing daily life. We also analyze their view regarding the education period and the selection of specializations.

We will initially present the distribution of the school specializations (whether scientific or theoretical) of the Arab students who took part in the poll, without deepening in the division of the courses, since some courses might be alike but hold different names in schools; and this would lead to inaccuracy in data presentation.

The students who participated in the poll are distributed in about 40 domains of specializations, as each school provides six specializations.

The vast majority specializes in science: 10% in Physics-Chemistry, 7% in chemistry-Biology, 5% in Electronics-Chemistry, 10% in Electronics and Computers, 5% in Biology, 4% in Biology and environmental studies and 12% in Technology-Chemistry-Biology. As for Humanities, like History, Geography, Social Sciences and Political Civics, the percentage did not exceed 15%.

With regard to the reasons for choosing the domain of specialization, we find that:

- 67% said that they chose the domain of specialization that they desired.
- 22% for reasons related to university admission.
- 78% for reasons related to educational attainments.
- 14% were subject to the school's decision.
- A few said that the selection they made was related to a social pressure or to the lack of other options.

But when asked about the level of satisfaction concerning their domain

of specializations, 45% said they were very satisfied, 52% were somewhat satisfied while only 5% said they were completely unsatisfied. On the other hand, when the respondents were asked whether «there existed another specialization which they desired but their schools did not offer», around 64% affirmed this statement, while 33% answered negatively.

Based on the poll's results with regard to academic specializations, the vast majority of the respondents stated that they wanted to be enrolled in disciplines related to their school specializations. Many students (30%) said they wanted to study Medicine or Paramedicine; 16.5% Sciences, Engineering and Technology; 2% Law; 2% Teaching and Education; while only 7% chose Social work, 5% Social sciences and 2% Humanities.

When asked about the reasons behind the selection of the academic specialization, approximately 50% said their selection was largely influenced by the employment opportunities available in Israel; approximately 42% said that the availability of employment opportunities in the Arab localities is very influential; 85% said their selection was made due to their willingness to study that specific subject while 50% said that the selection was made based on their socioeconomic status.

The positions of the Arab respondents point to several obstacles and problems existing in the Arab educational system; they reflect some logic regarding the selection of the school specialization and the academic specialization, and a realistic vision regarding the existing problems. It could be also argued that the results, mainly with regard to secondary and postsecondary education, somewhat reflect a distorted reality. While still in high school, the Arab students choose scientific specializations who require energies and great efforts; however, based on the distribution of the Arab students in the Israeli universities in 2008, we find that 60% are integrated in Humanities and social sciences, while only a small part studies scientific subjects, contrary to the students wishes, as demonstrated in the poll's results. The results indicate that the reasons behind choosing a certain specialization are unclear, and that ultimately the selection is influenced by the courses available at school, the attainments and the school's decision regarding the specialization that the student should follow. Moreover, the results clearly indicate the lack of options available for students, who end up choosing the best available specialization. Very often, it turns out that the student chose a specialization which he/she did not desire, and was integrated in an academic discipline unrelated to his/her school specialization. While in school,

many students choose high-profile scientific specializations, but they end up choosing Social studies or Humanities. Therefore, it can be said that the distribution of the Arab students according to school specializations reflects the superior status which students and schools attribute to scientific subjects. Thence, the Arab student's desire to be deemed successful and diligent, due to the stereotypes prevailing at schools and in society, reflects the special attention that Arab schools give to scientific subjects and educational attainment. It also reflects the student's sincere desire to choose scientific specialization that helps him/her pursue higher education; but it reflects ignorance regarding the available academic specializations, and the needs of the labor markets. In addition, it reflects the traditional choices that are made without educational and professional guidance /counseling within the Arab schools. It might also reflect the student's knowledge regarding the criteria for admission to many academic disciplines; in addition to demonstrating that hopes and desires do not always come true as a result of the obstacles and the reality that one faces.

These results support the respondents' answer on whether they received counseling before choosing their school specializations. Only 27% of the students said they received counseling at school; 24% said they consulted relatives and friends before choosing their specialization while approximately 28% said they chose the specialization through personal examination of the available domains.

In addition to the importance of the educational specialization and guidance, special attention should be also given to the school's readiness with regard to infrastructures, like laboratories, halls and libraries, and to the preparations made by the school at the educational and psychological levels to help the student integrate in higher education. With regard to the readiness of the infrastructures and the equipment, 44% of the respondents opined that they were sufficiently good, 31% said they were hardly good while 25% said they were insufficient.

As for preparing the students at the educational level, only 35.5% said the school did that in a very good way; 6% said the school did not prepare them at all while 55% said they were lightly prepared. When asked about whether they were well prepared at the psychological and social level, only 23% affirmed that; 56% said they were lightly prepared while 16% said they were not prepared at all. This means that from the students' perspective, Arab schools do not place the task of preparing the students to the academic phase at the top of their priorities list. This

obstacle and many others would limit the student's ability to pursue post-secondary education. The respondents reported that they faced many obstacles hindering their integration in postsecondary education; some were structural and political, while some were personal or related to the Arab educational system. The main reasons impeding the continuation of higher education were determined by the students as follows: for 8% of the respondents, the matriculation exams were the main obstacle; 71% said psychometric exam; for 13.5% it was the low educational level; for 16% it was the Hebrew language; for 10% it was the inexistence of an Arab university while 40% said that racism was the main obstacle. Despite the students' awareness regarding the obstacles that impede the continuation of higher education, and their claim that schools do not sufficiently prepare the Arab students for the academy, we find that around 60% of the students want to pursue higher education; 81% prefer studying in the Israeli universities; most students (73%) prefer studying in universities rather than colleges and only 10% prefer studying in the Jordanian universities.

The focus groups

The research results demonstrate the dissatisfaction of the Arab youth in Israel regarding the performance of the Arab schools- the Arab educational system. Most of the focus group's participants consider the school as a grades' factory; they indicate that the school is mainly interested in the student's attainment and puts aside the development of the individual and collective identity. In certain cases, schools ignore, and even suppress, the student's individual skills and talents, as inferred from this student's testimony:

«Unfortunately, the school is willing to finalize the curriculum required for the matriculation exams; this is the main interest... The school does not teach us how to learn. We just have to solve a certain question because it will be included in the matriculation exam. Schools teach us how to get good grades, and not how to learn».

Another female participant said:

«We don't know how to ask a question... When a child asks a question we tell him to be silent. When we were children, asking questions was not acceptable...At school, everything we received was written and ready... we did not learn how to summarize and read between the lines».

The focus groups' results demonstrate that the limited specializations available in Arab schools are considered to be a real obstacle which

the Arab student has to overcome. A large number of participants indicated that most schools offer traditional specializations: Physics, Chemistry, Biology and limited specializations in Humanities. This impedes the student's ability to make choices and limits his/her exposure to other subjects; this will subsequently influence the selection of postsecondary specializations.

«I had been through the same situation... in high school we did not have enough specializations. We are not offered many specializations; therefore we don't have the freedom of choice. The students were sorted into sciences or humanities... Enrollment in sciences or humanities was based on grades and attainments. The school forced me into that specialization; there wasn't enough awareness on the part of my family and of the school itself, and the classifications were not logical».

Furthermore, many participants expressed resentment regarding the specific, limited and stable number of modules allowed for each student. For example, Mathematics and languages' modules are determined based on the student's main specialization; this means that a student specializing in Biology can't have 5 modules in English or Mathematics. A male participant states that:

«I fell victim to my high school, since the selection of the desired subjects is related to number of the Mathematics and English modules. Having 3 modules in English and 3 modules in English is insufficient».

The focus groups' analysis also demonstrates that most Arab schools lack systems of educational guidance and counseling to help students choose their school specialization. In addition, choosing a certain specialization is generally based on the students' grades, without providing them with the opportunity to understand the essence of their specialization, the extent to which it's related to their preferences and capacities, to which academic studies it qualifies them and what academic and practical skills are acquired through the chosen specialization

«I was interested in social sciences, but I was obliged to study Chemistry. For me, high school was a strangling phase which I got rid off after I graduated... The specialization that I was enrolled in at school was determined by my grades; people were telling me: it is pity that you choose this kind of specialization... social sciences and psychology were meant for weak students.. you cannot decide what specialization to choose or not to choose... We don't make the choice; it's made by the headmaster, the teachers and the parents»

«I took Physics since my grades qualified me to do so... At first, I wanted

to choose another specialization, but my mother put pressure on me by saying that I could not integrate into another specialization while I am qualified to study Physics».

The hierarchy between scientific subjects and Humanities is also problematic for the students. The focus groups' results indicate that the scientific specializations and the students integrated in these specializations are prioritized and privileged, compared to the Humanities' students; and this leaves a serious psychological impact on them. The focus groups' results also demonstrate that the school is mainly interested in students with high attainments, and does not pay enough attention to weaker students who fall victims to the school.

«The student integrated in Humanities is neglected because he/she is not good at school»

«The school is mainly interested in 40 students, out of 300. As for the remaining 260 students, I unexaggeratedly think that the school invests in them to help them finish high school or pass the matriculation exams, instead of paving their way towards higher education...»

According to the research, the focus groups' participants suffer from the lack of counseling to help them choose the domain of specialization, mainly with regard to the relation between the school specialization and the academic discipline, or its relation with the needs of the labor market.

«When I was a 12th grader, I have never intended studying the subject which I ended up choosing... The choices I made are completely unrelated to each other. I am currently studying History and Political Sciences... although at school I specialized in Social Sciences. I even did not think of going to university. I think that this situation was also relevant to many others who, for other reasons, had to change directions and choose other specializations and fields... After I had finished high school, I realized that what I chose wasn't what I really wanted... Nowadays, I work in a high school and I see how things work... There is one problem... students integrated in scientific specializations are treated better than students integrated in Humanities».

