

The Report on the Survey in Jordan
Of Children's Literature and the Promotion of
Reading among Children

Information and Research Centre at
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Introduction

The survey gives a presentation of the status of children's literature and encouraging reading in Jordan through the following axes:

- First : Policies
- Second : Libraries in Schools and Kindergartens
- Third : Universities
- Fourth : Public and Private Libraries
- Fifth : Civil Institutions Active in the Field of Children's Literature
- Sixth : International and Local Exhibitions and Prizes
- Seventh : Information
- Eighth : Trends in Respect of Children's Literature
- Ninth : Problems and Proposals for Developing Children's Literature
- Tenth : Available Documents

First: Policies

The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and Cultural Activities within the Greater Amman Municipality and in the municipalities of Jordan's governorates among the most important official bodies involved in the preparation of policies, departments, and various cultural activities concerned with children's literature and encouraging reading.

As to other official bodies such as the Higher Council for Information, the Higher Council for Youth and the Ministry of Social Development, it has become evident that they have no policies and programs concerned with the question of children's literature and encouraging reading.

The following is a presentation of policies and programs of official bodies starting with the Ministry of Education followed by the Ministry of Culture. After that comes a presentation of the National Jordanian Plan for Childhood for the years 2004-2013, issued by the National Council for Family Affairs, followed by the Greater Amman Municipality and the municipalities of some governorates in Jordan.

- 1- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education:-**
- A Glimpse on Schools in Jordan**

Obligatory education in Jordan is for the basic education from the first grade to the tenth. Four authorities supervise schools: the Ministry of Education over government schools, the private sector over private schools, UNRWA* over their schools and a small number of schools under the supervision of other governments.

The private sector is still generally the main supervisor of kindergartens. The two following schedules indicate the distribution of schools and sections according to the supervising authority, stage and gender. This includes kindergartens of which there are no more than two independent ones supervised by the Ministry whereas it has become clear to us that the number of kindergarten sections supervised by the Ministry of Education are 306 compared to 4140 supervised by the private sector.

| The Distribution of Sections According to the Supervisory Authority, Stage and Gender, 2005/2006 | | | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Authority | | Total All Authorities | Ministry of Education | Other Governmental | UNRWA | Private Education |
| Stage | Gender | | | | | |
| Total All Stages | Total | 57033 | 38095 | 868 | 3357 | 14713 |
| | Female | 18767 | 15924 | 104 | 1593 | 1146 |
| | Co-Ed | 19547 | 7256 | 53 | 176 | 12062 |
| Kindergartens | Total | 4450 | 306 | 4 | 0 | 4140 |
| | Female | 19 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| | Co-Ed | 4428 | 290 | 4 | 0 | 4134 |
| Basic Education | Total | 44928 | 31581 | 366 | 3319 | 9662 |
| | Female | 15060 | 12611 | 41 | 1593 | 815 |
| | Co-Ed | 14913 | 6938 | 48 | 176 | 7751 |
| Secondary Education | Academic | Total | 5981 | 5030 | 66 | 885 |
| | | Female | 3069 | 2735 | 9 | 325 |
| | | Co-Ed | 204 | 28 | 1 | 175 |
| | Vocational | Total | 1674 | 1178 | 432 | 38 |
| | | Female | 619 | 565 | 54 | 0 |
| | | Co-Ed | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

* [UNRWA stands for the United Nations Relief and Work Agency – the Translator]

| The Distribution of Sections According to the Supervisory Authority, Stage and Gender, 2005/2006 | | | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Authority | | Total All Authorities | Ministry of Education | Other Governmental | UNRWA | Private Education |
| Stage | Gender | | | | | |
| Total All Stages | Total | 5498 | 3126 | 56 | 178 | 2138 |
| | Female | 862 | 755 | 12 | 79 | 16 |
| | Co-Ed | 3345 | 1263 | 10 | 13 | 2059 |
| Kindergartens | Total | 1222 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1220 |
| | Female | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Co-Ed | 1221 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1219 |
| Basic Education | Total | 2986 | 2059 | 6 | 177 | 744 |
| | Female | 435 | 350 | 2 | 79 | 4 |
| | Co-Ed | 1818 | 1081 | 3 | 13 | 721 |
| Secondary Education | Academic | Total | 1216 | 1025 | 22 | 169 |
| | | Female | 405 | 393 | 1 | 11 |
| | | Co-Ed | 299 | 179 | 2 | 118 |
| | Vocational | Total | 74 | 40 | 28 | 5 |
| | | Female | 21 | 12 | 9 | 0 |
| | | Co-Ed | 7 | 1 | 5 | 0 |



The most important of the Ministry of Education's **policies** concentrated on the encouragement of reading, care for children's literature and the prerequisite that schools with over 250 students must have a school library. If the number of students were less than that, the existence of a school library would not be obligatory, nor are kindergartens obliged to have one. The Ministry of Education pointed out that more than 70% of its schools have a library. The most common reason for the absence of a library in all schools supervised by the Ministry is the lack of space in rented premises.

The Ministry has specific criteria for libraries defining their services and activities, the area, furniture and budget of the library, the basis for choosing library material, the basis for choosing books and educational material, the school library's contents and the percentage of the various subjects, the staff cadre in school libraries in respect of administrative and technical work and library services.

As to **projects and programs** supervised by the Ministry of Education in the course of care for children's literature and encouraging reading, the Ministry mentioned projects directly related to this subject and others with an indirect connection, namely the following:-

- 1- The project for "My Arabic Library";
- 2- The development of knowledge centers, with concentration on the middle category, for providing appropriate educational material. This project will be applied in nine schools on a trial basis;
- 3- The project for the English language for ages (6-9) and (10-16);
- 4- The "Letter land" project¹;
- 5- The Kid Smart software²;
- 6- The interactive national program;
- 7- The project for protection from abuse;
- 8- Computerization of kindergarten programs;
- 9- Contests at the level of Directorates, including a reading contest;

¹ In an interview with the head of the Training Department at the Ministry of Education, it became apparent that this project is still in the first stages of implementation in Governmental schools under the control of the Ministry of Education. This is an international program based on the concept of teaching children letters, reading and writing them and then applying these letters in words and sentences. It has been circulated by way of tapes and CDs but it was not possible to obtain any of them.

² The Kid Smart program is considered one of the projects implemented by Ministry of Education for use of the computer in teaching how to read. It consists of personal computers designed especially for early learning by IBM in cooperation with Little Tikes Company for children's equipment. The units had been designed to enable two children or more to work together. River Deep Company is considered the party responsible for this program in remote areas by providing all children with equal opportunities to acquire modern technology regardless of differences in culture and social condition in compliance with an agreement concluded with the Ministry of Education (4-8 years). Accordingly, IBM has presented 216 computers in four stages during the years 2003/2007. Two of these PCs, intended for training, have the Kid Smart software in respect of the following subjects: - mathematics, sciences, social subjects, music and other various activities. As to the distribution of these sets, 34 schools benefited from the project and 214 sets were distributed to kindergartens supervised by them. 300 female teachers have been trained in this program.

The unit consists of assembling plastic units to make a box within which the PC is placed to show only the display screen, key-board and the mouse made especially for children. The unit also includes a seat that enables two children or more to work [together]. The unit takes the height of the children into consideration.

