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Report on  
The five highest performing schools and five  
lowest performing schools in the In-service  
program for 2010/2011

Component Three: Professional Development

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## Summary

This study aims at examining the profiles of those schools which achieved the best results and those which achieved the lowest results according to the study which had been carried out on “The Impact of Training on the Performance of the Schools Participating in *Towards a New School Program*” within Education Reform Support Program (ERSP). It also aims at tracing the impact of some intervening variables which affected these schools' results and profiles positively or negatively.

To achieve the objective of this study 10 schools were selected as a purposive sample which consisted of top five schools and lowest five schools in performance out of 122 schools which participated in "In-service Program" in the second year of ERSP, the 2010/2011 academic year. Study data were collected through a set of tools that included a school observation, students' questionnaires, principal interview form, and focus group questions with teachers over three complete days during which the evaluation team coexisted with the school staff to come up with most accurate results. The study concluded with a number of key findings; if the following findings lean toward the positive side they impact the school positively whilst if they lean towards the negative side they impact the school negatively, and below are the seven main findings:

1. School leadership and its role in the school.
2. School's connection with local community and local community's participation in school activities.
3. Teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession and the process of change and development.
4. Parents' academic level and their perception of the teaching learning process.
5. School infrastructure especially safety, health and attractiveness.
6. The number of participants in In-service training program which is part of ERSP.
7. The role of teachers who were awarded higher education diploma “ICT in Education”.

## Introduction

This study is conducted under Component 3, Professional Development, of the Education Reform Support Program (ERSP), a USAID funded project, and supports the second stage of ERfKE. This program contributes to building the capacities of thousands of educators working in Jordan's public school system over a five year period starting from 2009 until 2014. ERSP aims at supporting the MoE in its efforts to further enhance education in Jordan and creating generations that possess competitive skills necessary for knowledge economy.

The schools targeted in this study participated in the ERSP In-service professional development program in 2010/2011. The In-service training program aims at building positive attitudes and knowledge and skills among teachers and school leaders to change learning and working processes in schools. The program also provides a specialized training for teachers of different subjects on skills that are considered necessary for designing student-centered classrooms taking into consideration their subjects' uniqueness.

This study hones in on ten selected schools out of 122 schools that participated In-service training program in the school year 2010/2011. Furthermore, this study provides a more in-depth, critical and comprehensive view of school performance, building on an initial study<sup>1</sup> carried out in January 2012 to measure the impact of training on the performance of the schools in "Towards a New School". The schools selected represent the top five and lowest five performing schools in the school rubric that cover the four fields which were included in the preceding study. These four fields are:

1. First field: School culture
2. Second field: Projects planning skills
3. Third field: Communication skills
4. Fourth field: Project management skills

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<sup>1</sup> This study aimed at investigating the effects of the ERSP In-service School-based program "Towards a New School" on the overall performance of the participating schools in the program as well as on its four component areas, namely school culture, planning, communication and project management. Out of the 122 participating schools in the program 106 schools were included in the analysis. Differences between pre and post scores on the rubric were analyzed and the effects of several independent variables were studied. Those variables included geographic location of the school, type of school, urban level, gender and school principal attendance of the program. The major conclusion of the study was that schools performed significantly better after the implementation of the program on both the total score and all sub-scores. Additionally, there were significant differences in both total score and all sub-scores between female and male schools in favor of female schools. There were no significant differences in the performance of the schools as a result of the rest of the variables.

## **Importance of the Study**

The richness of the study lies in examining the profiles of the schools that achieved the best results and those that achieved the lowest results. Through these studies the factors and variables that affect negatively or positively these schools' performance are realized. The results of these findings will be reflected in training implementation in the coming years to capitalize on positive variables and defend against negative ones. Furthermore, the study offers further recommendations to build upon and share with MoE.

## **Study Problem Statement and Objective**

To study the impact of the program "Towards a New School" on MoE's schools which participated in this program, a study was carried out to investigate the impact of the program on these schools (122 schools), and define a group of variables and factors which might affect schools such as school gender, geographic location or the phase of education it offers. Upon reviewing the results of that study it was noticed that common factors influenced both high performing schools and low performing schools. Also indicated were other variables influencing schools performance that needed further explanation. Therefore, this follow-on qualitative study of selected schools was designed to further investigate factors or variables and accordingly use findings to strengthen the training program in the years to come.