A large number of participants confirmed that despite their awareness regarding the policies of negligence and poor budgets adopted by the successive Israeli governments in regard to the Arab education system, they believe that the principals, teachers and school staff are not sufficiently contributing to the amelioration of the Arab education system. They also said that the teaching methods in schools are typical and traditional; neither preparing students for the after-school life nor providing them with analytical and unconventional ways of thinking. Instead, these

teaching methods encourage the students to imitate and comply with traditional approaches.

This result supports the poll's results in which only 35% said that the Arab schools educationally prepare the Arab student for higher education; 6% said Arab schools do not prepare them for that phase whatsoever, while 55% said that schools scarcely do that. In regard to psychological and social aspects, we find that the situation is much worse; 23% said they were well-prepared, 56% said they were lightly prepared while 16% said the schools did not take any initiative in this regard.

Postsecondary education

«I could have been in a totally different place»

Based on the focus groups' analysis, we infer that the Arab youth are generally in urgent need for academic orientation programs, and that these programs are particularly absent from schools. According to the groups' participants, this lack confuses students and makes it difficult for them to choose the academic specialization. The research findings show that most participants chose majors that were unrelated, and sometimes even paradoxical, to the specialization they chose at school. Moreover, the choices made resulted from the subjection to the status quo, the need to adapt the educational specializations and the available employment opportunities to the Arab students and the educational attainments. It was evident that the majority of the focus groups' participants favored scientific specializations at schools (as seen in the poll); however when enrolled in the academy most of them chose Humanities.

«I don't know which direction should we follow, but if we are talking about specializations, schools had often encouraged integration in scientific specializations for intelligent students with high attainments and educational levels... We went in that direction... they favored scientific specializations... Today, I think that if I had previously thought as I do now, I would have chosen a different subject, and I could have been in a totally different place...

«We lack guidance and counseling. I faced a problem since I did not know what to study... I reached 12th grade and I did not know what I was going to study... everyone around me asks: what do you want to study: engineering? It's difficult, medicine? No. Everything I think of leads me to «No»... What will I study?»

«I didn't feel it was what I wanted...the educational guidance was dif-

ficult, and youngsters are generally ignorant regarding the subjects and the specializations available in universities... I think that many academic disciplines are still unknown to the youth... beside medicine, law and traditional subjects like chemistry and biology... this is what they know» It emerged that many of the field research participants tend to study traditional subjects (for men: Medicine, Law and Accounting and for women: Languages, Nursing and Social Work). The participants explained that these decisions are made due to the lack of postsecondary academic and professional counseling; as a consequence, the Arab youth receive information and counseling merely from their surrounding- family, neighbors and friends. In addition, these decisions are influenced by gender considerations and traditional social attitudes regarding gender roles. Most of them also indicated that the Arab student is not previously acquainted with the various specializations available in universities and colleges; and this is another reason for choosing traditional subjects.

«Honestly, I wanted to study journalism... I wanted to study journalism abroad but my father refused... he told me that I had to study a scientific subject... and I said that I did not want to study medicine... I actually love medicine, but I wanted to study journalism, but in Canada not in Israel... my father told me to forget about studying journalism, I don't know why»

«When I looked at the graduation picture, I laughed. All the boys were studying medicine and all the girls were studying social work. It's funny, but tragic. We are really living into a box»

«I chose social work because I was definitely influenced by the society; I had the intention to step out of the strangling social box with its concepts and traditions. There is no doubt that I was influenced... this is how we were raised».

The research results show that young Palestinians face many challenges in postsecondary education, and when they have to choose the future career. The research demonstrates that the challenges faced by the young Palestinians are due to their political status in the Jewish state. The racism and the limitedness of the Israeli labor market constitute an additional factor which influences the Arab student's selection of the postsecondary specializations, mainly those qualifying him/her to work in the local market.

«I am a political sciences graduate; sometimes I get frustrated but I am still studying, and I want to complete my studies. But thinking of the subject that we want to study and of the relevant career that we want to pursue is frustrating»

«Nowadays, there is discrimination in the High Tech market... The country's economy is totally dependent on High Tech, and there are not Arabs in this field»

«The companies prefer non-Arabs».

In addition to that, the poll and the focus groups clearly point to the existence of structural impediments which hinder the pursuit of higher education among Arab students in the Israeli universities. The most prominent impediment is the psychometric exam. Another obstacle is the universities' decision to determine the minimum age for studying specific subjects. The research findings demonstrate that most students and parents have significant difficulty in financing higher education. Furthermore, it was concluded that the Hebrew language constitutes a main challenge which the Arab student faces in his/her first year. Most of the participants also talked about a «cultural shock» that occurs once they enter the sphere of the Israeli universities and colleges.

Racism practiced against the Arab students is another barrier which they should overcome within universities and colleges, as demonstrated by the following testimonies:

«I have been studying for 4 years, but I had only completed two years. I study during the day and work at night. After work, I attend my lessons while I am extremely exhausted; and when I go to work after school, I cannot concentrate on anything. I am waiting to receive scholarships, and I go ask many people to help me get one».

«Before starting my academic studies, I worked for one year to save some money. I also worked during my first academic year, and I had no life. Although my parents provided me with some help, I still had difficulties»

«I studied in college and it was very hard for me to pay the tuition fees. If I had been able to do the Psychometric exam, I could have entered university».

«Those who go to Jordan to study medicine do that to avoid the psychometric exam... many youngsters go to Jordan.. I think for political reasons... in many universities, the minimum age required for studying specific subjects is 21..»

«The most difficult parts are the language and the psychometric exam, while being an Arab is itself an obstacle».

«Adapting to the university in the first year is hard. Many students change specializations».

«The planning was totally made by parents. Instead of waiting for the «minimum age» issue and the other restrictions, send him to Jordan. It's

expensive; but if one wants to study, the easiest place is Jordan, this is the highest ceiling you can get to».

Beside these challenges, it is clearly evident that the Arab youth blames the Arab educational system for dereliction with regard to preparing the young students for the after-school life, especially the academic life, as indicated by the focus groups' participants:

«Concerning the selection of the academic specialization, there isn't a relevant address. I don't find anyone to consult»

«They (the school) delivered some relevant lectures; but they are not experts in this, they don't have the sufficient information to prepare us. They had not also prepared us at the psychological level. No one told me that I would go to university, leave my parents for a whole week and concentrate on my studies. I am not used to this life there».

«When I went to university, it felt as if I had not learnt anything; it was totally unrelated, school had not at all prepared me to university»

The aforementioned hardships urge many Palestinian students to seek solutions outside the Israeli universities and colleges. Many start looking for educational frameworks in the nearby Arab countries and in the European countries. Moreover, the above indicated problems and obstacles affect the integration of the Arab youth in the labor markets, and impede the ability to change their economic conditions.

The labor market

The labor market during secondary education and before pursuing higher education

The report's introduction demonstrated the difficult economic conditions of the Palestinians in Israel, and the way they are reflected in the domains of average income, participation in the labor market and unemployment. It had also pointed to the disparities between the Arab and the Jewish citizens.

Young people are in integral part of the economic situation of the Palestinian society; and one affects the other. Therefore, we found it crucial to dedicate a small part of this research to the economic conditions of the Arab youth. After addressing the most remarkable results regarding secondary education and its relation with higher education, we will address the results of the economic field, and present the results of the poll and the focus groups' analysis with regard to the economic aspects, particularly youth participation in the labor markets, and relevant chal-

lenges and hardships.

The field research findings point to serious limitations in the labor market for the school students, in addition to the scarce employment opportunities available for high school graduates. Many of the focus groups' participants talked about the lack of employment opportunities in general, and during the summer vacation and after high school in particular. In addition, many of those integrated in the labor market during and immediately after the secondary studies said that the working conditions are unfair in regard to wages, social benefits, working hours and so on. This was reflected in the response of a male participant from an Arab locality regarding the working conditions during high school «I used to work in any available job, every two or three months I was moving to a new job. The working conditions? They were definitely appalling. My boss was paying me the salary as if he were doing me a favor, even though I worked better than a 30 year-old man». A young woman taking part in the research said «During the summer vacation I was working in a store, and I continued working there after I graduated from high school. I was working 8 hours a day but I wasn't paid minimum wage, neither was I given social or employees' rights. The same applied during the year that followed my graduation from high school».

The poll's results affirm the focus groups' results, as they show that approximately 48% of the respondents work during high school at different rates (4% are permanent workers, 4% work during week-ends, 21% work during the summer vacation while 8% help in family businesses). 52% said they did not work at all during high schools; 45% of the working students said they worked without being legally recognized; 27% said they were working legally (with pay slips) while 11% said that sometimes they worked legally, but in some cases they were illegally employed (without pay slips). 25% of those employed, or who had been previously employed, said that the working conditions were very good; 38% said they were good, 12% said they were bad while 10% said that the working conditions were exploitative.

When addressing the working conditions in the postsecondary phase among the focus groups' participants, we find that there exists gender-based discrimination with regard to wages and working conditions. To phrase it differently, female high school students are paid lower wages, versus their male counterparts, as indicated by one of the focus groups' female participants: «Boys and girls were doing the same work in the store, and we all worked the same number of hours, but the boys' wages were higher than the girls».

«Before I entered university, I had not worked at all, there wasn't a specific reason, but whenever I tried to discuss this idea with my parents, they did not like what

I was saying... they could agree only if I worked for one of their acquaintances». This testimony demonstrates parents' objection to the integration of their daughters in the labor market while they are still in high school, unless they worked in a family firm.

The labor market following postsecondary education

The challenges faced by the Arab male and female students in secondary and postsecondary education are reflected in the selection they made regarding their academic specializations and their future careers. They are also associated with the challenges that these young people face in the labor market; and they become clearer when the young Arab men and women attempt to experience life and integrate in labor markets. Young men and women unwilling to pursue higher education and are instead willing to join the labor force are scarcely provided with employment opportunities, while the available employment opportunities are limited to specific domains. A harder challenge is faced by young women, who generally prefer seeking work within their Arab towns.