- In an interview with the coordinator of programs at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, it was learned that work along this program had started in 2004 and is still continuing. For the purpose of evaluation, a special questionnaire has been designed to ascertain the results achieved by this program. The evaluation covers the objectives of the project, its context and ease of access and utilization. This evaluation questionnaire has been distributed to the teachers who had been trained on this program and the results are presently in the process of extraction and compilation;

- Ten kindergarten supervisors had been trained in addition to the male and female teachers of the first, second and third grades;

- The program supervisor and a colleague of hers went to Dubai for two day training by IBM to become acquainted with the mechanism of operating this program. Then each of the coordinator and her colleague trained the other teachers and the kindergarten supervisors in the implementation of this program.

10- Within the Ministry's Web site, an electronic magazine that encourages reading.

The most specialized projects in the field of children's literature and encouraging reading have been defined as:

“**My Arabic Library**” project³. Implementation of this project started in 2005 in cooperation with the American Middle East Partnership and it is now in its final stages. It aims at:-

- To supply the classrooms of government schools, from Grades 1-6, with Arabic books translated from English;
- To sow the seeds of the reading hobby among young children within the targeted stage and encourage this trend among students in the Kingdom;
- The slogan of the library is, “Let Us Read and Play Together”.

The program “My Arabic Library” is presented in participation between the Ministry of Education and the Scholastic Corporation, the largest publisher and distributor of children's books in the world. This project was implemented in each of Jordan, Lebanon and Bahrain.

The books that were translated included a collection of stories, literary books, fictitious and of universal variety, and books about the culture of nations and peoples. They amounted to around 230 titles, each class to receive five copies each of 40 titles in a small class cupboard, in addition to a teacher's manual and supplementary brochures. These books are available to the students.

A number of teachers were trained to make the benefit from these books available to all. Parents also were made aware of these benefits in order to help their children. There is a system for lending books and exchanging

³ Implementation of this project started in 2005 in cooperation with an international American publishing firm, Scholastic Corporation, which undertook to supply Jordan with a collection of booklets suitable for grades 1-6 of basic education. The concept is based on the availability within each classroom of a library containing 40 books so that each book has five titles, i.e. 200 titles. Three million of these books have been distributed to all government schools in all parts of the Kingdom. 7,000 teachers and school principals have been trained over one day only for the activation of this project. The project is presently in its final stages when follow-up is undertaken with schools in respect of activating these libraries and encouraging students to read and benefit from these books and also directing them towards referring to this library as a source of education during their studies. 1,300 boxes have been distributed to schools under the slogan “Let Us Read and Play Together”. 2,600 teachers from both sexes have been trained as well as 24 education supervisors from the various Directorates of the Ministry of Education. We also have the Sesame Tales, a pioneering story collection still underway in cooperation with Mu'assasat al-rā'idūn al-‘Arab (The Arab Pioneers' Institute), directed towards kindergarten children to encourage reading.

knowledge. Almost all government schools in the various parts of the Kingdom were included.

The Ministry had chosen these books prior to their translation and perused them after translation, rectifying errors resulting from that process and from printing. They were also checked in respect of compliance with the philosophy of education and teaching in Jordan. Finally, they were approved by those concerned at the Ministry and the Higher Council for Education and Higher Education.

This library was considered an important part of the sources of education that enrich school books and support them within the wider concept of the curriculum. Instructions were given to allocate additional time for reading. It is expected that benefits would reflect on the following aspects:-

1. Linguistic;
2. That of knowledge;
3. That of imagination;
4. Love for reading.

A shortcoming in respect of this project is that, until this minute, there is no feedback on or evaluation of its applications at schools. Furthermore, the other parties concerned with children's literature have no idea about this project.

2- The Ministry of Culture:-

The plan for cultural development in Jordan for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 clarified the policies and programs that are bound to activate interest in child culture. Among the most important things mentioned in respect of this matter was the policy for publishing and infrastructure projects. In addition to the plan for cultural development, there is in the Ministry of Culture a directorate allocated for child culture. The following is a presentation of the programs and projects which the Ministry of Culture is working on at present:

1- To Support the Writer of Children's Literature:-

The Ministry of Culture either publishes directly for an author or gives him total or partial support. The amount of support rendered by the Ministry to an author can reach 1,500 dinars. Another side to this support is purchasing an author's production. In respect of books of children's literature, purchasing can involve twice the number of an ordinary book. If the ceiling

for the latter is 50 copies, then the purchase ceiling for a book of children's literature would be 100 copies.

2- The Chain of Children's Books:-

The publications of the Ministry of Culture include a chain of books for children. Twenty of these have been issued in a variety of stories and poetry. Of each title, one thousand copies are printed and distributed through a major distribution firm that delivers them within the Kingdom's governorates to be presented to institutions concerned with the child. They are also displayed in the local and international exhibitions in which Jordan participates.

3- *Wisām* Magazine:-

This is a monthly illustrated cultural magazine for children and youths. It is running in its ninth year and edition No. 191.

4-The Project for a Mobile Children's Library:-

The Project for a Mobile Children's Library (A Book for Every Child) is implemented by the Ministry of Culture in cooperation with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, the Haya Cultural Center and the Abdul-Hameed Shoman Foundation. The implementation of this project falls within the framework of the larger project at the Ministry, (the Library of the Jordanian Family) with its twofold parts, the Reading for All Festival was launched last November [2007] and the Mobile Children's Library which was launched in June, 2007 as one of the projects of the Plan for the Cultural Development of Jordan for the years 2006-2008. The project aims at creating the reading habit among the members of Jordanian families, starting with the home, and developing it. It also aims at providing ex-curriculum books.

The project will work towards delivering children's ex-curriculum magazines and books to remote areas of the Kingdom by caravans designed especially for this purpose as the children of those areas suffer an inability to obtain such magazines and books.

The Mobile Library has between five and ten thousand titles in various fields directed towards the age group 4-16 years. In addition, it participates in spreading awareness by holding workshops for creative writing, offering lectures to create awareness among people, showing family films, holding

reading sessions for various age groups, following up on the program called “Friends of the Book”, offering cultural and educational contests in addition to theatrical shows and applying a membership system for children to enable them to borrow books. Among the future expectations for the Mobile Library are the conclusions of contracts with local and Arab bodies and institutions, offering mobile library buses, linking the project to an audio/visual/reading program and the launching of an electronic web site.

5- The Project for the Family’s Library:-

The Ministry is in the course of establishing the Family’s and Child’s Library which has been privileged with Queen Rania’s patronage. The Library was launched in October 2007, within the framework of the project of the Plan for cultural Development for the next three years. The Family’s Library will provide a cheap print of a number of books annually to enable the Jordanian family to build its home library and develop its culture in various fields. It will help to deliver the cultural discourse to it through the book which will cover fields such as health, the woman, nourishment, the child, adolescence, bringing up children, sports, arts, enlightened religious books, ethics and various skills in addition to the importance of promoting Jordanian books. These books will be printed to high specifications in large quantities and will be sold at the promotional price of half a dinar for adults’ books and a quarter dinar for minors’ books. They will be distributed in all governorates with a view to spread cultural libraries. It is hoped that this project will generate a qualitative transformation and a change in the citizen’s view of the book due to the continuity of this project which will start its first stage with 500 titles.

6- Children’s Festivals: - The Arab Jordanian Child’s Song Festival and the Festival of the Arab Child’s Theatre.

7- Holding Numerous Sessions Related to the Child: - teaching, music, drawing, story writing.

8- Competitions for Youth Creativity.

9- Establishing Cultural Centers for Children, particularly in the Governorates.

