Under Curfew 13

Online Teachers-Compounded Burdens

Flxible Work

The prevailing idea about flexible work is that it is flexible as long as it can be performed from home, since it provides workers with the opportunity to balance between work requirements and personal, familial and needs; as well as saving some expenses, like those related to transportation. However, the reality of flexible work for teachers in the private sector during the Corona Crisis was different from these conceived ideas.

In the time of Corona, working from home is no longer just a method for workers to respond to the challenges of the time. Instead, it became an urgent economic necessity that is required by the nature of certain professions. Online work thus became a normal aspect of the professional lives of many workers and not a novelty, as they were forced to adapt or risk losing their jobs despite its difficulty and its

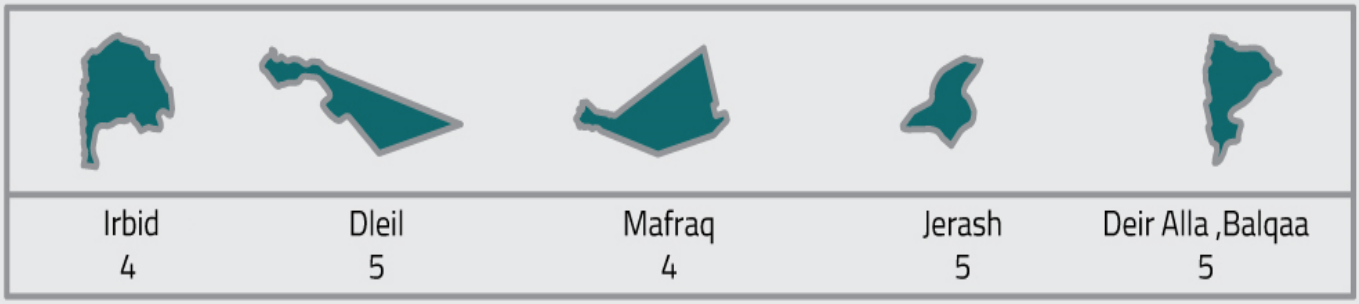
requirements. These aspects result in depleting workers' break times, as well as affect their weekends, annual leaves and ultimately means that they lose their flexibly contrary to what many might think.

In this report, Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights sheds light on teachers in the private sector, and the near-radical changes that they had to endure affecting their work due to the Corona Crisis and the activation of online learning. These changes resulted in teachers' jobs now encompassing the preparation of lessons early on the morning by recording videos; then sending homework and worksheets to students through WhatsApp; and finally receiving inquiries from students via group chats or phone calls.

From Classrooms to Virtual Rooms

The usage of virtual classrooms was filled with gaps that were not previously taken into account and left teachers in the private sectors with additional burdens. The report targeted 23 teachers working in: Mafraq, Dleil, Irbid and Deir Alla, who talked about their experiences with online learning. The teachers noted the shift that occurred from classroom to virtual classes held on applications like Google Class Room and G Suite, as well as the other e-learning platforms. These platforms require technical and communication skills that were not familiar to teachers prior to the crisis, which forced them to use these applications; as well as using WhatsApp groups as a means of communication, which is considered a precedent in the Jordanian educational system.

23
teachers were targeted in this report



83% of the targeted teachers received wages that are below the minimum wage

100% of the targeted teachers worked longer hours compared to when they worked in classrooms

78% of the targeted teachers worked for more than 12 hours without receiving overtime

100% of the targeted teachers worked for long hours due to weak internet connections

91% of targeted teachers were registered under the umbrella of Social Security

22% were provided with an internet connections paid by the school

Prior to the current crisis, teachers only worked at home during the final exams period when they corrected the papers, checked all the grades and then submitted them to the Directorate of Education.

This is further complicated by their inability to control external factors, including poor internet connections due to its wide usage by large segments of society during the curfew; the absence of students from attending some classes which forces teachers to repeat it; as well as the meetings arranged by school administrations to review the weekly plans and accomplishments by a large group of teachers, which makes them time consuming and burden teachers even more.

