

## **The Model Child (Between International Standards and National Values)**

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### **Introduction:**

In a training visit, as part of the Growing up in cities project, MENA Region Amman October 12-14 2003, the positive condition of children in a low material resources residential area, (Al-Manara Qwesmeh Amman) surprised participants. The results from the studies they conducted on the children proved them to be happy, free, interactive and responsive. Even though each of the participants observed and communicated this in their comments, they did not expect the others to have observed it too. They all reached the same conclusion while expecting otherwise.

The above issue raised many questions for the participants and program instructors. The explanation for the above findings is that low material resources of children and people causes them to show that they are satisfied, adapted, gratified and pleased with their social, communal, urban setting; nevertheless it is not the case. This however cannot be generalized for all regions and cases, which aggravates the complexities of the solutions. The big questions are what make children in parts of the world, in parts of cities, or certain tissues of the urban settings happy, interactive and responsive? And what make other children unhappy, inactive and irresponsive?

### **Intordacton**

"Across a wide range of indicators, cities are failing to meet the needs of young people and their families, not only in the developing world but in the wealthy countries of Europe and North America as well" (GUIC Amman 2003). Jordanian children like other children in the MENA region and around the world are facing the challenges of modern evolution. When children enjoy the profound achievement of modernity many also face the stress and uncertainty of such achievements. The dilemma of change, with its good and bad sides has had its affect on children's social, cultural and mental evolution. Rapid urban evolution in this part of the world does not prompt speedy changes in the concepts, values and beliefs related to religion, history and heritage. The effect is more rapidly seen in children's behaviorisms that are related to mental physical child.

Many studies and researches in education, behavior, participation, place attachment, cognitive mental mapping, better and friendly cities, psychology even sustainability have all explored issues of children's life developments, styles and psychology whether in this region or all over the world. Despite that it is clear that none of these researches have been locally in Jordan or regionally initiated. International methodologies and theories or circular researches, (prototype researches with fixed programs and processes), is what have been tested here, and not a specific research framework prepared particularly to our case. All of the studies came in from of limited exercises, but with international frameworks, which should have provided answers and solved the anticipated urban problems that children expected to face. Nevertheless most previous studies have merely redefined the problem but no solutions were found.

## **Methodology**

It is preconceived in many studies and the study referring to in this study, that Jordanians of low income class who uphold low living standards are less fortunate, less intellectual, less cooperative and less interactive than those of the higher or middle income class. However it is rather believed in our case here that values of life, not standards of living, creates socio-cultural gaps in-between societal classes in our community. Along with the growing up in cities program, UNESCO/MOST, it is the intention of this paper to show that applying the above program, although it apprehend a well established procedures and a well tested international applications, yet if not taking into consideration the societal local and regional values it would not reach or provide applicable solutions or real conclusions. Anyhow the study ahead will examine certain quantitative working figures and available measures that their presence or absence is will either enhance or degrade the quality of the children's lives. By finding out what they have or miss, will reveal the qualitative values in their lives, which when enhanced and brought up will improve their living standards. This brings us to the main issue of the Model Child that is; whether improving the standard of living or enhancing the quality of life of children will develop a normal interactive child.

This paper will not conduct an independent exercise, neither will develop a different growing up in cities program but rather to elaborate their findings, in a way that will not only concentrate as in the program on the standard living of the children, but will incorporate and test the values that children have in their life. Furthermore children actions and reactions and behavior wouldn't be main only references resources of measuring their interaction, but their thoughts and views will form another crucial and genuine venue of measuring their interaction throughout the exercise.

Details will be utilized from the data gathered from Amman's GUIC program workshop conducted in Almanara District in Qwesmeh, and The Better Guides for Youth and Children survey conducted in the Palestinian refugee camp in Amman. Both districts are considered to be from the poorest areas in Amman. Both studies conducted were fully abided by the UNESCO manual and its rules. Children at Almanara were randomly selected from the area while those that were selected from the refugee camp were chosen from four schools (two girls' and two boys' schools). In both cases the children were between the ages of ten and fourteen or from the fourth to the eighth grade. Each child was interviewed three times. Two of the interviews were conducted at the child's school while the third was conducted in their home. General questions cover wide range of information, from spatial, educational to questions that addressed the children past, present and future. The study abides with the UNESCO's manual where the above questionnaire is followed by specific questions interview that was culminated by a drawing exercise. Final third session comprised of another interview that was preceded by an exercise where children were given a disposable camera, which allowed them to take pictures of their own surroundings. To conclude the study children were interviewed in their homes. Note that these interviews were conducted over a number of days and were not all done in one time.