According to the results of the last study, schools were classified into high performance schools and low performance ones. Specifically, this study aimed at examining the school profiles of those high performing schools and those of low performing schools, and to trace the impact of intervening variables identified in the four fields: school culture, project planning skills, communication skills and project planning skills on the school performance.

## **Methodology of the Study**

Qualitative analysis methodology was used to explore practices applied by the school which might affect the level of its performance whether high or low. Furthermore, qualitative research tools were developed to collect data that can more elaborately describe the environment of the ten schools.

## **Population and Study Sample**

Study population consists of all schools in which the In-service training program was implemented during the second year of ERSP 2012/2011. The number of these schools was 122. Ten schools were selected as a purposive sample for this study. They represented the top five schools and the lowest five schools in performance

according to the previous study's tool. The following table shows the names of these schools, their classification and the average of their marks:

Table 1. Names of Schools and Classification

No.	School's Name	Mark Average out of 5	Region	Field Directorate (FD)	Classification
1.	Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls	3.94	North	Irbid First FD	Highest five schools
2.	Al-Iskan Coeducation Secondary School for Girls	3.94	South	Ma'an FD	
3.	Zubaidah Bint Al-Hareth Secondary School for Girls	3.91	Middle	Zarqa First FD	
4.	Umm Al-Jimal Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls	3.91	North	Northeastern Badia FD	
5.	Fatima Al-Zahra'a Basic School for Girls	3.91	Middle	Jerash FD	
6.	Tela'a Al-Ali Secondary School for Girls	2.58	Middle	Amman Second FD	lowest five schools
7.	Al-Saeediya Comprehensive Secondary School for Boys	2.5	North	Northeastern Badia FD	
8.	Khalda Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls	2.5	Middle	Amman Second FD	
9.	Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Secondary School for Boys	2.31	North	Irbid First FD	
10.	Al-Hasa Secondary School for Boys	2.23	South	Tafila FD	

## Study Tools

To collect study data, the evaluation team visited the ten schools. Each evaluator resided with (2-4) schools for three complete school days, and used the following tools to observe human activities and interaction, physical environments and comprehensive look at the dynamic environment of the schools. These tools were:

- 1- School observation tool: this tool consisted of 36 items which covered five domains (school, principal, teachers, students, local community). Answers fell into four levels. The fourth represented the highest whereas the first represented the lowest.
- 2- Student questionnaires: these questionnaires consisted of 29 items which covered 6 domains (school environment, principal, teachers, students, classroom and local community). Answers had five levels ranging from five (I strongly agree) to one (I strongly disagree).
- 3- Principal interview form: this form consisted of 23 questions. Its main themes were school's vision, school leadership, teacher and professional development, learning and teaching, student, local community.

- 4- Focus group questions with teachers: there were 23 questions which covered the following domains, including me as a teacher, learning and teaching, classroom and behavioral management, and communication.

### Validity of Study Tools

Study tools were developed by the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team. To verify the validity of the content of the study tools, they were submitted to a group of well-experienced and specialized referees. This group consisted of four specialists working at Creative Associates International (Creative) in addition to three from the Ministry of Education who provided feedback on these tools, including: detailing the observation tool, simplifying the student questionnaire and taking the role of the community more into consideration. Referees' remarks were taken into account and tools were modified in light of the feedback. The final tools are provided in annex 1.

### Procedures of Study

Study procedures were performed in the second term of the school year 2011/2012 by three evaluators, one from each region (North, Middle, South) under the leadership of the M&E team. Evaluators were selected on the basis of their competence and provided that they were not the assigned trainer for ERSP training at these schools to ensure objectivity. Orientation sessions were held by M&E team with the evaluators to let them know study objectives, its importance, and to expose them to the study tools and procedures.

