



### Introduction

Representation is key for democracy, and it is more so when it incorporates true plurality. This entails that all groups of society get equal representation in decision making, particularly women and youth. According to IPU, of the approximately 45,000 parliamentarians around the world, 24% are women and only 1.9% is under the age of 30. In Jordan, only 20/130 MPs are women, 15 of whom are quota MPs, while none of the MPs are under the age of 30, as per the constitution.

The UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security, sponsored by Jordan shows that Jordan has been a strong advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the inclusion of women and youth in decision-making. This support is not accompanied with action, despite the fact that the largest voting age group is youth, with 38% voter turnout, higher than the national average of 36%. Young women in Jordan are even less engaged in the political process, as they face many additional obstacles to political participation. Thus, it is essential to facilitate practical steps to enable women and youth to take their vital role in the decision-making process through enhancing their participation in elected offices.

This research studied the support for enhancing the participation of women and youth in elected offices in Jordan. It examined public perceptions, support, benefits of women and youth engagement, challenges and obstacles, mitigations and recommendations.

### Objectives

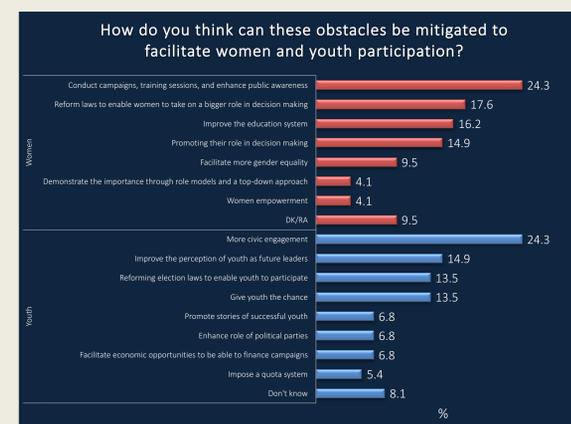
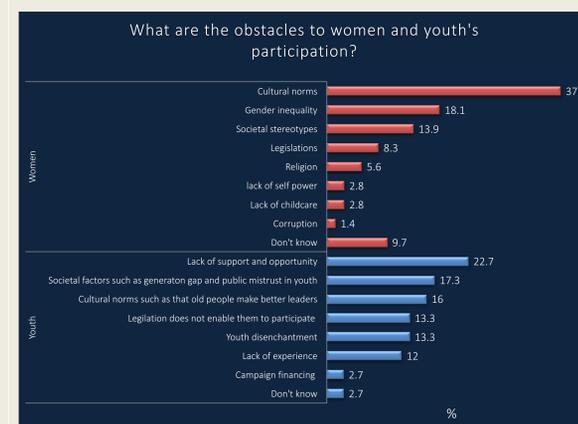
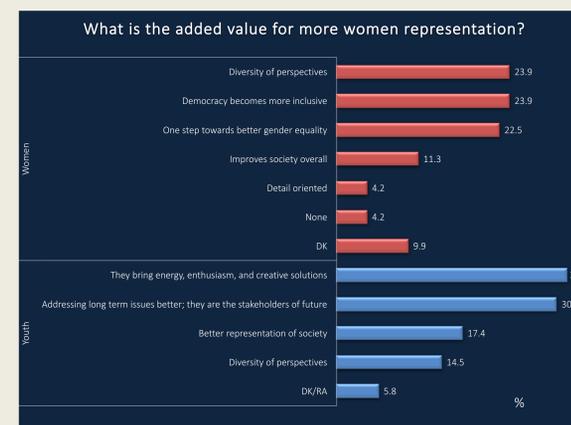
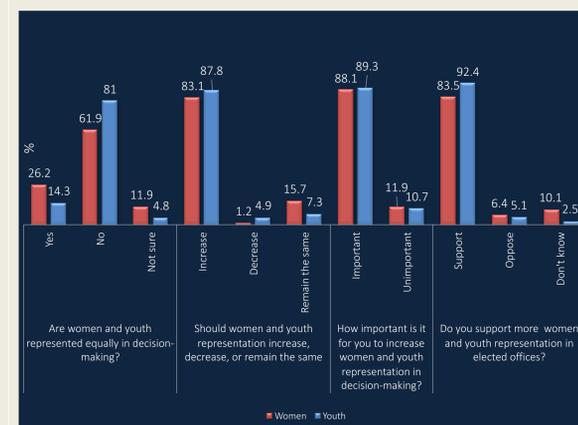
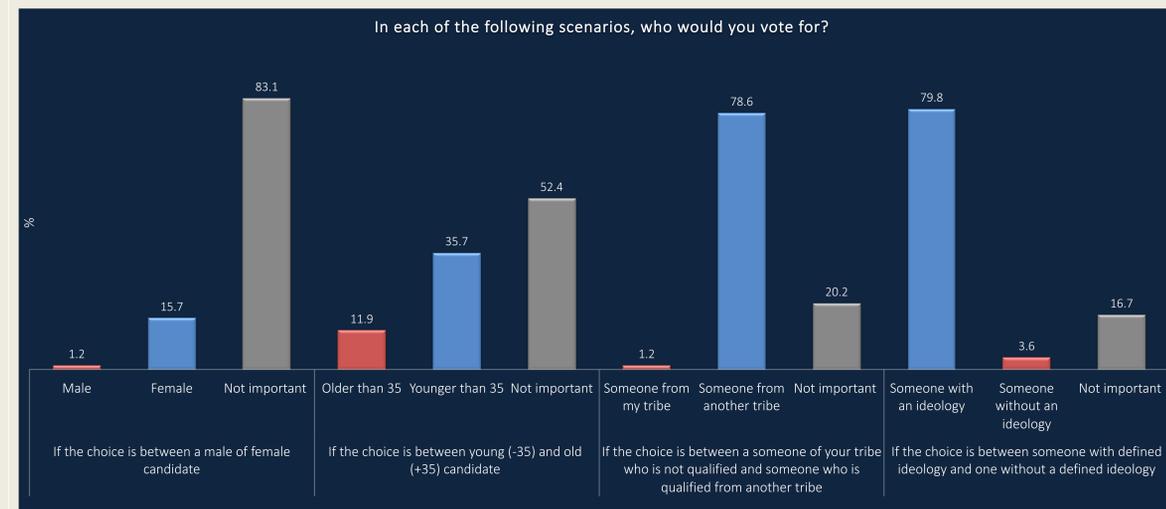
- Explore Jordanians' perceptions of democracy, voting tendencies, and representation in decision-making;
- Examine Jordanians' perceptions in regards to the capacities of women and youth when it comes to decision-making;
- Understand the benefits of their engagement in elected offices;
- Investigate the obstacles preventing women and youth from meaningful inclusion in decision-making;
- Address these challenges and arriving at recommendations and means through which these obstacles can be mitigated;
- Study Jordanians' support for enhancing youth and women inclusion in decision-making, with a focus on support for lowering of the candidacy age.