In Deir Alla, some teachers also highlighted a number of additional tasks that they were required to do, like stimulating students and writing then sending tank you cards, which crowds their schedules with even

Computerization of education: The use of electronics and mastering automated educational programs is a skill that many students / teachers miss lack at the moment. This has resulted in them spending extra hours working to master interacting with these educational platforms, while dealing with the fact that these platforms could sometimes be distracting for students as well.

Time Management and the Quality of the Internet: According to all the teachers that were targeted, they have lost their ability to manage their time. These teachers now have to spend long hours to gather students to attend their classes. After these classes, teachers then have to prepare their next lessons, correct homework and exams, which was previously done during their breaks before the Corona Crisis.

more work. Due to the current crisis though, these teachers cannot refuse such tasks due to the increased demands of parents.

"Online Teaching is torturous. Students are not complying, neither with the usage of platforms or in their deadlines to send their homework. Some send their homework at midnight, others at 5 in the morning. Then, there are the many phone calls which exhausts us. Throughout the day, my phone is always ringing."

Teacher in a private school, Dleil

"I was never stressed like I am in this period. Work has become extremely difficult. I start my classes at 8 am and finish at 4 pm. Then, I spend my time preparing, correcting papers and communicating with the students' parents. This work continues till 10 pm."

Teacher in a private school, Irbid

Communication and Familial Stability:

Communication with students is much easier in traditional school context compared to communicating with them virtually. Traditionally, communication with students used to be limited to direct contact with them in classrooms, while communicating with parents was only done during parents-teachers conference meetings. During the curfew, this is no longer the norm, as students and their families continuously communicate with the teachers through phone conversations and WhatsApp messages.

These communications occur throughout the hours of the days and night; thus, putting additional load on teachers, as well as increasing their working hours which are no longer limited to 8 hours but could sometimes extend to more than 12. These increased hours affect the teachers' other priorities, including her own household duties, in addition to affecting

their private lives. Other teachers faced other issues as they suffered from instances of miscommunication with their schools' administrations due to the reliance on online platforms for communication, leading to an increased tension between teachers and the administration.

"My house is not that big. Sometimes, I find difficulty designating a specific space for me to have an online class. Thwus, I am forced to silence my husband and children so I could give my class in the right manner. This has created tension between my family and I and now they are resentful of my work. Additionally, a number of parents are evading my privacy after working hours, which caused my husband to complain and he has a right to do so.

Teachers in a private school, Irbid, Jerash, Mafraq and Deir Alla

Teachers with children faced another set of challenges that included disputes with their spouses due to their inability to reconcile between their work and their

families' needs, or at least maintain the same balance that was there before the crisis. Due to the current situations, these teachers now have limited time to care and teach their own children, which resulted in many husbands complaining or resenting their jobs.

"I now work for 24 hours because of Online Teaching. Nobody is considerate of our own situation, or our families and children who also need teaching. Online teaching has caused us issues with our husbands, because they do not accept that our work is continuous 24/7 and they want us to take care of them and their children."

"I begin preparing and recording classes early in the morning when my family is still sleeping and I am able to upload my videos easily. Throughout the day, I receive homework but this process is so time consuming, and on the other hand I have my own house and family to care for"

"It is correct that I do my work but it is at the expense of my health, well-being and the satisfaction of everyone"

Group of teachers in a private school - Jerash, Mafraq and Deir Alla

Virtual Teaching and the Output Quality

Despite the unprecedent efforts to improve the online teaching platform, the majority of teachers said that online teaching is not as productive as standard teaching. Additionally, teachers have noted that students seem to be getting higher grades that does not really reflect their levels, which is happening due to the following reasons:

- The efficiency of Online Education is very low in terms of effectively delivering information to students compared to teaching them in classrooms because of teachers' ability to control students in classrooms unlike with virtual education.
- The novelty of the experience and the unpreparedness of both teachers and students result in them lacking both the skills and trainings to make it more effective; especially for students in elementary schools who view electronics as only

a source of entertainment that they use sometimes for playing and in other times for watching YouTube videos.