10- Cultural Organizations Allocated for the Child:-

There are eight cultural organizations falling under the Ministry of Culture carrying a word related to childhood in their names. It is not a prerequisite, however, that these organizations have a children's library or be concerned with encouraging reading. They are:

- The Cultural Society for Youth and Childhood;
- The Children's Club of al-Balqā';
- The Child's Cultural Club in Zarqa;
- The Children's Club of Ma'ān;
- The Children's Club for Culture and Arts in Ma'ān;
- The Children's Club of al-Karak;
- The Children's Cultural Club of Madaba;
- The Jordanian Society for Children's Tumors.

3- The Jordanian National Plan for Childhood for the Years 2004-2013:-

Concern for the child and reading is discussed in the culture section of the Jordanian National Plan for Childhood for the Years 2004-2013. This National Plan had emerged from cooperation between the National Council for Family Affairs and the Ministry of Planning, international bodies, UNICEF and other parties concerned with childhood from both governmental and non-governmental sectors, academics and the private sector.

Of the procedures and activities included in the culture section of the Jordanian National Plan as concerning the child, reading and books, we mention:

- The determination of criteria for children's books as to production, ingredients, audio/visual aids, colours and various illustrations, the use of simplified Arabic, encouraging general commitment to the criteria for encouraging children to derive the aesthetics of the Arabic language and employ them in the various areas of their lives. It calls as well for consolidating children's adherence to their Arab Islamic identity which revolves around the Arabic language;
- Expansion in the establishment of libraries at schools, cultural centers and clubs, developing existing libraries, qualifying their staff and modernizing their methods of operation;
- Promoting the principle of "Reading for All" and "Reading for the Child in the Pre-School Stage".

However, there is nothing in the Jordanian National Plan for Childhood by way of direct procedures and activities addressing the subject of children's literature and the mechanics of taking interest in and developing it.

4- The Policies of the Greater Amman Municipality and the Other Municipalities:-

The Greater Amman Municipality and the other municipalities in Jordan are considered among the parties with the keenest concern for the establishment of public libraries and those specialized for children and supervising them. 39 libraries and information technology centers are under the supervision of the Amman Municipality including 12 libraries specialized for children in addition to sections allocated for children in each of the other libraries.

As to the policies of the Amman Municipality in regard to children's literature, the Cultural Department at the Greater Amman Municipality prepares and supervises the publication of a monthly magazine allocated for children under the name "The Buds of Amman". This magazine addresses children aged from one to six years. The editorial team comprises a number of specialists in literary and cultural fields relevant to children. The magazine faces a problem related to distribution.

Additionally, the Greater Amman Municipality can render support to a Jordanian writer by printing and publishing his works or buying a quantity of his books. However, the Greater Amman Municipality and the municipalities of Jordan face the problem of the lack in the clarity of outlook in respect of cultural work concerned with the child, particularly children's literature.

Second: School and Kindergarten Libraries

We have mentioned previously that the roles of the school and its library are among the important policies addressing children's literature and encouraging reading. The Ministry of Education has indicated that 70% of its schools have libraries. Studies have also pointed out that 44.6% of kindergartens in Jordan also have libraries⁴. To study the status of school and kindergarten libraries closely, a case study sample was taken of schools

⁴ Qandīl, Dīālā Yūsuf, *The Libraries of Kindergartens in Jordan*, the magazine *al-'arabiyya*, the Arab Club for Information.

and kindergartens involving becoming acquainted with their libraries in addition to drawing on the results of a previous study made exclusively about the libraries of kindergartens in Jordan.

A. The Most Important Results of a Case Study of Schools, Kindergartens and Their Libraries:-

The Arwa Bint al-Ĥārith School:-

This is a primary school for grades one to six with 310 girl students and no kindergarten. The school has a library containing 4,000 books and a library area of 4x4 [m.] with two tables and 30 chairs. The Directorate of Education is responsible for determining library budgets. The principal gives the budget to the library custodian who undertakes the process of choosing and purchasing books. The School holds book exhibitions and invites writers and those in charge of children's magazines. It also participates in contests at directorate level. The school has also indicated that there are library lessons within the course for the Arabic subject.

The library custodian is specialized in Arabic but has had qualifying courses in library work and her responsibility is solely as a library custodian. There is a system for lending books to girl students of Grade Three and above. The choice of books by students takes place through the library custodian who selects a number of books and presents them to the students in class. They then choose from that collection. This applies to all classes from Grade Three and above. The books most borrowed by students are fictitious stories and encyclopedias. As to Grades One and Two, the class tutor undertakes this function, usually reading the material to the students.

2. 'Ātika Primary School:-

This is a school for the stages from Grade One to Grade Three and has no kindergarten or a library in the form of a classroom. There are only two cupboards of books supervised by the teacher of Arabic but they are not put to use. As to the project, "My Arabic Library", which is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry supplied the School with a collection of books which the principal in turn distributed to the teachers asking them to read stories and activate them in the time available to each teacher.

3. Al-Nuzha Girls' School – UNRWA:-

This is a primary school for the stage from Grade One to Grade Ten. It has no kindergarten as in all UNRWA schools but there is a school library with a section specialized for ages 4-12; there also exists a system for lending books. Students are acquainted with the library and its contents during the hours of utilizing the library weekly or within borrowing time during recess. Students usually read during free hours or at home. The most preferred subjects are religious, those connected with the Arabic Language or scientific subjects and, sometimes, according to the reports students are asked to prepare.

The library budget is modest, \$ 210 for books and \$ 70 for children's stories. The library custodian undertakes the purchasing role by buying from distribution firms or from UNRWA's education office. Activities are in place to encourage reading such as the competition for the leading students at reading, the competition for the best report and the tracking by teachers of the notebooks on the fruits of reading.

The school holds no book exhibitions on the premises and there are no prizes in regard to children's literature. The library custodian is the teacher of Arabic and her library functions are to record books upon receipt, lending and classification, to supervise the cleanliness and orderly arrangement of the library, to open the library daily and undertake training regarding workshops on library work in addition to her teaching of Arabic.

4- The International Baccalaureate School and its Kindergarten:-

The Baccalaureate School is a private international school with a large budget. It gives aid and presents to government libraries. The School itself has three libraries, one for the kindergarten stage, one for the elementary stage and a third for the intermediate and secondary stages. There is a system for lending books even in the kindergarten stage. The School assigns library hours at the rate of one in the Arabic Language program and one in the English Language program. Students usually prefer to read fashionable fictitious stories in both Arabic and English but prefer English as it is more attractive to them.

The three libraries have excellent areas. That in the kindergarten section is twice the size of a classroom and is arranged in the form of a garden. The library in the elementary section has an area of 175 sq.m. The budget for the School libraries amounts to \$ 35,000 annually. The process of choosing books and supplementing the libraries with books, encyclopedias and stories

takes place in coordination between teachers and the officer in charge of the libraries.

As to programs for encouraging students to read, in addition to library hours and the system for lending books, there are book exhibitions, reading contests and the presents to students during Christmas vacations are usually books. There is as well what is called the "Month of the Book" when each class is requested to read a book. The student who has read most receives prizes. Students also make contributions for the purchase of books.

As to the qualifications of the library custodians, the lady in charge of the kindergarten library has Information Technology skills. Two custodians are in charge of the library in the elementary section; one is a graduate in English and the other in Information Technology. The library in the secondary section has four custodians with specializations in libraries and the English Language. Their tasks comprise looking after the library and supervising it. All librarians receive three months continuous training in library skills, noting that there is a special program at the Baccalaureate for the application of library skills. The library custodian gives this program to the students and helps them in the projects they need to achieve during their study.

5- The Orthodox School and the Wahba Tamārī Kindergarten:-

This is a private school which has two libraries, one for the stage from the 1st to the 6th Elementary and the other for the stage from the 7th upwards. The kindergarten (the Wahba Tamārī Kindergarten) which is part of the School has its own library.