The difficult economic conditions standing in the face of the Palestinian society in general oblige the students to work and study at the same time. In certain cases, some students are even forced to renounce education to help supporting the family. A large part of the focus groups' participants said that they had had to work before university to help covering the tuition fees. Others said their university tuition fees had been fully covered by their parents or through scholarships and specials programs for students, like Perah.

Having to work in order to help covering the university tuitions fees mainly applied to young men, although it also existed among young women. A young woman said «I had to work 10 hours a day in a clothing store located in an Arab locality; and I was only paid 100 Shekels a day; not to mention the holidays, where we were working day and night under harsh conditions.. I had to work since I did not have many options. We have to cope with this situation; and this is how the market works».

One of the young men said that he needed to work to finance his studies, which were negatively affected by this situation «I have been studying for 4 years, but I had only completed two years. I study during the day and work at night. After work, I attend my lessons while I am extremely

exhausted; and when I go to work after school, I cannot concentrate on anything. I am waiting to receive scholarships, and I go ask many people to help me get one».

Another student said «Before starting my academic studies, I worked for one year to save some money. I also worked during my first academic year, and I had no life. Although my parents provided me with some help, I still had difficulties»

As for the challenges faced by young women in the labor market, beside the scarce employment opportunities, one female student said «I work in a filling station in my village; but I only work as a cashier, without providing services to cars because this is unacceptable in our society or town. But if I had been working outside my village, I could have refueled and provided service to cars».

Another young woman said «I work as a waitress in a restaurant in Tel-Aviv. My sister lives there because she's a student; so I lived with her. I want to work and save money before I start my studies. But I cannot work as a waitress in a restaurant or a coffee shop in my town, because the local community will deem this shameful. We don't have good employment opportunities for girls. All jobs are available in the nearby Jewish localities».

As will be indicated later, the experience of the focus groups' female participants shows that the employment of young Arab women is mostly influenced by the traditional social roles which determine how, when and where they should work; in addition to the other obstacles that hinder their participation in the labor market.

The awareness of the youth in the postsecondary phase concerning the importance of adapting the educational specialization to the changes happening in the Israeli labor markets, and the information they have about the labor markets' needs is not different from what we found among high school students. The field research results demonstrate that the vast majority of the focus groups' participants are unaware of the labor markets' needs in Israel, and don't pay them enough attention. They also showed that most participants don't have sufficient information about the needs of the Israeli labor market with respect to scientific or vocational specializations, mainly in the domain of new technologies and High-Tech, and with respect to technological and industrial specializations. Moreover, it turns out that the lack of knowledge and information, and the absence of frameworks providing young people with this

knowledge lead to the underestimating the importance of the labor markets' needs and of determining the future career according to the labor market's needs. Besides, the majority of the focus groups' participants talked about the need for consultative and guiding frameworks in this domain.

Discrimination and racism in the labor market

The research results highlighted that the Arab youth suffer from discrimination in the Israeli labor market; and this is one of the serious obstacles that one faces while he/she is building his/her future career, as indicated by one of the participants concerning discrimination in the Israeli labor market:

«After the 10th grade, I decided to study a subject related to cars; therefore I moved to an industrial school where I finished the 11th and the 12th grades. Afterwards, I learnt a subject related to auto mechanics... When I was in the 12th grade, some people from Rapahaeli (weapons' development industry) came to our school and said that they would teach the best three students at their expense...the school was Jewish... they said they would teach them engineering... I was the top of my class; but they definitely took those classified in the 2nd and 3rd place... my friends told me that if it weren't through Rapahaeli, I would not find another place to work in... they told me that they studied in the Technion- the Israeli Institute of Technology and not in the University of Tel-Aviv... they were engineers, but they didn't find work... some of them traveled to Europe to find work... there is no work in this domain....»

Another says

«I saw that 3 companies and some more don't employ Arabs. If the Jewish candidate has the same skills that you have, even if you were alike, they will definitely favor him»

A social work graduate from the North of Israel said «Before starting my higher education I considered studying economics; but I wondered regarding my future career after I graduate. In the best case, I could have become a bank clerk working through a manpower company and earning 4000 Shekels a month. We are not like the Jewish students who study economics and work in investment companies or in stock exchange. We are not familiar with this field, which is available only in the Center. I am currently considering moving to the Naqab (Negev) where I can work as a social worker, there exist many job vacancies».

Based on the aforementioned testimonies, it can be inferred that the Arab

youth are aware of the influence that racism has on the employment opportunities offered to them, as indicated by one of the participants:

«I am a political sciences graduate; sometimes I get frustrated but I am still studying, and I want to complete my studies. But thinking of the subject that we want to study and of the relevant career that we want to pursue is frustrating. It is evident that we will not be managers in ministries or embassies; the best case scenarios will be teaching in a school».

The influence of racism and the avoidance of academic specializations associated with employment in Israeli companies in the center was prominent when the focus groups' participants talked about work in companies of High-Tech, new technologies and engineering. Most participants believe that these companies prefer non-Arabs.

It appears that the Arab youth are aware of the scarcity of employment opportunities in the sector of New Technologies, mainly due to the difficulties of studying such subjects, the efforts that should be invested and the admission to Israeli companies operating in the center. One of male participants said «Studying this subject in the Israel Institute of Technology (Technion) is not easy; in addition, we cannot control the matter of employment, since companies prefer non-Arabs».

Another said,

«Working in this field requires relations, friendships and acquaintances. But here in my village, how many people work in High-Tech? They can be easily counted». Another participant added «Nowadays, there is discrimination in the High-Tech market... The country's economy is totally dependent on High Tech, and there are not Arabs in this field»

The obstacles hindering the employment of Arabs in non-Arab areas are not limited to the field of High-Tech. The Arab youth state that racism exists in other fields as reflected in the following testimony:

«I know one thing... I have a store in An Arab locality; but if I intended opening one in a Jewish town, I would not be allowed to do so». Another young woman said» I saw that 3 companies and some more don't employ Arabs. If the Jewish candidate has the same skills that you have, even if you were alike, they will definitely favor him»

Racism towards veiled women in particular constitutes an additional obstacle standing in the face of Palestinian young women in the Israeli labor market. Therefore, they are obliged to seek work in the local labor market. One of the female participants raises the issue of the veil by saying «I am veiled, and I prefer studying a subject which would enable me to work in Nazareth; at the social level, I would be able to find work, and I will not suffer from discrimination. But the situation is different if I seek

work among Jews».

Another one says «I have never seen a veiled woman working in the malls' stores, never».

The local-Arab labor market

As previously mentioned, the racism prevailing in the Israeli labor market is one reason urging the Palestinian youth to seek work in the local market. As inferred from the focus groups' analysis, a high percentage of the research participants prefer working in the local market, and in their residence area, particularly young women. In addition to racism and discrimination being the main reasons, this also happens due to familial and social considerations.

The research findings highlight that career selection among most male and female participants was considerably influenced by social roles. Men are integrated in jobs in which the most important component is the salary, while most of the young women internalize that their paid work should not be inconsistent with their traditional social roles, and that their salaries are marginal for the family's income. Therefore, the young women often choose typical jobs in terms of nature and working hours like consulting services and other positions in the field of teaching.

A young woman says:

«I see many parents influencing their daughters... A lot of women work as teachers, because from a stereotypical perspective, she returns home at half past one to be with her children. I think that this applies everywhere, and is not limited to a specific area».

Another female participant adds:

«I wanted to study nursing; but my parents said that being a nurse would oblige me to work night shifts. You'll have family and children, so you cannot be both a housewife and a nurse working at night. Why don't you study social work; you will be home at two o'clock. My mother was always advising me to become a teacher so that I return home at one».

We conclude that upbringing and preservation of traditional roles, in light of the racism prevailing in the Israeli labor market, largely explain the young men's preference of medicine. Many young men, and a few young women, expressed their desire to study medicine because, according to many of them, it would place them in a superior social position, and would provide them with high income and many employment opportunities. Moreover, there isn't a serious competition with the Jewish students. This leads many to study medicine, even if they have to

travel aboard and pay considerable amounts of money.

«Our society is extremely fond of medicine... for social consideration... it's the dream of ever single father, mother and grandmother... Jobs availability in the different domains is highly influenced by the discrimination practiced by the state... the best governmental framework in which a physician may succeed is the hospital... and hospitals are generally governmental rather than private ... there, the physician will not face discrimination, like lawyers and auditors do. Arab lawyers often work in the Arab society.. He/she does not work in the Jewish sector, in Tel-Aviv or in big offices. It's hard to do that because of the discrimination... therefore he/she I is obliged to work here. A high school student sees that the lawyer living next to him opens an office bellow his house, and deals with insurance cases... He deems it a modest occupation, while he admires his neighbor who works as a physician in Beilinson hospital».

In total, the local- Arab labor market is small, undeveloped and limited to specific economic branches and professions. Moreover, it is largely limited to working in local authorities' institutions, in teaching and in services' provision. It also provides employment to a large portion of the Arab society, mainly Arab women and girls. However, it's evident that there exist many obstacles hindering the integration of Arab youth in the local –Arab labor market. Some are due to political-economic reasons, since the local labor market is very limited and does not include industrial, commercial or occupational zones for young people. The local Arab markets in many localities are small; therefore, it would be economically inefficient to develop initiatives in the domain of small industries, services or repair workshops. This was highlighted by the focus groups' participants, as a young man said:

«The problem is that I can't open a garage (to fix cars) for 10 or 20 people».

On the other, there are other restrictions related to local politics and to the minuses of the Palestinian society, like family-oriented competitions and preferences. For example, one of the female participants said that her family constitutes an obstacle standing in face of her integration in the local authority «I want to make sure that the municipality employs me... they employ people coming for certain families... but I am not sure whether they employs others. Lawyers and engineers prefer working independently, but what about teachers and others? They are all dependent on the local authority».