After that, the team communicated with the MoE, which in its turn sent a letter to selected schools to notify them of the visits dates and purpose (see annex 2). The evaluators confirmed the receipt of MoE letter through their phone calls to the principals of those schools. The evaluators visited schools and spent three complete school days in each school. Every evaluator carried out the following activities:

Table 2. Schedule of Activities

Day	Activity	Tools used
Day ONE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School principal visit</li> <li>2. Scheduling principal's interview and teachers' focus group session.</li> <li>3. General non-guided observation</li> </ol>	"The School Walk Through" Guide
Day TWO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School principal Interview</li> <li>2. School observation</li> <li>3. Distribution of students' questionnaire</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School principal's interview form</li> <li>• School observation checklist</li> <li>• Student questionnaire</li> </ul>
Day THREE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers' focus group session</li> <li>2. Collection of students' questionnaire</li> <li>3. Final school tour</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group session questions</li> <li>• School observation checklist</li> </ul>



On the first day, the evaluators introduced themselves to the principal and had non-guided school tours to observe the environment and the school activities in general. During this day they scheduled an interview with the principal for the next visit, and informed the principal to schedule focus group session (1 1/2 hours) on the third day with a representative sample of teachers. On the second day, the evaluators interviewed the principals and attended classes. Classes visited included those given by teachers who participated in the In-service training program while others were given by teachers who did not participate in the program. In addition, questionnaires were distributed among a representative sample of students (one section from every grade from grade five to twelve). On the last day, the evaluators held focus group sessions with the sample of teachers (from various stages and specializations and from ERSP trainees and others). Questionnaires were collected on this day. Finally, they attended more classes and a conducted a final school tour to around the school.

After the visits, the evaluators entered data from students' questionnaires<sup>2</sup> and observation tools, analyzed the data and recorded their notes. Then, they held a round-table session to discuss results with ERSP trainers who trained in these schools in In-service training programs. This session aimed at assisting the evaluators to have a better picture of how the schools were before the training program. The M&E team and a representative from Creative attended. Finally, in light of the results and trainers' remarks, school profiles were written to four main areas (school, principal, teachers, and students) and conclude the most important reasons that led to their results (refer to annexes 3 and 4 for school profiles). The final report was written providing a summary of the most significant findings.

### Quantitative Results

The observation tool was analyzed to reflect the results of the selected schools in 5 main domains: school environment, leadership, teachers, students and the local community. The results of the high performing schools' quantitative results can be summarized in the following table:

School's Name	Domains					Overall Average
	School environment	Leadership	Teachers	Students	Local community	
Al-Iskan Coeducation Secondary School for Girls	3.2	3.2	3.3	4.3	3.3	Overall Average
Zubaidah Bint Al-Hareth Secondary School for Girls	3.2	3.66	2.9	3.85	2.3	

<sup>2</sup> Student questionnaires' results were excluded for the purpose of this study because the data was unreliable and not credible were some data was incomplete.

Umm Al-Jimal Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls	2.6	3.3	2.5	2.6	2.3	
Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls	2.6	3.3	2.9	2.6	3.3	
Fatima Al-Zahra'a Basic School for Girls	2.4	3.3	2.3	2.7	2.7	
<b>Final Average</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>2.96</b>

In addition, low performing schools' quantitative results can be summarized in the following table:

Table No.4: lowest five performing schools						
School's Name	Domains					Overall Average
	School environment	Leadership	Teachers	Students	Local community	
Al-Hasa Secondary School for Boys	1.1	1.5	1.2	1	1	
Tela'a Al-Ali Secondary School for Girls	1.3	1.8	1.3	1.8	3.3	
Khalda Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls	2.5	2.6	2	2.1	2	
Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Secondary School for Boys	2.1	2.2	1.6	1.5	2	
Al-Saeediya Basic School for Boys	1.2	2.1	1.2	1.4	1.7	
<b>Final average</b>	<b>1.64</b>	<b>2.04</b>	<b>1.46</b>	<b>1.56</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.74</b>

Finally, according to the quantitative results, the majority of schools which were the highest in performance scored better averages in (school environment, school leadership, teachers, students and local community) in comparison with schools which were the lowest in performance. The highest performing schools scored averages ranging from 2.78 to 3.48 and their general average was 2.96 whereas the lowest performing schools in the five domains scored averages ranging from 1.46 to 2.04 and their general average was 1.74.