The methods employed to encourage reading at the School include a library hour as part of the Arabic Language program. There is also a system for lending books to take home. A cup is allocated by the Elementary Section as a reading prize to students as well as annual prizes for students leading at reading and various competitions in poetry and story writing.

As to the language most preferred by students, as part of its plan the School concentrates on both languages and lends serious emphasis to Arabic, particularly in the first educational stages (from the 1st to the 6th).

The area of the library in the Elementary Section is 60 sq.m. but the library in the Secondary Section is much larger. At the end of each academic year, the School allocates a budget of \$ 2,850 for the Secondary Section library and \$ 2,100 for the library of the Elementary Section. The process of buying books for supply to the library is undertaken in coordination between the full day library custodian and those teachers charged to cooperate with her.

B. Libraries of Kindergartens in Jordan⁵:-

By reviewing the literature concerned with the libraries of kindergartens, we find a study by the researcher Diālā Qandīl prepared especially on this subject and based on a sample of 15 kindergartens whether as part of a school or independent. The most important findings of her study are:

- 1- Ownership of the Library: It was indicated that 66.7% of libraries are owned by private institutions. The remaining libraries belong to charitable societies;
- 2- The Library Community: The number of children at kindergartens is not large. This helps the library to offer better services. The number of teachers is not large which enables the library to offer services to the teachers or ask for their assistance. It is noticeable that kindergarten libraries do not cater for responding to teachers' needs with the exception of those libraries that serve all educational stages as they contain material that responds to the needs of a kindergarten teacher, thus according her equal treatment as that accorded to a teacher in the other stages;
- 3- The Library Building: It was indicated that 66.7% of libraries have their own independent library hall whereas in respect of the remaining 33.3% the library site is used jointly for other functions such as drama or administration. As for furniture, the libraries of kindergartens contain have "open fronts for books and tables, chairs for reading" in addition to a notice board, a lending office, television, video player, computer, recording apparatus, and projection apparatus. The last item is the one least common as only 40% of the libraries have one;
- 4- The Library Custodian: 60% of the custodians of kindergarten libraries are full timers. This is a good percentage and can be attributed to the fact that a number of kindergartens are part of schools that have higher educational stages. This would mean that the size of

⁵ Qandīl, Diālā Yūsuf, *The Libraries of Kindergartens in Jordan*, the magazine *al-'arabiyya*, the Arab Club for Information.

- the school requires a full time library custodian. As to qualification for library work, 13.3% are qualified as such. This is not a lower percentage than that of qualified staff in school libraries in Jordan. 33.3% of the number of kindergarten libraries have library trainees. This is a low percentage especially if we know that library training is available in Jordan where many institutions undertake it such as the Jordan Library Association, universities and the Ministry of Education;
- 5- Library Collections (the Contents): In kindergartens, Arabic books are in excess of English books. 33.3% of libraries have less than 250 Arabic books, 60% have less than 50 English books. These are meager collections even though the number of students may be small. The libraries where the number of books exceeds 3,000 represent 33.3% due to the existence of educational stages in addition to the kindergarten. 66.7% of kindergarten libraries do not subscribe to any children's magazine, possibly because children's periodicals do not give any importance to the pre-school stage and this does not encourage kindergartens to buy them. Kindergartens have other material such as illustrated posters and drawings, films (static and with motion), computer CDs, video films, audio cassettes and magnifiers. Of these items, the one present in the largest quantity in libraries is video films, a percentage of 68.7, and the least films of both types, static and with motion and computer CDs. It was indicated that 46.7% of libraries have no illustrated posters and 60% have no drawings although these items are very important for kindergartens and are readily available;
- 6- Library Services: Libraries offer a technical service in respect of classifying books as 60% of libraries do their own classification. Other library services include lending which 53.3% of libraries facilitate for children. However, the most common service is reading stories as 86.7% of libraries undertake this service. Further, 60% of them hold exhibitions. 46.7% of kindergarten libraries also undertake other activities, cultural, entertaining and social.

Third: Universities

Interviews with university instructors have indicated that a course for children's literature is taught at many Jordanian universities, governmental and private. These are the following: Jordan University, The Hashemite University, University of Petra and Tafila Technical University. Research

has covered two of these universities, namely the Hashemite University and Tafila Technical University.

1- The Hashemite University:-

Almost since 2001, there has been a course on children's literature designated within the curriculum for specialization in the Arabic Language but it was not offered for instruction until 2002 and was met with good attendance by students. Usually, the course on children's literature is offered within the Arabic Language Department of the Faculty of Arts as an elective (optional) when specializing in the Arabic Language. It is also considered optional for the students of other faculties. The course on children's literature is also given at the School of Education as a course very similar to that given at the Department of Arabic. Yet another course on children's literature has been recently introduced within the specialization in the care for early childhood.

The great attendance by students of the course on children's literature is due to a distinguishing feature of this course for it depends more on applied study than on theoretical study. In addition to the study of texts, there are field tours that the students make to writers and associations as well as activities and conferences concerned with children's literature. Attendance is by students pursuing different specializations not merely by those specializing in the Arabic Language.

Usually, the course on children's literature is addressed from all aspects. Concentration is not restricted to language but also covers motion, drawings, the size of the book, addresses.....all of which are related to the various age groups.

The Hashemite University is also distinguished from other universities by the presence in the university's library of a library allocated for children, provided with furniture and contents suitable for children.

2- Tafila Technical University:-

Almost since 2001, there has been a course on children's literature designated within the curriculum for specialization in the Arabic Language, in the curriculum for specialization in Children' Education as well as in the specialization in the English Language. Usually, the course on children's literature is offered within the Arabic Language Department of the Faculty

of Arts where it is an optional subject when specializing in the Arabic Language. The subject is offered once or twice during the academic year. There is substantial attendance of this course, especially by female students.

In respect of teaching children's literature, instruction in the subject is from an applied approach. A laboratory instructs about the puppet theatre, how script for the theatre is prepared and how songs are composed. The instructor's attention is concentrated on the belief that this subject will play a great role at schools where a child's personality is formulated and that it will have importance regarding his development during the stages of his age, especially in the first stage. Various subjects are also taught other than language. These include drawings, phraseology and colours, all as appropriate to the child's age group.

An instructor of Arabic at Tafila Technical University and Al-Balqa Applied University confirmed that the course on children's literature is an optional course which the student passes in order to join specialization in the Arabic Language, children's Education or to become a class teacher. The course is also offered as an optional subject in English for students who join the Department of English as a minor not as a major specialization. Attendance of this course is intensive and obvious especially by females in comparison with males. He also confirmed that Jordanian universities, especially government ones, lack specialization in children's literature as an independent specialization despite its prominence⁶.

Fourth: Public and Private Libraries

It is difficult to determine in detail the number of public libraries that are concerned with the child in Jordan due to the variety and dispersal of the parties supervising these libraries. In addition, due to the lack of documentation in this respect, ascertaining the extent of the existence of such libraries may require recourse to cultural centers, societies and the libraries themselves. However, it is possible to say that the most prominent libraries and the parties supervising them are:-

- 1- The libraries of the Greater Amman Municipality, 39 public libraries in number of which 12 specialize for children. Additionally, there is a section allocated for children in the remaining libraries. There are also

⁶ This information was attained during an interview with Dr. Rā'id Jarādāt at Tafila Technical University.