- The usage of electronic devices could be distracting for some students
- The non-usage of illustrative materials to communicate ideas or lessons due to the unavailability of needed educational tools for that like those that are found in schools. The only available tools in Online Education are videos or pictures, which need extra efforts for teachers who have to prepare them, and even then, students might still not understand the lessons like they did in the classroom.
- Some students do not electronic devices at their homes, or do not enough devices for all of their children that would allow them to attend classes and do their homework.

- Lack of parental supervision, which might lead to some students cheating in their exams. In other cases, other members of the family have taken the exams or done homework instead of the students. Teachers are unable to control or supervise such cases in online education.

"As a teacher, I am not convinced at all with online education. Parents are solving their kids' homework or they solve while having their books open. In other cases, they ask help from their friends. I am afraid that after all of my efforts, that we will have to repeat the material again.

Teacher in a private school, Dleil

Wages, Vacations and Appreciation

Wages: Teachers' monthly wages ranges between 110-220 JODs in the targeted. The 22 Jordanian teachers that were targeted in this report are all registered under the umbrella of Social Security, where their salary is recorded at 220 JODs, based on the minimum wage in Jordan.

In Dleil and Mafraq, teachers were informed that their salary for the third consecutive month due to the imposition of the Defence Law, which imposed orders that prevented free movement, and due to parents not paying their monthly instalments. As for teachers in Mafraq, they asked to be enrolled in the programs that were launched by the Social Security Corporation, but their requests did not find the slightest interest from their employers.

The biggest concern for these teachers though is the continuation of Online Learning, in light of parents'

continuous demands that the monthly instalments are reduced, which would consequently lead to teachers' wages being reduced as well. On the other hand, teachers in Deir Alla said that they were not expecting to receive any wages due to the extension of the vacation decision.

"I did not receive my salary even if when I used to go to school. The school's administration used to give it me in instalments. I expect to face issues in terms of receiving the salaries of the coming months."

Teacher in a private school, Dleil

Vacations: Before the crisis, teachers used to receive 7 days of annual leave. However, these vacations were cancelled after the crisis. In cases where any vacations were given, they are conditionally granted either by her compensating the vacation later on; deduction from her salary; or the termination of her services.

تمكين TAMKEEN
للمساعدة القانونية وحقوق الانسان
For legal aid and human rights

Internet Connectivity: Except for a few teachers, the targeted group agreed that they had to incur the cost of the internet themselves, and that the school administration does not provide it even though it is essential for them to do their jobs. The teachers view this behaviour as part of the underestimation of their efforts and work through in these exceptional circumstances. Yet, they continue to do it because they view their job as an ethical responsibility towards their students that goes beyond its material gain. Unfortunately, these efforts and commitment were not met with even the minimum level of appreciation. Instead, teachers are evaluated based on the academic achievement of their students at the end of the year; rather than studying the actual effectiveness of online teaching system, collecting the lessons learnt and the weakness points, as well as potential opportunities for development.

Moreover, teachers noted that parents do not appreciate their efforts. Instead, they demand that their children's homework be quickly corrected even though they were not sent within the agreed deadline. In the absence of a rapid response to these inquiries, teachers are blamed and accused of being negligent and favouritism among her students.

"The teacher barely has time to take care of her students, her own kids and husband, as well as her chores. Now, she also has to deal with parents who are not convinced that we are not machines and cannot look at the homework the moment it is sent."

Teacher in a private school, Deir Alla

Recommendations:

1. Preparing and building the capacity of teachers and students on Online Teaching to be better prepared in cases of emergency.

2. The development of a mechanism to provide teachers with internet connections to ensure that they are able to do their jobs and maintain their communication with their students.

3. Setting of clear working hours for teachers when Online Teaching is used.

4. Identify the communication channels between teachers, students and parents.

16 Jun 2020

Under Curfew 13

Online Teachers-Compounded Burdens

تمكين

TAMKEEN

للمساعدة القانونية وحقوق الانسان

For legal aid and human rights