### Qualitative Results

The results of the study shed a light on the underlying reasons in which the schools were classified among the high performing schools or the low performing schools. The study concluded that there is evidence that the following factors are the most significant factors that influence school's performance: the role of school leadership,

the number of participants active in the In-service programs, the role of local community, school facility infrastructure, teacher motivation, higher education diploma ICT in Education participants. According to the school rubric and the observation tool, it was obvious from the results that female schools outperformed male schools as the top five schools were female schools while three out of five of the low performing schools were boys' schools.

Two schools from the same geographical region had common influencing variables, but the female school (Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls) outperformed the male school (Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Secondary School for Boys). The first one ranked in the top five schools whereas the latter ranked in the lowest five schools. This result could go back to factors such as school leadership, teachers, students in which the female school surpassed clearly the male school (kindly refer to annexes 3 and 4 for more details on the school profiles). Since local community and geographical region are common to both schools these are omitted as influencing factors in explaining the performance discrepancy.

When studying the results of the top performing schools we find that the schools share all or most of the factors listed in details below. Quantitative scores for schools' performance are available in annex 5 which shows detailed marks scored by each school:

1. Having a transformational leadership with a clear vision positively impacts the school culture as a whole and leads to the improvement in school's performance. A school principal should foster the development of the school staff and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture. In addition to continuously monitoring and supervising the staff and adopting a decentralized leadership approach that empowers teachers to have sense of responsibility and accountability.

Examples:

- Fatima Al-Zahra'a Basic School for Girls: the principal supports teachers and motivates them to participate in training courses and programs.
  - Al-Iskan Secondary School for Girls: The principal has continuous school walks, monitors closely the educational process and provides timely and continuous feedback.
  - Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls: The school principal involves many teachers in decision-taking and monitoring work and projects.
2. Teachers' true belief in the importance of development and change in the teaching and learning process and the sense of ownership toward the school and the development process positively influences the school development.

Examples:

- Al-Iskan Secondary School for Girls: three teachers (Arabic, history, and computer) gave a collective lesson about the armed forces to grade four in the Arabic language integrating different subjects together. In addition, school teachers donated to renovate the school principal's office saying that "her office is the school's frontage".
  - Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls: a group of teachers gave an integrated (science, geography, vocational, computer) to grades eight, nine and ten (some teachers participate in the In-service program), but the participants in the program supported their colleagues and involved them in the development process.
  - Umm Al-Jimal Secondary School: the math teacher gave a lesson in which she integrated ICT with modern pedagogy in the math subject and invited the supervision section and all math teachers in the neighboring schools to attend the lesson. In addition, the resource room teacher uses ICT in her classroom.
  - Zubaidah Bint Al-Hareth School: After the In-service program, the school teachers and employees activated the use of e-mail to communicate with each other and with the students.
  - Fatima Al-Zahra'a Basic School for Girls: school teachers emphasized that their desire for change and development was for the benefit of students who are their daughters or their nieces. Therefore, they exert their utmost effort to improve the teaching learning process.
3. Schools performed better when the principal participated in the In-service program and through all 3 phases. The principal helps to disseminate the shared vision among all school staff and supports teachers to develop the teaching and learning process at school and plans for school projects.

Examples:

- Al-Iskan Secondary School for Girls: the principal works to establish communities of practice among teachers from various specializations where they can sit together and plan to work on projects that would lead to school's improvement.
  - Umm Al-Jimal Secondary School for Girls: school teachers are still working on the projects which they began during the program. In addition, they work on new projects. The principal says that she urges her teachers to work on these projects and forces them to work on at least two new projects every year because this will bring about great benefit to the school community as a whole.
4. The number of participating teachers actively engaged in the In-service program has a positive impact on school. When the number of trainees increases, then the impact of training on school increases.

Example:

- Zubaidah Bint Al-Hareth Secondary School for Girls: the number of trainees was 20 out of 48 i.e. about half of the teachers. This led all teachers to apply modern teaching methods in their classrooms and activate the role of technology. Besides, the trainee teachers influenced the other teachers who did not join the course to learn modern strategies and communicate the impact of training to them through exchanging class visits.
5. The impact of those who were awarded a HED ICT in Education scholarship in supporting their schools and communicating the training impact to their colleagues through carrying out workshops and supporting their colleagues (especially new teachers) in their classrooms and motivating them toward change and innovation.