- the Library of the Zaha Cultural Center and the library of Queen Rania's Gardens;
- 2- The libraries of the municipalities in the governorates. Every municipality supervises one public library and another library for the youth in cooperation with the Abdul-Hameed Shoman Foundation;
 - 3- Some cultural centers and cultural authorities reporting to the Ministry of Culture may have libraries;
 - 4- Some youth centers reporting to the Higher Council for Youth may have libraries;
 - 5- Some societies registered with the Ministry of Social Development may have libraries (societies in Amman having libraries are around 17; they may have branches).

As to private libraries, the library of the Abdul-Hameed Shoman Foundation is considered one of the most important in Jordan. The survey has not shown if there are any other similar libraries. The Hakawāti Library can be added as a center for selling children's books.

The survey has taken samples for its case study from both private and public libraries in order to learn about them and study their experience. These libraries are:

1- The Library of the Abdul-Hameed Shoman Foundation:-

The Abdul-Hameed Shoman Foundation participates in the field of children's literature and encouraging reading as follows:

- The main Shoman Library in the capital, Amman, undertakes a number of library related activities at the level of the governorates concentrating its interest in children and youths. In 1998, a project for supporting youth libraries in the Kingdom's governorates was launched in accordance with a mutual cooperation agreement between the Foundation and the municipalities. The Foundation has lent support to the establishment of ten libraries in the towns of Irbid, Jarash, Tafila, Madaba, Mafraq, Karak, Aqaba, Salt/'Allān region, Zarqa and Ma'an. These libraries serve the categories of both children and youths in the main. The Foundation participates by the presentation of furniture for the library, shelves, tables, chairs, desks, computers and other equipment, also by presenting suitable acquisitions such as books, periodicals and other library items for the various subjects that are compatible with the interests of beneficiaries. The Library prepares an index of, classifies and lists all library items and ensures they are in working condition prior to delivering them to

- the library in question supported by the necessary indices. Further, it follows up periodically on the development of the services and acquisitions of these libraries and helps to develop the efficiency of and qualify the staff of these libraries. Support by the Shoman Library to the libraries in the governorates is within an annual budget allocated for them;
- In respect of the children's section or the children's library which was inaugurated in 1986 but later closed in 2000 on the basis that the Amman Municipality was able to undertake that role by inaugurating numerous libraries allocated for the child or sections for children within public libraries;
 - The Project for the Mobile Library: The project for a children's mobile library (A Book for Every Child) which is implemented by the Ministry of Culture with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, the Haya Cultural Center and the Abdul-Hamed Shoman Foundation;
 - The Abdul-Hameed Shoman prize for children's literature was launched in 2006.

2- The Library of the Jebel Hussein Cultural Center – the Friends of Children Society:

There is a public library for children in the Jebel Hussein Cultural Center in the Hussein camp for Palestinian refugees. The manager of the Center is the lady in charge of the library and had attended training courses and was exposed to experience in the field of childhood and the methods of teaching. She exercises direct supervision of the library and her tasks include encouraging visitors in regard to ex-curriculum reading and to choose books and stories for them.

Visitors of the library are mainly children from 11 to 14 years. They are students who come to the library to finish their school tasks and the percentage of girls is the higher among them. The library contains varied books, stories and illustrated encyclopedias. Its area is small but it has tables and seats for reading. A system for lending books is in place and there are various activities to encourage reading. The most important of these is the national campaign for encouraging reading – the passport for reading comprising seven stages, "The Train of Knowledge". There are also summer clubs, story readings and theatrical shows.

3- The Library of the Haya Cultural Center:

The Haya Cultural Center is considered a cultural and entertainment center for children. It is concerned with the culture of the child and has a library with an area considered as medium but it makes it possible for the child to read in it. Its book content suits ages 6-13 and the library depends in that respect on contributions from various parties.

The Center's Library holds many cultural activities that are considered in turn as encouraging of reading and interest in children's literature. In addition to the system of lending to children for reading at home, there are reading contests, contests related to the bulletin board and the activity of narrating stories.

The Library custodian is not specialized in libraries but has obtained training while working in the Library of the Haya Cultural Center.

4- The Ĥakawātī Library:

This is a library for the sale of children's books for the age group 0-15 years. There are available in it various collections of Arabic, English and French books. In addition to being a center for the sale of books, it holds on its premises cultural and artistic activities for children; there is a weekly activity for reading a story by authors and artists in addition to learning calligraphy, drawing in its various forms and some types of handcrafts.

In an interview with the manager of the library, she stated that children's interest is in French, English and Arabic in that order. On the other hand, it is the parents who show great interest in the Arabic Language. They are the party responsible for purchasing and for visits to the Library. They are satisfied with the standard of the local book in Arabic and are keen purchasers of it. The cost of Jordanian books between J.D. 2-3.5 is considered reasonable. Jordanian authors endeavour to produce their books in good form but that does not match foreign standards.

The Ĥakawātī Library participates in school exhibitions and in the book exhibition held by the Amman Municipality which has a section for children. School exhibitions are much better as the Municipality exhibition does not normally meet with success. The choice of imported books is subject to consideration before it is ordered so that it can be acceptable culturally and entertaining when narrated.

5- The Sweilih Public Library:-

The Sweilih Public Library is considered as having comprehensive sections. Administratively, it is subject to the Greater Amman Municipality – the Department of Public Libraries which supervises and allocates a budget for it and provides it with the necessary books. The Library serves Sweilih and neighbouring areas and has a special section for children within the age group 3-14 years. The area of the children's section is medium but furnished with chairs, tables and shelves suitable for their ages. The system for lending books applies from the age of 5 years. Activating and encouraging reading and interaction with the local community are carried out by field visits to students and by visits of kindergarten children to the Library. Drawing competitions take place in the Library's halls and there are reading prizes, especially during the month of Holy Ramadan. The children's section is supervised by a lady employee who had received courses in library skills.

Fifth: Civil Institutions Active in the Field of Children's Literature

There is a scarce existence in Jordan of civil institutions active in the fields of children's literature and encouraging reading. This is despite the fact that there are numerous civil societies active in Jordan, particularly those registered with the Ministry of Social Development. There are more than 800 societies working in various fields of development. Of particularity, in the capital, Amman, there are 100 societies for children. Despite all this, we find no cultural activity addressing children's literature in the first place and encouraging reading in the second place, albeit some of these societies have a library. The study has tried to restrict its search to those in Amman only through reviewing the aims of civil societies working in Jordan in general and in Amman by way of samples.

As there are no societies in Jordan with aims specifically targeting children's literature, a sample of three societies only was taken as case studies for civil societies. These are the Friends of Children Society, the Association of Arab Libraries and the Haya Cultural Center for the Care of Childhood. An attachment was also prepared listing societies that have the establishment of a library within their targets without specifying if

such a library is in actual existence or whether it is public with a section for children or allocated totally for children. This listing is based on the guide to societies registered with the Ministry of Social Development and only for the capital, Amman.

1- The Friends of Children Society:-

A General View:

The Friends of Children Society was established in 1965 under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Development. The idea was initiated by a group of Arab and foreign ladies, American and English, in addition to some notable Arabs, both, men and women (who had attained high social standing through their social work or by virtue of their status in a Government institution). Elections resulted in an all-Arab Board of Administration. In its beginnings, the Society used to work in a number of childhood fields, social and related to health. Then it crystallized to become cultural, i.e. cultural centers. Its main office is in the House for Children's Culture in the building of the Amman Municipality in Marka. The Society presently has six **cultural centers** which are: 1- The Center of Jebel al-Naşr, 2- The Center of Jebel al-Hussein, 3- Hittin Cultural Compound, 4- The Center of al-Wihdāt, 5- The Center of al-Baq'a and 6- the House for Children's Culture/Marka.