### Methodology

- This research was conducted through a mixed methodology of desk research/ document review and an online quantitative survey.
- The survey comprised of a total of 55 questions and was conducted online via SurveyMonkey in both English and Arabic.
- The total sample achieved was 149 respondents, 62% of whom answered in English, and about 60% were males.
- The survey was divided into 6 sections: general perceptions on Jordan; perceptions of democracy; voting tendencies; representation in decision-making; support for more youth and women engagement in decision making; and demographic questions.

### Results

- When asked about the biggest issue facing Jordan right now, 29% referred to corruption and nepotism and 10% identified bad decision making.
- 73% stated that the performance of the current parliament was bad, and they added that candidates were incompetent and were aided by voting malpractices.
- 91% indicated that it was important for them to live in a country governed democratically, and that the most suitable political system to resolve the biggest issues facing Jordan is a parliamentary system featuring political parties representing the entire political spectrum.
- 85% disagreed that "men make better political leaders than women in general" and over 76% disagreed that "older people make better political leaders than younger people in general."



- 48.1% indicated high levels of support for lowering the candidacy age to 18 while 35.4% opposed; 76% indicated support for lowering it to 23 while 18.7% opposed. They reasoned that 18 is too young, that they are not mature enough, that they lack proper and adequate life and work experiences, and that 25 would be a better option.
- About 85% of respondents indicated that they would take action in support of lowering the candidacy age to 23, including signing a petition, convincing people in their surroundings, writing in media, dedicating some time apart for that, lobbying the parliament, joining a demonstration, donating money, and calling for meetings.

### Conclusion

By maintaining laws that hinder young people from participating in politics, Jordan is sending a message that politics is not for women and youth, particularly young women who already face societal oppression based on various assumptions.

It is important that Jordan encourages inspiration and political enthusiasm to spread among young women. Based on the global #NotTooYoungToRun model, it is essential for the constitution to be amended to lower the age of candidacy for elected offices in Jordan to 23.

Jordan strives to define itself as a global leader on women and youth empowerment. With this aspirational language comes an imperative to act. Making this amendment to the constitution will advance Jordan's progress toward the UN SDGs, particularly SDG 5 for gender equality, and it will empower the next generation of women into leadership roles. If women and young people are given the opportunity to bring topics of relevance onto the country's political agenda, the future will be better.

### Recommendations

- Initiating a national lobbying campaign for enhancing women and youth inclusion in decision making. This can include draft legislation for lowering the candidacy age and widening the quota system for women.
- Amending Article 70 of the Constitution: "A Member of Parliament must have completed thirty calendar years of his/her age"
- Amending the Legislative Provisions in the Framework for Parliamentary Elections Law 25/2016 on the Election of the Chamber of Deputies Article 10 Section B.
- Establishing a national platform of organization supporting the enhancement of women and youth inclusion in decision-making, to include NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, political parties, and think-tanks.
- Initiate capacity building training for potential candidates, lobbying for lowering campaign spending ceilings; calling for temporary special measures such as youth quota and lowering candidacy fees, by offering state funding.

### References

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