Racism and discrimination, combined with the preservation of social

roles, increase the gaps between young men and women with respect to their needs and capacities. While it's easy for young men to work outside their cities and villages, young women find it difficult to work in non-Palestinian communities. This affects their employment opportunities and increases the unemployment rates among them «Unemployment is more prevalent among women than men... since most work places require traveling».

Identity components and social attitudes

Identity

Identity is often described as a complex concept that does not have a specific definition. It is rather an indication of the features characterizing individuals and groups, as there are a collective identity and an individual identity. The former embraces, formulates and nourishes the latter, while the latter affects the former and remolds it; and this process is unique for being permanent and infinite. Thence, the relationship between the individual identity and the collective identity is dialectical, as one enriches the other.

The obsession regarding the dialectical relationship between the national belonging and identity of the Palestinians in Israel and their role in the national liberation process, and their demands and daily civil rights, in light of the objective condition they live under, has occupied many researchers in the fields of social sciences and politics.

Azmi Bishara opines that the Palestinian Arab identity does not separate the Arab Palestinians citizens of Israel from the rest of the Arabs or Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Diaspora. Moreover, their Israeli citizenship is not deemed identity or belonging, since it is simply a legal and official definition, unrelated to their identity. And despite all the attempts to present this nationality as an expression of the Palestinians' identity and belonging, Israel did not succeed in changing the collective identity of the Palestinians living in Israel. For this reason, they find it urgent to confirm their identity and its landmarks, and to reorganize their historical memory, after the dispersion of the Palestinian people following the Nakba (Catastrophe).

In his research about the «The Collective Identity of the Palestinians in Israel» (1997), Nadim Rouhana concludes that there is a contradiction between the fact that the national identity of the Palestinians is a Pales-

tinian Arab identity, that the state in which they are deemed citizens is Jewish, and that the dominant identity is the Palestinian. On the other hand, Samuha thinks that there is a conflict between the Israeli identity and the Palestinian identity; and that until the early nineties, it had appeared that the Israeli identity could be enhanced at the expense of the Palestinian identity.

The conflict between the identity components, the national dimension and the citizenship dimension, and the emergence of local and religious-sectarian identities were prominent in the results of the poll and the focus groups. In general, it seems that there exists a process for enhancing the Palestinian national identity, especially among older youth. We found a certain disparity with respect to the clarity of defining the identity and its components between the students and the focus groups' participants. Most of the focus groups' participants demonstrated high political awareness in their definition of their Palestinian and national identity. In addition, the religious identity appeared among some groups as one of the main identity components defining oneself.

The clarity of identity found in the focus groups was somewhat present in the poll's results, in which the component of the religious identity was prominent among high school students. It can be inferred that the definition of identity among young Arab students is still unclear and confused, compared to older youth

When we asked the poll's respondents about the definition that suited them more, we found that approximately 27% of the respondents define themselves as «Palestinian Arabs» and «Palestinian Arabs in Israel», 5% as «Israeli Palestinian Arabs», and 6% as «Arabs». Approximately 25% chose to define themselves according to the religious, rather than the national component (Muslim or Christian) while the rest chose various personal, familial or factional definitions, many of which include the national component (for example, Palestinian Muslim Arab in Israel or Christian Arab in Israel). This demonstrates the multiplicity of components constituting the Arab youth identity and the immaturity of their national identity, compared to the focus groups.

Through an additional question, complementary to the definition of identity, we attempted to examine the extent to which the Arab youth identify with the Israeli achievements. This question is complementary to the definition of identity because if the Arab youth identify with the Israeli achievements, this would be contradictory to the Palestinian identity.

The poll's results indicate that most of the Arab youth do not identify with

the Israeli achievements or feel proud of them. 45% said they did not feel proud when learning about the Israeli achievements, 13.5% said they were governed by negative feelings, only 6% said they felt extremely proud while 30% said they felt relatively proud.

In general, it could be said that a high percentage of the respondents defined themselves as Palestinians; and that the Palestinian identity component is stronger than the component of the Israeli identity. But on the other hand, we did not find an absolute majority adopting the Palestinian identity. Therefore, it could be inferred that the identity components are not yet complete among the youth; and this is not bizarre, in light of the educational system that suppresses and ignores the students' identities through its curriculum. The clearer formulation of one's identity happens at a later stage, when the Arab student leaves his home village or city, and explores the daily reality through work or academic education, and through experiencing the institutionalized racism in daily life. The national identity is generally formulated through exposure and acquaintance with the other; and this is absent in the Arab localities' daily life. The positions and attitudes of the focus groups' participants, who are older than the high school students, and some of which study in the Israeli universities or are integrated in the labor market, support this claim.

When we asked the focus groups' participants to define themselves in terms of belonging and identity, the supermajority chose the Palestinian identity; a small part said their religious affiliation was the primary definition of their identity while a few emphasized the humanitarian, familial or personal aspects. Many participants indicated that they became familiar with their national identity after high school, mainly following the political-cultural shock they experienced when they entered the Israeli universities. They also confirmed that preserving and enhancing the national belonging provide solutions to many lesions prevailing in the Arab society.

With respect to the centrality of the Palestinian identity among the youth, one of the male participants said «I am a Palestinian Arab because I am a part of the Palestinian people; my specific particularity lies in the fact that I live in Israel, but my identity is definitely Palestinian».

The change that occurred in the identity components among some of the focus groups' participants reflects the change created in the Palestinian society in Israel. One of the female participants says: «I remember that for many years, the Israeli flag had been hung in our cars on the Independence Day. Following my participation in the activities of a certain organization, things changed. Since then, a change has occurred in my

family. I started explaining things to my siblings; and the situation has gradually changed»

Regarding the ambivalence that the Arab youth experience due to the identity components, another young woman said» «It's true that there are several identities; I was born in Israel, I hold the Israeli identity card and I was born and raised in a Christian surrounding. But when I define myself, I first choose the Palestinian Arab identity, since it is the one which defines me, and which I want to highlight».

With respect to rediscovering the Palestinian identity during the academic education, another young woman said: «I discovered my Palestinian identity in the university; due to their racism I realized where I was living. As we were speaking Hebrew like they did, and as my name did not reveal my Arab origins, they could comfortably gossip about us».

The focus groups' results also demonstrated that most of the participants involved in partisan, political and/or social frameworks emphasized the necessity of developing and enhancing the Palestinian/Arab identity among the young generation due to its contribution to building a collective identity, especially for the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Nevertheless, the research findings show that a high percentage of the focus groups' participants (not being affiliated with any political party) criticized the performance of the political parties, mainly their insufficient contribution to the youth and social issues. Many said they are not affiliated with any party due to the partisanship.

Social issues and attitudes

This section addresses the research findings concerning positive and negative social phenomena prevailing in the Arab society. It also addresses some of the main issues that had been broadly studied through this research, like equality between men and women, division of gender roles in society; in addition to the issues of violence, sectarianism and familial affiliation. Discussing these issues is one of the main goals of Baladna association; to shed light on the negative aspects of our society and present the status quo, so that the association of Baladna, the other organizations and the authorities can suggest solutions, work plans and programs to deal with the negative aspects that worry the youth. On other hand, there is a need to shed light on the aspects which the youth deem positive, in order to enhance and disseminate them.

Concerning the positive and the negative phenomena, we asked the poll's respondents to evaluate the extent to which they agree on the

existence of different phenomena in our society. 1 means absolutely nonexistent while 5 means remarkably existent.

Table 5: the extent to which a specific social phenomenon is existent (%).

The phenomenon	1 Absolutely nonexistent	2	3	4	Remarkably existent
Drug abuse	6	21	33	28	17
Alcohol abuse	4	14	29	27	26
Violence and criminality	3.5	6.5	16.2	26	47
Housing crisis	6	13	24	26	30
Fighting with neighbors	5	22	29	21	17
« Honor Killing»	12	26	21	20	19
Concern for higher education	3.5	13	27	30.5	25.5
Discrimination against women	17	26.5	27	17	12

Concern for the environment and the cleanliness of the public places	28.5	36	21	10	4.5
Voluntarism	14	37	27	10.5	5.5
Familial/tribal affiliation	8	23	30	20.5	17.5
Contribution to the public interest	15.5	31.5	33	12.5	7

It could be inferred that the youth are highly aware of the existence of positive and negative phenomena in the Arab society; and this reflects to a large extent the reality.

Women’s equality

Another domain addressed by the research is the attitude of the youth and students towards the status of Arab women and women’s equality. The focus groups’ results showed a consensus among most participants regarding the existence of inequality between Arab women and men. However, there was a controversy regarding the need and the importance of change, and the domains of change. Most participants are aware of the inferior status of the Arab women; they all agreed that some initiatives should be taken to ameliorate their status in the political domain and in the labor market. However, most male and female participants emphasized that the power relations existent in the familial and social domains should be preserved. There were also some conservative attitudes regarding personal freedoms.

Concerning the younger respondents, we found that they tended to support equality between men and women, and agreed that women should be given their rights, mainly with regard to elementary economic equal-

ity. However, their attitudes were more diverse and conservative regarding substantive equality and liberal individual rights. We posed some questions and examined the respondents' attitudes through several statements.

We first asked them how they perceived a married woman working outside her house. 56% of the respondents said that women's work was as important as men's, 12% said that women's work was important if the man's were insufficient, 20% said that women's work was important provided that it did not hinder completion of household chores while 4.5% said it was completely unimportant.

Concerning what is perceived as acceptable for the students in regard to women's rights, we had several groups of questions. The first group of questions was as follows:

Our society often determines what is acceptable and what is unacceptable for a woman to do. We will present you with a list of domains; and we'll ask you to determine, with regard to each domain, what is acceptable for unmarried women to do. You will use the 1- to- 5 rating scale, in which 1 means «totally unacceptable», while 6 means «very acceptable».