Its Objectives:

Among the fundamental objectives of the Society are the following: to care for the child's culture, broaden his knowledge and comprehension, care for his hobbies and develop his talent, consolidate his belonging to his homeland and create in him positive habits and behavioural patterns. The Society also aims to rally kin and mothers and direct them towards the healthy basis of bringing up the child socially, educationally, psychologically and health-wise. The society seeks to satisfy the need of the local community which is distinguished by popular residential concentrations (additionally to create job opportunities for girls at the Centers).

The Programs of the Friends of Children Society:

- **The Child's Culture:** This is achieved by establishing a number of **cultural centers** for children within popular residential

- concentrations, each center to be supplied with a collection of books, computers, video, television and, possibly, an inside games room;
- **A Public Library:** The Society inaugurated its first library in 1971 in cooperation with the capital's Municipality and continued to service the children of Jebel Amman until 1988 when the Society was forced to move it to Marka, the headquarters of the Society, because of repairs to the building. It was then established in Marka in cooperation with the General Union of Charitable Societies. This public library does not restrict its services to children but covers all age groups;
 - **A Book for Every Child:** The main aim is to encourage reading and to make the passport of seven phases for reading, "The Train of Knowledge";
 - **Day Care:** Day care is provided in all of the Society's centers. In the Ĥiṭṭīn Cultural Center there is as well a class to care for the deaf and dumb;
 - **Special Courses for Mothers:** These are offered in the House for the Child's Culture on subjects such as sewing, make-up, floral industry, ladies' accessories, taekwondo, physical fitness and other subjects;
 - **Periodic Activities:** An example of these is the collection of donations and zakāt* during the month of Ramadan for distribution among needy children and orphans as part of the activities complementing the Society's work.

The Targeted Category and the Local Community:-

- The targeted category is children from age three years and older (some centers go until eight years, others until 18 years and some over that);
- The Society is concerned that the employees would have good relations with all tranches of the local society in order to ensure servicing the Society's targets and their reflection on the local community of which the Society is part. For example, there are large halls in the Society's centers and the local community makes use of them to hold its deliberations and private activities, other than those of the Society. Schools, regardless of the authorities supervising them, are invited to participate in the Society's various programs and activities because they are considered a means for dissemination and announcement.

* Zakāt is one of the five pillars of Islam and involves one's annual giving up a portion of his wealth for charity [the Translator].

The Program of the National Campaign for Encouraging Reading:-

The Friends of Children Society started the National Campaign for Encouraging Reading in 1996 in cooperation with cultural institutions and organizations, both official and popular, including the Greater Amman Municipality, The Haya Cultural Center, UNICEF*, Children's Villages (S.O.S.), the Child's Committee of the Jordanian Writers' Association, the Child Care Society, the schools of the Islamic Center in Zarqa, private, government and UNRWA schools, the libraries of the municipalities of Zarqa, Ruseifah and Irbid, the Child's Committee of the Karak Assemblage and the National Association for the Education and Teaching of Children in Aqaba.

Students who have finished reading a total of 170 books receive gold certificates and those who have finished reading 100 books receive bronze medals. They also become members in the "League for Bearers of Train of Knowledge Certificates" and, accordingly, carry personal cards that qualify them to obtain various cultural privileges. The campaign is still running to the present day.

2- The Jordan Library Association:

A General View

The Association was established on 23/12/1963 in Jordan's capital, Amman, to be registered under the Law for Societies and Social Organizations No. 23 for the year 1966. The Association aims at unifying the efforts of those working in the field of, and those concerned with libraries by using all possible means to develop library services in Jordan. The Association has four branches managed by committees; its general assembly comprises 780 members of whom 80 are females.

The work committees are:

- The Committees for School Libraries;
- The Committees for Medical Libraries;
- The Committees for Publicity and Raising Awareness;
- The Committee for the Group of the Employees of CDS/isis;
- The Committees for the Library's Mission.

The Association's Objects and Aims:

* UNICEF: The United Nations Children's Fund [the Translator].

1. Unifying the efforts of those working in the field of, and those concerned with libraries by using all possible means to develop the management of libraries in Jordan and the services they offer by determining the criteria and regulations that support this end, campaigning for legislation regarding libraries and encouraging the establishment of libraries of all types;
2. Gathering and publishing research concerning libraries or printed material that is of assistance in achieving the Association's objectives and developing its services;
3. Establishing an Association library specialized in the science of library work;
4. Participating in developing library services in Arab countries and other countries of the world.

The Project of "Generations for Reading":-

The Association is implementing the project "Generations for Reading" as a primary step in offering a monthly educational package and story collection to every student subscribing in the project. The Association will deliver this package to the student in his/her school. The annual subscription fee is J.D. 10.

A special committee would select the stories to be distributed to the children and would depend in its work and choice on feedback from families. This may determine the type of books for their children and the stories they prefer for them according to the child's needs and interests.

The Association also undertakes other activities such as buying local magazines (*Wisām, The Buds of Amman, Hātīm, Zaha*) and distributing them gratis in cooperation with the Abdul-Hameed Shoman Foundation and al-Ahli Bank. The Association also offers lectures for encouraging reading.

3- The Haya Cultural Center:-

The Haya Cultural Center was established in 1976 for the achievement of important targets concerning child culture, including:-

- Offering various programs and activities for children from age 6 to age 13 years with the aim of developing their artistic and cultural potentials and skills and refining their talents to the best standards;
- Prompting variation in programs thus training children in the freedom of choice and presenting them with the opportunity to determine their dispositions and develop them under the supervision of specialists;
- Establishing a library specialized for children.

The Center occupies a large area of many floors and is the first center for the education of children outside the teaching institutions. It had established 23 branches in various parts of Jordan but two only remain at present besides the main center. The Center is a civil society reporting to the Ministry of Social Development and is supported by the Royal Bureau. Its management comes under a Board of Trustees consisting of fifty members who are changed every two years.

As to the strategy pursued by the Central's management, it is represented by teaching art and not offering activities during free time.

The Activities Offered to Children:-

- Performance Arts (theatre – ballet – dancing);
- Plastic Arts (Arabic calligraphy – drawing);
- Computer Training;
- Various workshops in fields of art;
- Workshops on manipulating puppets;
- Workshops on film cartoons. These have been held in some children's libraries of the Greater Amman Municipality, in poor quarters, in cooperation with other local societies.

Subscription to the Center is by way of annual membership at a fee of J.D. 35 for ages from six to thirteen and J.D. 5 for insurance.

The Center has departments in Jordan, some of which are distinctive, such as the astronomical dome and the astronomical observatory. Another department is distinctive for its modernity and keeping abreast of the developments and requirements of the times. The Center also enjoys distinguished relations with most Ministries, organizations and local and international institutions.

Over the previous years, the Center has executed a number of activities including a training program on the child's rights, astronomy programs, the Festival of the Arab Child's Song, art exhibitions, theatrical performances for adults and minors, programs for awareness in the field of rationalizing the consumption of water, on smoking, drugs, aids and others in addition to a summer program for the academic development of minors' talents.

At present, the Haya Cultural Center is an effective partner in the **“Project for a Children's Mobile Library”** (A Book for Every Child) which is under execution by the Ministry of Culture in cooperation with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority and the Abdul-Hameed Shoman Foundation and the Haya Cultural Center.