Examples:

- Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls: the computer teacher coaches her colleagues in planning for lessons that integrate ICT and using various software.
  - Zubaidah Bint Al-Hareth Secondary School for Girls: the English teacher ensures the sustainability of the projects that have been carried out during the In-service training program "Towards a New School" and initiates new projects. For instance, she enrolled her school in the ThinkQuest<sup>3</sup> competition and connected her school with other schools around the world.
6. Parents' academic level and profession (teachers, university professors, doctors, engineers...etc) plays an evident role in the level of their sons and daughters' achievement because they believe in the importance of constructive interaction with school and they are aware of the importance of learning and teaching. Therefore, they support school and students.

Example:

- Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls: The school's local community is comprised of professionals with high level of education. The principal clarifies that parents come to school continuously to inquire about their daughters and they help them at home with their school assignments.

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<sup>3</sup> ThinkQuest is an online learning platform that helps students develop important 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, including communication, critical thinking, and technology skills.

7. Having a strong partnership, continuous and effective collaboration between the school and the local community are key factors that lead to school development and self-sufficiency.

Examples:

- Fatima Al-Zahra'a Basic School for Girls: there was cooperation with the civil defense as some people from the civil defense gave awareness lectures to students on first aid procedures. In addition, through the principal's networks she was able to invite the youth organization "We are all Jordan" to paint school as part of their volunteer work.
- Al-Iskan Secondary School for Girls: school administration, teaching staff, students, parents and local community participate effectively and work as one family to shoulder their responsibilities and carry out their duties in an atmosphere of involvement and support. This can be seen during school events where the local community donate the resources needed for the event such as chairs, podium, sound system...etc., while parents collaborate with teachers and students to prepare for the events.
- Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls: one of the banks provided support to the school by equipping the school theater with all necessary equipment. A parent who is an agricultural engineer volunteers and did the landscaping for the school garden.

Also, it has been noticed that the lowest five schools in performance shared all or some of the following points:

1. The school leadership is not cooperative and does not hold positive attitudes toward school and teachers. Furthermore, it adopts the principle of individualism and centralization in decision-taking. Roles are not distributed, authorities are not delegated and there is no continuous monitoring of plans. Besides, the school is in bad need for planning and organization for development and performance enhancement.

Examples:

- Tela'a Al-Ali Secondary School for Girl: the school principal does not know the number of students in school even the number of teachers. She was witnessed delegates problem-solving and critical considerations to other staff, such as the librarian or one of the assistants. An example of her incapability to plan properly was that she sent one of grade eight teachers to a kindergarten course.
- Al-Saeediya Secondary School for Boys: the school leadership lacks the ability to adopt strategic planning at school. School staff is not divided into teams and do not have specific roles.

2. Failure of the principal to join the In-service program. Failure in understanding its objectives and importance results in a principal that does not support teachers at school and/or monitor their work on projects and evaluate them in a way that is promoting the use or application of the newly acquired practices.

Examples:

- Khalda Secondary School for Girls: the principal of the school did not participate in the training course. Therefore, she did not support teachers and monitor their affairs or even encourage them to join and attend the course. Her absence from the course had a major negative impact on teachers' willingness to join the course.

3. The school's performance is negatively impacted by teachers' attitude. For example teachers who have negative attitude towards the teaching profession and lack the motivation to put effort, or those who are on the verge of retirement usually are unwilling to change their methods and do not contribute effectively towards the teaching and learning process.

Examples:

- Tela'a Al-Ali Secondary School for Girls: teachers clearly stated that they work for the salary only, and are not willing to work in teams since it is time consuming and needs extra effort. There was nothing to indicate that they used teaching aids besides their books in the classroom.
- Al-Hasa Secondary School for Boys: the majority of teachers come from outside the governorate, and they took up teaching as a profession for the purpose of employment and they think of being transferred to other places because they have no sense of belonging toward the school or have no sense of pride toward the profession either.