Table 6: the extent to which the following statements regarding women's rights are acceptable (%)

Conduct	1 Totally unacceptable	2	3	4	5 Very acceptable
Completing higher education	3	2	8	10.5	76
Living outside the house for education	8.5	9	20	20	37
Living outside the house for work	27	20	19.5	13.5	19

Traveling a b r o a d to pursue higher education	11	11	20	21	36
Traveling a b r o a d with female friends for pleasure	27.5	19	19.5	13.5	19.5
Going out for pleasure without being accompanied by a family member	29	19	18.5	11	22

We observe a large acceptance with regard to education and work; and with regard to living outside the house and traveling abroad to pursue higher education. But when addressing the liberal individual rights of women, like living outside the house for work, spending leisure time with friends or traveling abroad for pleasure, we witness regression among many respondents who express opposition to these rights. The majority of the participants (86%) said that higher education was very acceptable. However, this percentage drops significantly when talking about women living outside their homes in order to work. 47% said it was highly unacceptable, while only 19% said it was very acceptable. Most students (50%) said it was unacceptable for girls to go out for pleasure without being accompanied by a family member, while 22% said it was very acceptable. In total, we did not encounter absolute refusal with respect to women’s rights; and in most cases there was a split in attitudes. The second group of questions addressed traditional and simple life issues, like the freedom of dressing, discretion and control over the lives of girls and women. We asked the respondents about their attitude regarding the following statements:

Table 7: Women’s equality (%)

Conduct	I Definitely agree	I agree	I don't agree	I totally disagree
Girls may wear whatever they want	18	36	27	18.5
Traditional/religious clothes are ideal for girl	21	24.5	24.5	29
It's preferable for girls to marry directly after they finish high school	70	17.5	4.5	3
It is preferable for girls to finish higher education, integrate in the labor force and then marry.	5.5	17	37	40
The girl decides whom to marry in the future	3	7.5	19	69

It is preferable that the parents choose the girl's future husband	51	31.5	11.5	5
It is important for girls to work during vacations	15	36.5	37	11

Although we changed the order of the answers, so that number 1 was changed to acceptable and number 5 to totally unacceptable, the respondents' attitudes did not significantly change. Their attitudes were somewhat conservative with respect to individual rights and conducts. For example, the most remarkable opposition concerned the statement «girls decide whom to marry in the future»; as 69% said that they totally disagreed versus 10% who did not oppose that. As for the statement «It is preferable that the parents choose the girl's future husband», approximately 80% said that they agreed on that.

Nevertheless, the research findings point to the differences in the attitudes of the participants with respect to women's status in general and the need to change it in particular, based on the political and social activism (young men and women affiliated with sociopolitical frameworks were more critical concerning the status of women and expressed their desire for change).

One of the female participants talked about the people's reactions when they she returns home late from work:

«I always start working from 2 o'clock till nine or half pas nine, I should close and take the keys home with me. I close, or actually I go home at half past eight, half past seven, I walk in the street, I walk for personal reasons, sometimes I don't find a car to drive me home, I don't find one, so I walk, I think it's normal to walk in the street. People wonder why I walk in the street at night»

With regard to conditional equality, one of the male participants said: «Wait a second, for me women's rights are the following: she has the right to study even if she needs to sleep outside her house; the woman

has the right to work day and night. But at the same time she should not have much freedom, so that violence does not increase».

About female homicide «This is the right thing which we grew up knowing»

Another female participant added:» If the woman dares to challenge, she might be excluded, or even killed»

«A woman's mistake is not like a man's mistake».

«There should be equality, but with limits»

With regard to the parents' contribution to maintaining the existing social roles, a young woman said: «You are talking about women's status, but in many families, mothers keep telling their daughters they should marry when they reach the age of 18, since they don't care about their daughters' education. We want to improve the women's status; but at the same time the supermajority of our society keeps preparing girls towards marriage. This is what matters».

«One problem is that the educated young men finish their studies at the age of 24-25 years old, and get engaged to 18 or even 16 year-old girls».

As stated in the previous chapters about employment and education, social attitudes and education influence the educational and employment opportunities, and the subjects that young women study in higher education institutes. Very often, the geographical distance between the student's house and the college/university becomes an important factor, as indicated by one of the female participants:

«I studied in Haifa, and this was my parents' decision. I want to live outside the house; but I should be enrolled in an educational framework to be able to do so. But leaving home only for work is out of the question».

«A male friend of mine said that he would not marry a woman who studies medicine because she will return home late and leave her children... My married friends tell me that it's important for men that their wives earn less than they do, because power lies in money».

Even spending leisure time is affected by social attitudes: «If I intend going out, I have to say whom I am going out with and when I will be back... I get scolded before I go out and after I return home».

Civil society organizations were also criticized by the male and female participant. As indicated in the quotation below, these organizations operate according to gender-based power relations and adopt traditional

attitudes towards women, which are reflected in the positions occupied by men and those occupied by women:

«If we take for example the civil society organizations, most managers are men; and in general, all those involved in social work are girls. Secretaries working in organizations are all girls... in the Arab schools; three quarters of the headmasters are men.

Violence

Based on the findings of the research, the focus groups and the poll, the Arab youth deem violence the most prominent and dangerous threat facing the Arab society. The focus groups' male and female participants agreed that this phenomenon lies directly and mainly within the responsibility of the state and its institutions. We also perceived that they were aware of the responsibility of the society and the political parties towards the need to fight this phenomenon, in addition to being partially aware of the individuals' relevant responsibility. We also found that the participants were conscious of the prevalence of violence in schools, with varying intensity according to the geographical areas. Most participants attributed the causes of violence to negligence on the part of the home, school and surrounding. Moreover, discrimination against students according to educational attainment and family affiliation leads to violence among the most marginalized.

The poll's results support the attitudes of the focus groups' participants, and indicate that school students believe that violence is prevalent in the Arab society; as 75% said that this phenomenon was remarkably existent in our society. As to being personally exposed to physical violence, we found that the answers were negative and only a small percentage said they were physically attacked at school (5.5%), at home (4%) or in the neighborhood (4%). Concerning verbal violence, about 20% said they suffered from verbal violence on the part of their school teachers, 30% on the part of their school peers and 17% were exposed to verbal violence in their residence area.

When asked whether «they had witnessed violence against others», we received a completely different image as 40% said they witnessed violence within the classroom, 68% at school, 15% at home and 55% in the neighborhood. This means that the Arab student prefers to attribute the violent scenes which he/she witnessed to others, but he/she would not say he/she had been exposed to violence, probably out of embarrassment or denial.

On the other hand, the focus groups' results were clearer; and this re-demonstrates that older youth are more daring in dealing with the negative aspects of society and reality in a real way; and would not deny the existence of these phenomena. One of the most remarkable statements said by a participant from Jaffa group within the context of the violence prevailing in our society was:

«Violence and murder have become normal in our life. We are accustomed to murders and to losing friends. I graduated from high school three years ago, and since then one of my classmates has been murdered».

The remarkable violence rates in the Arab schools were mentioned in all focus groups. One of the female participants said «The violence in school prevented me from learning in my classroom. I took an external mathematics course at my expense; and I haven't learnt English in class at all».

With respect to the reasons leading to violence, we find that the picture among these groups is clearer, and that the youth blames the institution and the local authorities for being silent and submissive in the face of violence and crimes.

«We are a society that lives without a police system; what do expect from such a society? For example, if my uncle is attacked by someone in the street, I expect him to go to the police, and the police will solve the issue. But my uncle has no one to go to, so he will speak to my father and cousins in order to solve the problem».

One should also blame and put responsibility on the society, as indicated by one of the female participants «The responsibility should be also put on our shoulders, and not only on the institution's. The institution has its role, but we should be responsible ourselves. We are considering crimes as taken for granted «.

Sectarianism and familial considerations

One of the internal social issues addressed through this research is the issue of sectarianism and familial considerations in the Arab society. Despite the influence of these components on the internal policies within the Arab localities, and the multiple violent occurrences recently witnessed in some Arab localities on the basis of sectarianism or familial considerations, this issue has not been yet the focus of in-depth researches, or even a poll that show the extent to which such phenomena are rooted in our society, their reasons and implications. We don't claim to be capable

of answering all these questions in a brief report that contains numerous social, economic and political axes; however, we aim at presenting the view of the youth regarding these phenomena and their impact; and the way these young people deal with the phenomenon of sectarianism or family-based struggles, so that one can follow up and handle these issues in reality, and reduce their prevalence..

We first asked the respondents to scale the prevalence of sectarianism in the society from 0 (nonexistent) to 10 (largely prevalent). The results presented here are based on a three levels evaluation. 15% of the respondents said that this phenomenon didn't exist in society; 44% said it was lightly or partially existent, while 38% said it was seriously prevalent. In the second stage, we asked about the prevalence of this phenomenon in the respondents' localities, since we believed that sectarianism was reflected differently in each village or city (we used the same scaling). 38% said that sectarianism did not exist in their city/village, 30% said it was partially existent while 29% said it was seriously prevalent. These answers show that the students' attitude towards sectarianism differed according to the place in which this phenomenon prevailed. A large number said it was more prevalent in the society as whole, than in their village/city. 40% said that sectarianism wasn't existent in their localities, but was more prevalent in the other localities or in the society as a whole, and that they were unfamiliar with it. We also found that respondents who pointed to the high prevalence of sectarianism in the society as a whole tended to deem it prevalent in their localities as well. For example, if we refer to the respondents who talked about the high prevalence of sectarianism in the society, we find that 25% said it was low in their cities/villages, 22% said it was medium while 53% said it was very high in their cities/villages.

With respect to family-based struggles in the Arab society, we used the aforementioned scaling used to evaluate sectarianism and found that approximately 40% said that this phenomenon strongly existed in the Arab society, 18% said it did not exist while 30% said it was partially existent.

With respect to the implications of these phenomena and the experiences of the respondents in relation to them, 36% said they felt they were discriminated against by other Arabs due to their familial or sectarian affiliation, while 63% said they did not have those feelings. Although most students said they did not feel they were discriminated against by other Arabs due to their familial or sectarian affiliation, we cannot ignore that more than 30% of the respondents (approximately 4 out of 10 students)

had these feelings; this high percentage is worrying.