Sixth: International and Local Exhibitions and Prizes

International and Local Exhibitions

Interviews made in the course of this study with the various parties concerned with child culture have indicated that Jordan has no periodic exhibitions allocated for children's books except those held regularly on an annual basis in major schools and societies concerned with child culture.

However, there is usually a section allocated for children's books in general book exhibitions. There is the Book Exhibition held by the Greater Amman Municipality once every two years on an international level. There is also the Book Exhibition held annually on a local level. However, in respect of the section allocated for children's books, most interviewees indicated that it is not usually successful because the public attending exhibitions are not generally serious about buying, the prices are not encouraging and books in the children's section are noticeably offered at high prices.

Prizes

More than one party in Jordan allocates a prize or more for creative writers of children's literature. Following are the prizes offered and the authority supervising them as related in interviews with the parties concerned:

- 1- The prize of the Ministry of Culture – The Ministry of Culture offers a prize for children's literature as part of the State's prizes for promotion and appreciation in addition to the prize awarded on the occasion of the Festival for Children's songs;;

- 2- The Abdul-Hameed Shoman Foundation established in 2006 an annual prize for children's literature in each of the following literary arts: stories, poetry, novels and literary criticism of children's literature. Nomination for the prize is "open to all living Arab writers in the field of writing for children under sixteen". The monetary value of the prize is U.S.\$ 10,000. The 2006 prize was awarded to three female Arabs, the story writers Khansā' Mohammad Hasan Hīto, a resident in Kuwait of Syrian origin, Nuha Ṭabbārā Ḥammūd from Lebanon and Fairūz Qarden al-Ba'albaki, a Lebanese of Jordanian origin;
- 3- The Khalīl Sakākīnī prize for children's literature. This is offered by the Jordanian Writers' Association but is neither periodic nor regular in the sense that it may be offered one year but withheld for many years;
- 4- The Noor al-Hussein prize but this has ceased a number of years back;
- 5- The prize for children's literature on the occasion of Amman being named the Arab Cultural Capital for 2002.

Seventh: Information

A survey of children's literature and information has been completed by specifying the children's magazines published in Jordan, becoming informed in regard to children's programs on radio and television and also in regard to Internet sites concerned with children's literature and encouraging reading. A case study was made on the Ḥayāt Amman radio program.

1- Children's Magazines

Children's magazines are essential for the child because of their usually low prices, attractive presentation style, the child's ability to interact with them directly through his contributions and because the variation of cultural, literary and entertainment subjects distinguishes them.

The most serious problem facing children's magazines in Jordan is weak distribution. Still, those available in Jordan are:

- ***Wisām***: This is a monthly magazine that has been issued by the Ministry of Culture for the past eighteen years (presently issue No. 191). Its price is suitable at J.D. 0.350 but it is not well distributed; most of the quantity is disposed of by way of presents;

- ***Ĥātīm***: This is another monthly magazine and is issued by the Jordanian Press Institute. Its price at J.D. 0.300 is suitable and it is well distributed. No. 101 of its ninth year has been issued;
- ***The Buds of Amman***: Issued by the Cultural Department at the Greater Amman Municipality, this monthly magazine sells at J.D. 0.250. Most of the quantity is distributed gratis as it has a distribution problem;
- ***Fikra***: A private magazine, only a few editions were issued and then it ceased to be published because it did not have a sufficient market inasmuch as the publishing of a magazine requires great financial and artistic capabilities;
- ***Zaha***: This is a journal issued by the Zaha Cultural Center and is edited by an editorial board made up of the Center's children. The first issue was published at the end of 2005. An agreement for cooperation between the Zaha Center and al-Manhal Institute includes the regulation of children's activities and the distribution of the Zaha journal gratis to the schools and kindergartens with which al-Manhal Institute deals;
- ***Al-Shurṭī al-Ṣaghīr [The Young Cop]***: This is issued by the Department of Public Relations of the Jordan Police Department.

2- Television Programs:-

The interviews indicated at the time when this survey was carried out that no programs for children are produced for Jordan Television with the exception of the one called “*ihnal hīlwīn*” (*We, the Handsome*). Otherwise, Jordan television is restricted to dubbed cartoon films.

We cite what the writer/poet, Mohammad Jamāl ‘Amr, put forward about the weakness of children's programs on Jordan Radio and Television, “In view of the retarded interest in children's literature in Jordan, so has been late as well the interest in children's literature by Jordan Radio and Television except for some experimentation that extended over tens of years {*dunya al-atfāl (Children's World)*}, presented by Hadiyya Mirza, until it was stopped before a few years. In my opinion, children's programs in general are not subject to planning but come rather as ‘spontaneous reactions’ that are launched only to vanish quite soon. We possess highly qualified persons who are capable of producing audio and audio/visual programs that would excel by far over what is produced in the Arab States. These same qualified persons themselves participate and

have participated in the production of children's programs in the Arab World and internationally; it is rather more worthy that their potential be employed for children in our country".

The writer, Wafā' Qusūs, who works presently as manager of the children's channel in ART [Arab Radio and Television], indicated that her plans include that there should be real production of children's programs with consideration to age groups and sex and that the child should be a major and effective participant. Cartoon films are no more than an operation of stuffing [the gaps] and we cannot call them children's programs.

3- Radio Programs:-

As in case of the weakness and retardation of children's programs for television, so does the same situation apply to official radio programs. However, there is in Jordan a development in the programs of other non-governmental broadcasting stations. We relate here a case study of Radio Ḥayāt Amman (Amman's Life) as one of its programs, addressed to children, in the subject of children's literature {*Ḥikāyatun min Ḥakāyā* (*A tale of Many*)}, won the prize for the best broadcasting program. Further, according to a study made to find out the extent of preference in listening to Jordanian broadcasting channels, Ḥayāt Amman was considered the fourth station listened to in Jordan considering that average listening time is thirty minutes. Usually, the programs of Ḥayāt Amman, particularly children's programs, are chosen by a planning committee that chooses and buys programs.

Children's programs in Radio Ḥayāt Amman were represented by:

- 1- The program *Ḥayāt's Children*: About a character called Na'nū', it is a program that broadcasts twice a week on Friday and Saturday. It is a program larger than ordinary broadcasting programs for it contains films, mms, paper output and a magazine. The program is broadcast, in simplified classical Arabic, between 9 and 10 a.m. on Friday and between 4:45 and 5:45 p.m. on Saturday.
- 2- *The Bird of Yearning, Katakīt*: It is a program for hobbies, reading, poetry and other children's talents. It is broadcast at 6 p.m. on Fridays in colloquial language but without triviality in its usage;
- 3- "*Ḥikāyatun min Ḥakāyā*", written by Mahmūd Abu Farwa al-Rajabi. It consists of a story collection that has been adapted for broadcasting.

- It won the prize for the best children's program in the Arab World and is broadcast twice daily in simplified classical Arabic, a main program and its repeat;
- 4- Readings by children, broadcast during fixed periods;
 - 5- In addition to the programs, there are courses such as "How Do I Make a Reader out of My Child", "How Do I Write Stories for Children?" and "How Do I Bring Up My Child as a Reader?".

In all the programs mentioned above, children are direct participants as the programs are meant to be interactive with them. Radio Ĥayāt Amman shows that a radio station cannot ascertain the age groups that will follow its programs although the program might have been designed with a certain age group in mind. Listeners, however, belong to various age groups. For example, a program designed for a nine years old can be listened to by a child of three. Broadcasting work is flexible and it is difficult to determine who the listeners will be.