4. Many trainees who participated in the program were transferred to other schools or number of participants was very low. This led to deficiency in the structure of school teams which were formed during the program. In addition, teachers face resistance and find lack of support from those who didn't participate or quit the program.

Examples:

- Tela'a Al-Ali Secondary School for Girls: only three teachers out of 37 participated in the In-service program, therefore their impact on the overall school environment is very minimal.

- Khalda Secondary School for Girls: When the principal did not complete all program stages, this made the teachers lose confidence in the program thus quitting the program from the very beginning.
5. The school infrastructure is unsuitable and/or deteriorating. Science and computer labs, even classrooms were unsuitable and did not constitute an attractive environment to the student or the teacher and there was no periodic and regular maintenance for it. In addition, toilets were not healthy or clean and they did not have water in them.

Examples:

- Al-Saeediya Secondary School for Boys: the school suffers from a lack of the maintenance. Classrooms were in bad need for lighting. Additionally, toilets lacked the minimal level of readiness as they were unhealthy and unsuitable for students, resulting in students urinating behind the toilet block.
  - Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Basic School for Boys: classrooms were small and overcrowded. Students could not move conveniently and classroom set-up could not be arranged appropriate for cooperative learning. Classroom doors were broken where it impacted students' attention.
6. Students' lacked motivation toward education. In addition, they behaved in an irresponsible way toward school structure.

Examples:

- Tela'a Al-Ali Secondary School for Girls: walls were painted in March 2012, but when the evaluator visited the school in May of the same year, the interior walls in the school and the classrooms were dirty and full of scribbles and drawings here and there. School windows had drawings on them as a sign of vandalism.
  - Al-Hasa Secondary School for Boys: students were spreading haphazardly during class times, some students were inside classrooms while others were in the yards and others were wandering in school corridors. Students used to come late and most of them had no books or school tools. In addition, school teachers were afraid for school keeping because students had inclination toward vandalism and aggressiveness. Therefore, teachers used to lock labs, library and computer doors because they were afraid of vandalism by students who carried white weapons (sticks, blades ...etc.).
7. Parents and local community do not participate in school life and do not inquire about their sons and daughters and their level of school achievement. Furthermore, there are poor communication channels between parents and the school where sometimes they direct their sons and daughters to disobey the



teacher under the justification that his/her task is limited to teaching and he/she has nothing to do with other elements.

Examples:

- Khalda Secondary School for Girls: Parents at the school occasionally go to parents meetings, either because they are too busy or because mothers wake up at 1:00 p.m. as the principal stated. In one incident, a student came late at the end of the first period because her mother did not get up early. Therefore, she did not wake her up on time. When the teacher wanted to reproach her and asked the mother for her late arrival, the mother came to the school and accused the teacher of dealing with her daughter without any respect and she said that she would submit a complaint to the directorate against the teacher.
- Dhahiyat Al-Hussein Basic School for Boys: a parent entered into quarrel and cursing with some teachers at school because he brought his son late for school. When the teacher asked the student to stand aside because of his late arrival, the parent started shouting at and cursing the teacher until the director of Irbid 1st Field Directorate as well as Irbid Governor intervened to solve the problem.

8. Parents from an uneducated background negatively impact their children's vision and motivation toward education.

Examples:

- Al-Saeediya Secondary School for Boys: Parents come from an uneducated background with low level of income. They say that the reason for sending their children to school is to obtain a seat at the university or to complete the basic stage then they would join the army or any government organization. They also think that early marriage is important and if their children pursue undergraduate studies they will marry late.
- Al-Hasa secondary School for Boys: Parents in the school are mostly Bedouins and believe that their children will carry on the Bedouin traditions in terms of herding the cattle. The principal states that the parents told him that they would like him to keep their children at their school so that they would stay out of trouble.

9. Racism, prejudice and classism among school communities aim at creating differences among teachers and they do not help them work as one team, and they have negative effects on students.

Examples:

- Khalda Secondary School for Girls: racism is prevalent at school such as bias toward place of nationality (Jordanian, Syrian, Palestinian), and toward the geographical origin such as the North, the South and the Middle, and the

economic status of the student and their family. This led to continuous disagreement and haphazard work which had negative effects on the educational process at school, where teachers sometimes refuse to collaborate with their colleagues on the basis that they are not from the same city or origin.