To examine the influence of sectarianism or family-based struggles on choosing the place of residence and to evaluate the significance of living in homogeneous neighborhoods or cities/villages, resided by people from the same families and religions, we asked the poll's respondents « If you had the opportunity to live in a neighborhood resided by people from different sects, or by some families from your own sect, what would you prefer? 24% said they would prefer the neighborhood resided by people from their own sect; 26% said they preferred living next to people from different sects while 50% said it did not matter.

When the respondents were asked about the occurrence of problems on a sectarian basis within their villages/cities, 11% said there were always problems; 52% said that problems happened from time to time while 37% said that problems had never happened. In total, 63% of the respondents said that sectarianism- based problems happened at different rates; this percentage is relatively high, and it is somewhat inconsistent with the students' previous answers with respect to the existence of sectarianism in their villages/cities.

The same applied to the question concerning the occurrence of problems on a familial basis. 26% said there were always problems; 52% said that problems happened from time to time while 16% said problems had never happened. We also found that problems happen at different rates among 88% of the students; and this is a very high percentage.

The students try again to deny the existence of negative phenomena; or at least reduce its scope (like sectarianism or family- based struggles). But when we examined how these phenomena are reflected in the daily life, it turned out that the reality is much worse. It was also inferred that the students were not totally aware of what sectarianism and family-based struggles were. But when addressing these phenomena in the context of everyday life, they became clearer.

The poll's results were not largely different from the focus groups' results. However, due to age gap, the focus groups' participants, being older than the high school students, proved to be more realistic and daring in pointing to the negative phenomena prevailing in our society. The focus groups' participants demonstrated awareness regarding the existence of sectarianism and stereotypes in the Palestinian society, as indicated by one of the female participants:

«I told my sister that she had two mentors, one Muslim and one Christian. I asked her whether she knew that he was Christian. She asked how did they let him to be a mentor»? Another young woman said: «

If you tell others that your roommate in the university dormitories was Christian, they react as if you did something wrong. My roommate was Christian; when I told some friends they found it strange; I did not know she was Christian; I had never asked, it's not important for me».

«I was once at my friend's place- she's Christian. We were sitting next to the window; a man passed by, and then she said: look at him, he seems to be Muslim. I remained silent».

It was found that the Arab youth are aware that the society does not handle these phenomena; it rather tries to hide or overlook them. One of the male participants said: «In all the meetings that I attend, people ask me whether I am Christian or Muslim, in order to know how to talk to me».

«Two classmates of mine were extremists, one was Muslim and the other was Christian. When they were talking to each other, I felt that the 3rd world war broke out. One has to keep distance».

«It was rare to find a Muslim and a Christian sitting in the same room and discussing the village issues».

It was also inferred that religious racism exists in work places. One the young women said «I worked in a local nursery owned by a woman from a different religion; and I always felt she was treating me arrogantly and racistly». A young man from the North said that he knew an engineering company employing about 15 Arab engineers; and they all belonged to the same religion. He is convinced that if he applies to work in that company, he would not be employed because of his religion.

In addition to that, we found that most participants oppose mixed marriages and prefer the present traditions and respect for religions, since they believe that mixed marriages would provoke unnecessary problems.

The youth group demonstrated awareness regarding the possibility of dealing with sectarianism through youth activism and mobility, national projects and enhancement of the national identity which is capable of fighting sectarianism. Some participants agreed that familial and internal policies in some cities/villages evoke sectarian sensitivities

«We can solve the problem of sectarianism when we all care about one case: language and nationalism; when the Christian and the Muslim carry the Palestinian flag».

An additional phenomenon inferred through the focus groups was the prevalence of racism in the Arab society, on the basis of geographical areas. In Nazareth and Umm Al-Fahm, the issue of the different neigh-

borhoods was prominent; and racism existed in many other regions in the North, the Triangle and the South. The Bedouin Arab felt that the people of the North, or the people of the villages, treat them arrogantly. One of the Negev group participants said «Sometimes, when you go to the North and people know that you are Bedouin, they treat you as if you were retarded.. Being Bedouin means being ignorant».

Spending leisure time, cultural youth institutions and frameworks

The opportunities available to the youth to spend their leisure time reflect the level of human and physical development in the Arab society and localities; the possibilities of developing sporting and artistic talents and participating in the public spheres through voluntary, formal and or civil society organizations and the possibilities for young people to change their daily life and influence life in their communities. There is no doubt that the availability of youth frameworks and public organizations, and the ability to spend leisure time and develop talents contribute to reducing social distortions, like violence, criminality, sectarianism and drug abuse, and bring together the different segments of the Arab society.

It is obvious that underdevelopment of the Arab localities, the lack of infrastructures, , the unreadiness of the Arab schools to organize after school programs, the absence of clubs and public organizations and the tight budgets available in the Arab local authorities are not promising. Not to mention the economic conditions of the Arab society in general and the youth in particular, previously mentioned in the introduction of this report, which limit the Arab family's ability to finance extracurricular activities, and hinder the participation of youngsters in clubs and public institutions.

Before presenting the results of the poll and the focus groups' analysis, it could be said that the results presented in this chapter will reflect the overall situation of the Arab society, and not only the opportunities available to the youth.

We asked the school students some questions about the availability of leisure time, and the way they spend their leisure time. We also asked them about the type of activities they practice, and about their participation and voluntary work in public and civil society organizations.

When we asked the poll's respondents whether they felt they had enough leisure time, we found the following:

Table 8: Availability of leisure time (%)

The leisure time I have is very sufficient	9.5
The leisure time I have is sufficient	32.6
The leisure time I have is insufficient	35.2
I never have leisure time	21.85

This means that approximately 41% of the school students have enough leisure time which they can spend doing activities and extracurricular programs. These results could be explained by the students' concentration on their studies, mainly during the twelfth grade when the students are busy preparing for the matriculation exams, for the psychometric exam and for higher education. On the other hand, they could be explained by the lack of organizations, clubs and activities in which the students can spend their leisure time; and the absence of these frameworks makes the student feel he/she doesn't have leisure time.

When we asked the students about the amount of time they dedicate to activities, like youth clubs or cultural centers, visiting friends, sitting in coffee shops and restaurants and so on. We found that the most popular activities among the youth were surfing the internet and using facebook 5.3 times a week, for a period of 1.52 hours each time; family visits (1.5 times a week for a period of 2.08 hours);visiting friends (1.5 times a week, for a period of 2.5 hours); going to clubs, cultural centers and public libraries (0.65 times a week, for a period of 0.84 hours) and spending time shopping and visiting malls (1.13 times a week, for a period of 0.77 hours).

Table 9: Spending leisure time

How much time do you spend in the following places	average number of times per week	Average number of hours each time
A youth club/cultural centers/cinema/theatre or public library	0.65	0.84
Visiting friends	1.5	2.5
Coffee shops or restaurants	1.06	1.3
Surfing the internet, facebook/playing games and so on	5.3	1.52
Family visits	1.52	2.08
Religious places	0.8	0.65
Shopping/malls	1.13	0.77

With regard to the question about the absence of local institutions in which students can spend their leisure time after school, approximately 50% said there was a lack of these institutions, while only 6% said there wasn't.

On the other hand, we tried to examine the Arab students' affiliation with youth organizations or unions, or with public organizations, to have the complete image of the activities implemented by young people, and the extent to which they are involved in the society and in the public sphere; like affiliation with students' committees, sports clubs, youth movements, civil society organizations, political parties or religious parties. The result we received was somewhat worrisome, indicating the youth reluctance to take part in the public life, and to communicate with the society and even with other young people. This situation is deemed dangerous since it would impede developing a social capital among young people in particular, and in the Arab society in general.

According to the results, a few respondents said they were affiliated with organizations or unions. 7.5% said they were members of students' committees; 16% said they were members of sports clubs; 10% were in youth movements or scouts; 10% in arts or dance groups; 2% in civil

society organizations; 4% in political parties; 4% in religious parties or movements and 21% in other organizations.

We also attempted to examine the youth participation in civil society organizations, as employees or volunteers; and to learn about the types of participation and the nature of these organizations with regard to the target group, the organization's goals and projects, the fields of work and the role of the youth in these organizations. But unfortunately, it was found that the participation rate was low; only 7% of the respondents were present into voluntary organizations that provide services; without occupying any position there. The small number and the students' distribution are problematic to the presentation and the analysis of the data; therefore it is sufficient to indicate the general participation rate. However, it is noteworthy to mention the low participation rate of the young people in political movements and parties, as we find that only 5% of these youngsters are affiliated with political parties.

As for the youth view regarding their ability to influence society, despite the lack of institutions and organizations, and the little participation in the public sphere, we found that young people are optimistic in this regard. When asked about their opinion concerning the Arab youth ability to influence the Arab society in Israel, 66% of the respondents said they were highly capable of that, 33% said they were modestly capable while 11% said they were moderately capable.

To summarize young people's attitudes with respect to spending leisure time and participating in the public sphere and in civil society organizations, or in cultural and sports frameworks, we conclude that there is an urgent need to establish organizations and develop activities through which young people can spend their leisure time, and to involve these youngsters in society and in daily and public matters. These initiatives would have positive implications on young people and on the society as a whole.

The poll's results were very close to the focus groups' results, despite the age gap. We found that in most groups and in most regions, among males and females and in all age groups, there was an urgent need for special organizations that target young people, and for sports, cultural and artistic frameworks.

The main answer received to the question «how and where do young people spend their leisure time» was: «young men stay in coffee shops and Nargile cafes, while young women stay home». But we found that older youth had more serious attempts to overcome the absence of youth frameworks and leisure time centers through developing local vol-

untary youth initiatives. These initiatives were mostly developed within the framework of youth mobility and the work done with young people; and aimed to impact the society and the youth, and try to create change in society, in values and customs and in political and social attitudes.