4- Internet Sites:-

There are no active Internet sites special for Jordan but there the following two sites although they are not active sufficiently to attract the age groups to which they are addressed:

- <http://www.rawdahudhud.com/index.php> : This is the site of Rawḍa al-Hudhud;
- <http://www.alsalwabooks.com/arabic/author.htm> : This is the site of Taghrīd al-Najjār, Al-Salwa for Research and Publishing.

Eighth: Trends in Respect of Children's Literature

Discussion of the dominant trends in respect of children's literature was completed through setting up a number of concentrated discussion groups with a number of families, children and teachers in addition to assertions by creative writers of children's literature. The deductions of all that are summed up as follows:-

First: Families:-

Families with whom focus group discussions were conducted in the Jebel al-Hussein Camp and who have children in the age group 4-12 years all concurred that **"That which is available is what imposes trends among children"**. As it is television that is available and its programs are varied and

attractive to children, they are inclined towards television with its various programs, those targeting children or even serials for adults as well as the many song channels. In regard to families that own a computer with computer games, that then is the core of the child's interest. As for the book, it comes last in respect of interest. The most attractive books for children are the ones of large size and attractive colours, i.e. the books that come in the first place at high prices for them.

As to the subjects that children prefer to read, males go for adventure and animal books in the age group 4-8 years and religious books in the age group 9-12 years. Females in the age group 9-12 years are keen on fictitious stories and scientific encyclopedias.

Families put forward a problem of immense importance, to wit the general weakness in reading skills for the curriculum texts themselves. They put the blame on teachers and the methods of teaching applied at schools. Members of the families love reading but most of them do not read and, accordingly, do not encourage their children to do so except for curriculum texts.

Half those present (ten mothers and fathers) indicated that they had book shelves at home and that most of the books were on religious subjects and housekeeping with some books of fictitious stories. The participants were unanimous that the idea of giving their children a book for a "present" had never occurred to them. However, they liked the idea very much and wondered "**Why it has not occurred to our minds until now?**"

Second: Children:-

The majority of children who participated in the focus group discussion group from al-Hussein Camp, both males and females, indicated that they like reading stories in Arabic but prefer the computer, television and lastly books, in that order.

The majority of children (9-12 years) indicated that they read such books and stories as they can obtain and according to what free time they have outside school hours. All participating children indicated that they usually read at home. At school, the library is not always open, even during recess intervals, and there are no library hours. When they do borrow from the school, they receive the books chosen by the library custodian who puts forward a number of fictitious stories and religious books and asks the students to make a choice from them.

Third: Teachers:-

Most female teachers who had participated in focus group discussions group indicated that children's literature in Jordan is still in its beginnings and still does not respond to all childhood needs. As to the role of the school in encouraging reading, the majority of teachers pointed out that there are aids for encouraging reading. These are:

- 1- The existence of a library and encouraging the borrowing of books, the existence of a reading notebook that is followed up by the teachers of Arabic;
- 2- In the curriculum for the Arabic Language, there are a number of supporting stories that aid the curriculum. These should be read and discussed during the school year;
- 3- There are the additional activities which are demanded from students for the extraction of information and writing reports.

Fourth: Creative Writers of Children's Literature:-

Creative writers find that, in comparison with the Arab World, children's literature in Jordan is ahead qualitatively though not as to volume. Some opinions indicated that, despite this position, the precedence is not institutionalized but is dependent on the writers' individual efforts. In that respect, child culture is not constant and depends on the writer's mood.

- The Problem of Publishing and Distribution:

Children's literature suffers from an obvious problem as to publishing and distribution. This caused creative writers to follow the policy of self-reliance in everything. More than half the writers of children's literature interviewed have each become writer, publisher and distributor.

The process of producing children's literature in Jordan represents a heavy burden which falls primarily on the writer who finds no assistance either from official institutions or from publishing firms. Official institutions, for example, slap the condition that two years should have gone before they can publish another book for him.

Publishing firms find an advantageous opportunity in children's books which they publish against book an amount that can reach a maximum of J.D. 100 to buy an exclusive copyright of the book. In other words, the writer's connection with his book is terminated once he concludes a

contract with the publishing firm and receives that amount. This drives writers to have their books printed and marketed through their own efforts. One institution can buy 50 copies as can a second but a third may buy nothing.

The Ministry of Education which is supposed to be the greatest supporter of Jordanian authors is satisfied with perusing the book and notifying its agreement that it be purchased by schools. The author then has to make a tour of these schools, dispersed all over the governorates, so that each may buy a copy or two.

- The Cost of a Book of Children's Literature:

The cost of a book of children's literature is very high because children's books require illustrations of high quality and special paper in addition to the fact that the Jordanian market is small. The printing of such books runs between 1,000-3,000 copies.

- The Arabic Language:

Most creative writers confirm that the child is inclined to read in the language that was stressed to him as important by family and school. This is a matter of relativity between the family's culture and the school.

- Illustrations in Children's Books:

As to illustrating children's books, there is great difficulty in finding art drawers for books of children's literature. Despite that, an effectively supporting phenomenon has appeared under the initiative of a group of art drawers working in the field of cartoon films in respect of which they have accomplished superb work for local companies and institutions. They also master illustrations for children and supply magazines and the books issued by publishing firms.

Ninth: The Problems of Children's Literature and Suggestions for Developing It

The Problems of Children's Literature in Jordan:

The parties interviewed have brought to the fore many problems facing children's literature and books of children's literature. The following are the most prominent of these problems:

- 1- The high cost of children's books;
- 2- The scarcity of creative writers of children's literature and the preoccupation of the creative writer with his livelihood;
- 3- The difficulty of finding professional art drawers;
- 4- The small volume of literary output addressed to children;
- 5- The problem of publishing and distribution;
- 6- The weak cooperation and coordination between the institutions concerned with child culture;
- 7- The unavailability of budgets allocated for child culture;
- 8- The existence of other items that are more attractive than the book (the Internet, video games and satellite channels);
- 10- The lack of conviction among people in respect of reading, from a practical not merely theoretic point of view;
- 11- Schools and other social institutions do not offer their own initiatives;
- 12- The greatest difficulties facing the writer are marketing and promotion;
- 13- The absence of an effective role practised by schools;
- 14- The limited Jordanian market;
- 15- The absence of a policy for the purchase of children's books by institutions;
- 16- The non-existence of support to Jordanian writers of children's books by the institutions concerned with culture.

Suggestions for the Development of Children's Literature in Jordan:-

The parties covered by the study mentioned some suggestions for the improvement and development of children's literature in Jordan. These are as follows:-

- 1- The need to institutionalize the work on children's literature part instead of relaying on not individual efforts. Therefore, it is imperative that a national policy be put in place;
- 2- The Ministry of Education bears great responsibility because the targeted population segment is at schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education can do the following:
 - Activate the Jordanian book market by the extensive purchase of the local output of children's literature;
 - Develop the role of school libraries;
 - Activate ex-curriculum reading by creating library hours.

- 3- There should be institutional programs addressing the question of child culture along clear objectives and in coordination between these institutions;
- 4- Publishing firms should have a clear direction of output for the child;
- 5- The role of public libraries should be activated, the role of library custodians should be energized and people should be informed about local literature;
- 6- Promotion of the local book of children's literature through lectures and seminars;
- 7- Good books should be supported through the press, UNESCO*, UNICEF and other concerned parties. Such books should be distributed gratis or at a low price to schools and societies with weak financial resources;
- 8- Creative writers of children's literature should be trained through specialized workshops and should be cognizant of contemporary literature and its modern trends;
- 9- In the courses on children's literature at Jordanian universities, Jordanian writers contributing to this literature should be introduced and identified upon the presentation of the subject.

* UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [the Translator].