- Al-Saeediya Secondary School for Boys: There are groups and communities that work to the contrary of students and school's benefit and the principal is unable to contain that. For example, if the principal doesn't give the teachers what they want, such as let them leave whenever they please or give them days off...etc. teachers get together to force the principal to transfer to a different school.

#### 10. Absence of incentives that motivate teachers to change and develop.

Example:

- Al-Hasa Secondary School for Boys: teachers do not believe in the importance of planning for change or using modern teaching methods in classroom because their salaries are low and their circumstances are not good i.e., they work in a school that is similar to "a reformatory" as said by them, and they do not feel safe there.

In conclusion, all or most of the following factors result in impacting schools performance whether positively or negatively. The factors can be summarized as:

1. School leadership and its role in the school.
2. School's connection with local community and local community's participation in school activities.
3. Teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession and the process of change and development.
4. Parents' academic level and their perception of the teaching learning process.
5. School infrastructure especially safety, health and attractiveness.
6. The number of participants in In-service training program which is part of ERSP.
7. The role of teachers who were awarded higher education diploma "ICT in Education".

### **Recommendations**

To build on the results of the top performing schools and to work for improvement and development in the lowest schools in performance, we recommend two sets of recommendations one on the strategic level and one on the ERSP implementation level, following are the recommendations:

#### A. Strategic Recommendations for Ministry of Education:

1. Endorsing the principals' standards framework as a national document and educating principals on these standards, the competences and indicators and linking principal's professional and career development to those standards. This will lead to an increased commitment and sense of achievement.
2. Considering the "Principals' Standards" as the main criteria when appointing principals in schools; i.e.: ensuring that the principals' minimum competences meet the national standards, to ensure that appointed principals have education leadership competences needed to lead the school.
3. Making school improvement plans that focus on staff professional development an essential part of the principal's duties and linking the plans to the supervisors' follow up activities in the schools' implementation and outcomes.
4. Giving weight to the "Teacher's Standards" when promoting teachers and ensuring that professional development programs and plans are linked to teacher ranks and career path.
5. Devising a policy that retains trained teachers and/or principals in the schools for a minimum of three to five years to get maximum benefit from their training.
6. Providing minimum infrastructure requirements in terms of facilities; lighting, bathrooms, operating computer labs, equipped science labs...etc. and ensuring the infrastructure is safe and doesn't have any bearing on students' safety.
7. Ensuring that civics education cover issues related to citizenship, ownership, leadership skills among other things. This will develop students' sense of ownership towards their schools and increases the communication level between the students and the staff where thus improving the overall school environment and infrastructure.
8. Motivating teachers through communicating and activating the incentive scheme that is connected with teachers' professional development and career path.
9. Increasing the number of participants in higher education diploma programs that focus on integrating ICT in education and benefiting from them at schools to communicate what they have learned to their schools, in addition to providing a suitable environment that will assist them to communicate learning impact to their colleagues.

#### B. ERSP Implementation Recommendations:

1. Paying special attention to the principal's competences in the selected schools for the In-service programs; for instance if the principal lacks leadership skills special attention will be given to the principal with customized interventions to ensure that the principal will support the school and its teachers with the In-service activities.

2. Providing customized solutions to schools and paying extra attention to low-performing schools.
3. Providing more onsite support interventions, coaching and providing model lessons for teachers in schools to support teachers in transforming knowledge into practice.
4. Involving the largest possible number of principals and teachers in the In-service professional development programs, because this would have a significant impact on the school and its staff's attitude toward change and development. Broader participation allows for stronger communities of practice that reflect on the improvement of the teaching and learning at school.
5. Increasing the focus of training programs on changing teachers and students' attitudes and enhancing their sense of ownership toward the school and the teaching and learning process.
6. Selecting schools that have bigger mass of willing staff to join the program which will lead to better results on teachers and students.
7. Directing schools towards building sustainable relationships with the local community and stressing the importance of the level of engagement and the impact it reflects on the school's development and environment.