The focus groups' male and female participants agreed that there is a severe lack of cultural and/or sporting and/or social, and even political frameworks. It was also inferred that these young people were not familiar with the few existent frameworks. The majority affirmed that there was an urgent need for this type of frameworks that contribute to enhancing belonging, giving and integration in society; and that enable young people to spend their leisure time effectively. We also observed that some young men and women had independently and personally taken the initiative to establish such frameworks.

On the other hand, severe criticism was directed towards Arab local authorities and responsible institutions because of the lack of frameworks and the negligence of young people's needs. One of the participants talked about the frameworks available in his city «There are some clubs in my city, club A, Club B, and others that don't open their doors. Children have to jump over the gates. Some boys and girls wanted to play soccer, so they jumped over the gates to be able to do that; the municipality is not allowing these thing to happen». The harshest criticism was that these clubs don't open on holidays, but only during the other days of the week. «We need clubs on holidays. When there is school we have to be at school and study, and we rarely need these clubs. We need them only on holidays, since we have nothing to do».

Another participant said:» If our society does not provide us with youth clubs, we will not have cultural awareness; we will not be familiar with theatres and cinema; we will know nothing about politics and political parties. These simple things establish a conscious society».

This demonstrates that young people are aware of the importance of youth clubs and organizations. They also believe these frameworks contribute to fighting negative social phenomena like violence, sectarianism, women's inequality and criminality, and to creating a healthy society. Moreover, the focus groups' participants agreed that the «different youth frameworks lead to a social change».

As a consequence, some young people attempted to establish nonpartisan independent frameworks that bring together the society's different segments. For example, a youth movement was established in Jaffa « it was established to meet the young people's needs... we have 5 goals,

enhance the language and the national identity, equality between men and women in society, academic and professional guidance, enhancing voluntarism and improving the relations between Muslims and Christians».

Another youth movement was established in the Galilee by a group of young people. One of the female founders talked about the movement's emergence:

«I will speak here about the youth movement that we established in our city. We took this initiative which aims at delivering educational, social and political lectures to raise awareness regarding all domains. Most participants were from the same class; and we were always together; it is not that we met each other in a certain place or under certain circumstances. Each one of us definitely knows others; therefore, the circle became wider. We also advertised our activism through the available means that we had. We have been active for eight months».

«We mainly aimed to expand the base and include people from different backgrounds, age groups, and political affiliations; we also targeted people that were not affiliated with any party; or even those who did not belong anywhere.

Our aim was not to achieve easy access to organizations, but this was spontaneously achieved. Being a broad youth movement or group including people from diverse backgrounds, we don't have problems with any organization or political party. Most organizations are ready to host us and cooperate with us; and all this is due to the broad and diverse base that we have. Our initiative aims at benefiting the society; it emerged from the violence prevailing in our city, like armed violence. We are a group of young people that care for the city's interests. We face many problems in the Arab society; when we finish high school, there is nowhere to go; we don't have clubs. We used to finish school at half past two; and young people could be brought together and kept away from these perversions. Schools were not open after 3 o'clock to hold fun and educational activities; we did not have such things.

This youth group did not want to remain silent; we wanted to take a step before things happen. We know there is a possibility to recruit young people to take part in activities and programs; we can go to schools to raise the students' awareness; there are many ways through which we can approach them because we are the closest to them. If we react only when problems happen, this would be tragic.

We don't aim at directly initiating large scale activities like parties or fes-

tivals. We are firstly interested in working with youth; we don't want them to react only when problems happen. Instead, we want to improve the situation and prevent future occurrence of problems. We need a good basis and a high awareness level; the activities will come later».

In the presence of these youth initiatives, partisan activism was criticized by young people. They mainly emphasized their dissatisfaction regarding the conflicts resulting from partisanship, and the fact that partisan activism is limited to the party's members.

One of the participants indicated that «There isn't partisan activism for young people; they work with them, but it is not sufficient. The political parties want to prove themselves and they don't care about the people or about others; they only want to be big to surpass other parties».

Other participants claimed that political parties or the youth movements belonging to them don't take part in activities that are not directly related to them, or that were initiated by other frameworks, as indicated by one of the male participants « I participated in the strike (for solidarity with the prisoners); the political parties did not care about us; members of one party came to visit, but they claimed that the solidarity tent was theirs; I don't want to mention the party's name».

Another female participant said: «Some families have to be affiliated with a certain party; this means that if your parents are affiliated with this party the children should follow their path... if you don't, the whole family will ask what happened? What is wrong with you? I realized that political parties don't lead us anywhere; and that political and social activism should not only be through political parties. This is my opinion».

«In my city there are many political parties; but the most prominent is the Communist party, its club is the most active. But you can see that this party only targets its members and not the whole community. I wanted to say that such parties are the most active since they receive financial support. For example, the National Democratic Assembly is supported by its Knesset members; and the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and the communists are definitely supported by their Knesset members. But the student movements or the youth groups are not economically strong; they are generally paralyzed, and their activism is limited to demonstrations.

Summary

The age group ranging between 0-29 years old constitutes 62% of the society while youngsters whose ages range between 15-29 years old constitute approximately 25%. Based on this, one cannot discuss the development of the economic, social and political situation of the Palestinian society in Israel, as well as the liberation from customs and traditions, without comprehending the reality and the needs of the youth and changing their perceptions and behaviors.

Despite the weight and the importance of this age group and its individual and collective impact on the society's future, there is still scarce research addressing the needs, problems and obstacles that hinder the development of the Palestinian youth, and other studies addressing the sociopolitical positions of the youth and their perception of the general social situations of the Palestinian society. The needs of the Arab youth are remarkably absent from the academic research domains, particularly from in-depth qualitative research providing stage to the youth discourse and language, and to the way they perceive their reality.

Though limited to specific aspects, the current research could be considered as a primary attempt to learn about the youth needs and the way they perceive the challenges they encounter in the domains of education, employment, participation in the public sphere (partisan or civil activism) and identity-related aspects, as well as their social perspectives regarding issues such as violence, women's equality and sectarianism. The attitudes of the surveyed Arab students point to the existence of several obstacles and problems in the Arab educational system. Moreover, the results indicate that the reasons behind choosing a certain specialization during high school are unclear, and that the selection is ultimately made according to the available courses provided by schools, the grades and the decision of the school itself regarding the specializations that the students should follow. The results also show that the options available for the Arab student are remarkably limited, and that he/she ends up choosing the best available specialization. Very often, it turns out that the student chose a specialization which he/she did not desire, and was integrated in an academic discipline unrelated to his/her school specialization. While in school, many students choose high-profile scientific specializations, but they end up choosing Social studies or Humanities.

The research results demonstrate the dissatisfaction of the Arab youth in Israel regarding the performance of the Arab schools- the Arab educa-

tional system. Most of the participants consider the school as a grades' factory; in other words, the school is mainly interested in the student's attainment and puts aside the development of the individual and collective identity. In certain cases, schools ignore, and even suppress, the student's individual skills and talents.

It was also demonstrated that Arab schools offer a limited number of specializations, thus making it difficult for Arab students to choose specializations that are compatible with their interests and with the needs of the modern labor markets. Furthermore, the results indicate that most Arab schools lack systems of educational guidance and counseling to help students choose their school specialization.

A large number of participants confirmed that despite their awareness regarding the policies of negligence and poor budgets adopted by the successive Israeli governments in regard to the Arab education system, they believe that the principals, teachers and school staff are not sufficiently contributing to the amelioration of the Arab education system.

With respect to academic education, the research results show that the Arab youth are in urgent need for academic guidance programs that are generally absent from Arab schools. It is also demonstrated that male and female Arab students tend to integrate into traditional disciplines (male students study medicine, law and accounting while female students choose study languages, nursing and social work). The participants affirm that these choices are made due to the lack of professional postsecondary and academic guidance; in addition, they are influenced by gender and traditional social positions regarding gender roles.

The results indicate that most Arab students are not acquainted with the various specializations available in universities and colleges; and this is another reason for choosing traditional subjects. Moreover, the racism and limitedness of the Israeli labor market urge the Arab students to choose a specialization that would qualify them to work in the Arab local market.

The Arab student's willingness to pursue higher education coincides with his/her awareness regarding the obstacles that hinder the accomplishment of this desire. The research results demonstrate that the most prominent challenges and impediments hindering the integration of Arab students in the Israeli universities are the psychometric exam, the minimum age required for studying certain subjects and racism. The field research findings show that most students face difficulties in financing their postsecondary education, and that Hebrew is deemed one of the main challenges standing in their face during the first year in higher edu-

cation.

Most of the participants also talked about a «cultural shock» that occurs once they enter the sphere of the Israeli universities and colleges. In addition, racism practiced against the Arab students is another barrier which they should overcome within universities and colleges. These factors urge Arab students to pursue higher education in the universities of Jordan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories or Europe.

Regarding the labor market, the research results point to the limited employment opportunities available for young people. When asked about the labor market during and following secondary education, many participants said that the working conditions are dire with regard to wages, social rights, working hours and so forth. There was also gender-based discrimination, with regard to wages and working conditions.

Regarding employment after academic education, the vast majority of the focus groups' participants are unaware of the Israeli labor market's needs, and don't pay them enough attention. Many of them also talked about the need for relevant counseling and guidance frameworks. In sum, the Arab youth suffer from a serious lack of employment opportunities; on the one hand the prevalent racism in Israel is one of the reasons that urge young Palestinians to seek jobs in the local labor market; on the other hand, the local labor market offers a limited number of employment opportunities. This creates a harsh competition and hinders the integration of young men and women in the labor market, mainly since female participants indicated that they preferred working in the local labor markets within their towns, due to social, familial and political considerations.

With respect to identity components and social attitudes, most of the focus groups' participants demonstrated high political awareness in their definition of their Palestinian and national identity. In addition, the religious identity appeared among some groups as one of the main identity components defining oneself.

The largest part of the participants integrated in partisan, political and/or social frameworks emphasized the importance of developing and enhancing the Palestinian/Arab identity among young people since it will contribute to developing a collective identity, mainly among Palestinians in Israel.

With respect to the attitudes of the Palestinian youth regarding different social issues, the research results point to a consensus regarding the existence of inequality between Arab men and women. However, there

was a controversy about the importance and the need for creating a change, and about the domains in which the change should be created. Most participants proved awareness regarding the inferior status of Arab women and agreed that some initiatives should be taken for the amelioration of women's status in the fields of political participation and employment. However, most male and female participants emphasized that the power relations existent in the familial and social domains should be preserved. There were also some conservative attitudes regarding personal freedoms.

It also appeared that violence is among the most prominent and dangerous threats facing the Arab society. The focus groups' male and female participants agreed that this phenomenon lies directly and mainly within the responsibility of the state and its institutions. We also perceived that they were aware of the responsibility of the society and the political parties and of the need to fight this phenomenon, in addition to being partially aware of the individuals' responsibility.

The focus groups' participants demonstrated awareness regarding the existence of religious sectarianism in the Palestinian society. They said that the internal politics within numerous Arab localities create provoke sectarian sensitivities and emphasized the importance of fighting this phenomenon. Some opined that enhancing nationalism could fight sectarianism.

As previously mentioned, one of the research aims is to identify the problems and hardships facing young people; and by presenting them we aim at suggesting programs and solutions to deal with these challenges. This would contribute to building a better future for Arab youth in particular and for the Arab society in general.

Annexes: summary of the workshops dedicated to youth groups' discussion at the 2nd Palestinian Youth Affairs Conference.

First workshop: «Identity, social attitudes and participation».

Urwa Sweitat - organizational counselor and planner.

The workshop addressed the issue of «Identity, social attitudes and participation» through focusing on two main axes:

- Analyzing the results of the field research and the poll and identifying the main gaps inherent within the research, the gap between the existing state and the desired state and the gaps between the stage and the backstage.
- Suggesting main tools and the powers that contribute to creating a change, in addition to the practical suggestions for furthering the process towards creating the desired change.

The workshop goals:

- Creating a dialogue about the main results of the research.
- Analyzing the different dimensions that affect the results.
- Addressing the main issues in order to create a change.
- Suggesting potential activities and projects and would contribute to creating the desired change.

Participants: the workshop was attended by a widely heterogeneous group of the 1948 and the 1967 Arabs of different age groups and from various professional and from geographic backgrounds.

The first level: Discussing the results

The addressed results concerned the following issues: identity and belonging, societal violence, Arab women's rights, community activism.

Identity and belonging

The workshop raised the question whether there existed discrepancy between the religious identity and the national identity. This question was raised based on the research finding indicating that most participants proved high political awareness in defining the Arab/Palestinian identity, beside the religious identity which appeared as one of the main identity components.

The majority of the workshop participants emphasized the importance of the national belonging and its integration with the religious identity and said that «the identity components cannot be separated», «there should be harmony between the national identity and the religious identity».

However, some indicated that one component should be prioritized over the other, «the national identity is more inclusive and more important; it includes all segments of society»; « the religious identity is a matter of personal faith and it cannot be annulled». All participants emphasized the importance of fighting sectarianism and social fragmentation.

Women's equality

The research results point to a consensus regarding the existence of inequality between Arab men and women. However, there was a controversy about the importance and the need for creating a change, and about the domains in which the change should be created. As a response to the facilitator's question about why there were a consensus over the problem and a controversy over the methods that should be followed to solve the problem, most participants indicated that the existing power relations in the social and familial domains should be preserved. Some had conservative attitudes regarding women's personal freedoms, while the majority was opposed to the statement that women's freedom and rights are conditioned by maintaining traditions and customs. They asserted that rights are basic and unconditional, «women's rights are unarguably human rights», «women's rights are more important than customs», » there should be equality in opportunities».

Violence

The workshop addressed violence, and all participants agreed that this phenomenon falls mainly and directly within the responsibilities of the state and its institutions. They indicated that «the police is fully responsible for this», and that « the police is not concerned about this issue; it actually wants us to fight each other», « the organizations should cooperate and fight this phenomenon», «no one can help you but yourself», « it's wrong to wait for the state to take the initiative».

Spending leisure time: cultural youth institutions and frameworks

The results of the field research and the poll showed that most of the participants who are involved in political and partisan frameworks highlighted the importance of enhancing the Palestinian identity. On the other hand, the research results indicated that a large part of the participants who are not affiliated with any political party criticized the activism of these parties and their failure to address youth and social issues. Many

said they were not affiliated with any party due to partisanship. Based on this, the workshop raised the question whether political forces enhance partisanship. This question provoked a heated discussion about the actual role of the political forces. Some affirmed that the political forces play an important role in enhancing the national belonging, «the political forces represent the society’s issues and concerns», «the political forces work on the enhancement and the dissemination of culture and identity». But others opined that the daily practices of the political forces increase partisanship, «partisan affiliations became familial affiliations», «there is a tribal partisanship and a negative competition between the political parties». Most participants also confirmed that voluntarism and nonpartisan societal frameworks have a significant contribution to the enhancement of national belonging «the youth movements include people from all parties», the organizations work for the benefit of the youth and not for their own benefit».

The second level: issues that require change
 During the second half of the workshop, the participants offered suggestions for creating change concerning the main issues, and suggested practical tools that would contribute to creating the desired change.

Issues	Practical suggestions
Distortion of the Palestinian identity	Developing projects to enhance national belonging, like lectures and tours to destroyed villages, in addition to oral history and enhancement of the Arabic language
Lack of awareness regarding the needs of the Arab youth	Launching media campaigns to raise awareness regarding the youth needs and affairs
The need for strengthening the relations between Palestinians within their homeland and in the Diaspora	Establishing a network between the Palestinian youth organizations
Prevalence of violence	Organizing community projects that enhance social solidarity and unity, and values of mutual support, dialogue and tolerance

The need for training professional educational cadres dealing with youth affairs	Training professionals to be agents capable of influencing youth in schools and educational frameworks
The need for enhancing voluntarism among young people	Establishing local youth groups Developing students' councils in high schools and students' committees in higher education institutes

Second workshop: Education and Employment

Lana Udwan

This workshop aimed to learn about the youth needs through the data presented at the conference, and reach practical solutions and suggestions regarding different initiatives and networks that can be established between local organizations and institutions. The workshop discussion pointed to the need for changing the stereotypical thinking among Arab students, and learning about the specializations through academic guidance that is compatible with the needs of the labor market; thus contributing to an increase in the available employment opportunities. The participants agreed that molding the identity of the Arab students and providing them with academic guidance fall within the responsibilities of the educational system. They all asserted that young people, especially academics, should take the initiative to raise the awareness of school students. They also highlighted the importance of raising the parents' awareness and integrating them in the academic guidance process which their children go through.

The participants suggested numerous recommendations, such as:

1. Delivering workshops to teachers, caregivers and parents in kindergartens and schools regarding academic guidance and its contribution to molding and enhancing the students' tendencies and adapting them to the needs of the labor market.

2. Inserting the psychometric course in the school curriculum.
3. Investing efforts to transform the students' stereotypical thinking into critical thinking; thus contributing to their success in academic education.
4. Educating and raising the awareness of students regarding the internal affairs and the special nature of our society as Palestinians within Israel. In other words, expose them to «Service Learning».
5. Raising the students' awareness regarding the importance and the process of economic development, and equipping them with the tools that will help them develop businesses and enterprises in the future.
6. Establishing a framework for training and preparing students towards integration in academic education, and opening youth clubs to help them fill the gap between high school and higher education (as some universities set minimum age for studying certain subjects).
7. Establishing a framework comprising university students to work closely with school students and take an active role in providing them with educational guidance and preparing them towards higher education.
8. Establishing forums including professionals from different domains in which a few Arab students specialize, market these domains and encourage students to choose relevant academic disciplines.
9. Establishing a coalition of organizations and institutions that are concerned with this field, in order to invest maximum efforts and increase their impact and efficiency.

An additional discussion was run about the «Arab labor market» in Israel, or the availability of employment opportunities in the Arab localities. Most participants indicated that the majority of the Arab firms work according to familial systems or hierarchical structures where the employees do not receive their minimum legal rights.

There are some enterprises that provided Arab citizens with job opportunities, like «Galil Software» which aims at employing Arab programmers, or «Kav Mashveh»- employers' coalition for Arab university graduates. But these enterprises were all developed with the aid of Israeli (non-Arab) capitals.

It's worth mentioning that women are the most affected by this situation. They face serious challenges that limit their movement and hinder their integration into work in the big cities due to familial responsibilities, customs and traditions that imprison them into a bubble to «protect» them from integration into society outside their village, their weak knowledge of

Hebrew, the lack of public transportation, the lack of frameworks for children in addition to the employment challenges resulting from the racism practiced against Arabs, mainly against veiled and religious women.

Among the recommendations suggested in this regard were:

1. As a consuming society, our consumption should be directed towards the benefit of our society and towards increasing the employment opportunities in the Arab localities. This can be achieved in two ways:

- Supporting Arab enterprises/businesses to increase their ability to employ Arab workers and give them their full rights.
- To organize ourselves as one purchasing power, require companies to employ a larger number of Arabs and contribute to changing the working and the admittance conditions.

3. Developing enterprises that aim at achieving a social goal; in other words developing a «social business». This kind of enterprises will aim to provide workers with fair employment opportunities and decrease the unemployment rates in the Arab society. One can refer to similar models implemented worldwide, and which have succeeded in empowering marginalized communities by employing them and increasing the accessibility of the services they provide, such as the Indian experience.

4. Providing education about rights and raising the society's awareness regarding workers rights and employers' obligations.

5. The Arab organizations should benefit from Israel's recent membership in «OECD» (2010) and put pressure on decision makers in the Israeli government to improve the economic conditions of the Palestinian citizens.

It was also discussed that the domains of education, employment and professional and economic development should be highlighted in the media in order to become daily addressed issues.