As mentioned before it is not the intention of this paper to substitute the methodology or the GUIC applications, but rather to utilize its process and ways to reach the differences of the children standards of living, ways of life and finally the diversity and the variety in their interactions and responses. In addition to the standard questions usually enclosed in the GUIC Project, more specific questions devised to our case here were added for the purpose of finding out how children value their life.

"Children and urbanism differ according to cultures, and social attitudes. Scientific definitions should be independent of culture and social attitudes" (Alkadi 2002). In a different approach as stated in Childhood Versus Urbanism, Alkadi intention, tend to put new definition for preexisting ideas. Nevertheless he only redefines them and does not proceed from the quantitative to the qualitative level. For example he replaces the individual unit (one person) with the family unit and the city slum with the city cell. This is

done in an attempt to incorporate the Arab culture in the study by not break the family unit into smaller units, and by using more appropriate terminologies in defining the constituents of the problem. It is clear that many researches in the Arab world have followed the contemporary way of solving problems; when in reality they need to use methods that take into consideration the values, culture and religious aspects of life in this region.

Anxieties are spreading into the next generation if they have not already done so within this one, regarding the burdens of life and globalization. The problem is that these issues cannot be solved by setting international criteria. Every region has its specific way of life and so it is not logical to expect one study or research to correspond to all regions or different neighborhood in the one city or areas. In the end we are back to square one and we are convinced by powerful organizations that what is being done is a gesture from those who know to those who don't, and from those who have to those who do not.

This paper does not intend to solve the problem of children in this urban context neither does it claim to hold the key to its complexities, but rather it will study the findings of GUIC by looking at children and how they perceive and project their values, as opposed to the labeled preconceived application or standards.

### **Quantity and Quality Definition:**

"Children and youth are seldom involved in the construction of their environment. They are considered too inexperienced too unrealistic, too unqualified (Sane P. UNESCO 2002). Complexities coming from rapid changes and developments of urban settings and communities have compelled system organizers and policy makers to quantify the social and human sciences. Using the quantities system is easy and forms a base of equality and genuine universal applicability.

### **Edge Definition: Above and Below:**

Crucial ideas are formed from the edge definition. Persons below 18 and above 6 are children, a day below or above are of great importance. Although Jordan does not apply three articles (14, 20 and 21) of the convention on the Rights of the Child, they do adopt the edge definition in many of its system (National Report 2000). In the educational system, a child one day below the age of six on the first day of the elementary school has to wait another year to be admitted, while a child one day older is accepted. These ideas extend beyond schools into many parts of a children's life; driver license, university admission, election, TV programs, marriage, crime etc. Its strict application creates a domino effect on a child's time line and mind set.

### **Physical and Mental Definition:**

The convention for the Rights of the Child marginalized children and considered them too inexperienced too unrealistic too unqualified and immature. "Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care," (CRC 1990). Does this mean that children after a specific age reach a point where they are mature enough to make their own decision as to the content of the programs they watch? Or does it mean that the different things that that they are allowed to watch after a certain age will not affect them because they are older? A day in a child's age makes a lot of differences. These ideas cause children to want to practice adult privileges such as smoking, drinking, free movement, free sex etc in order to convince adults that they are also adults. On the other hand when it comes to the law, children have the excuse of being irresponsible and immature to back them up when answering to their behavior. Does age really coincide with mental and physical maturity at the same rate for every child? Of course not, so how can we generalize?

## **The Survey**

### **Informative and Responsive Survey**

The GUIC Project is based on an informative interview, which tends to encourage children to participate and be more interactive. Dr Driskell described that goal as "Apart from involving young people in making improvements to the places where they live, one of the most effective strategies for, creating better cities is through the actual process of participation: helping young people to listen to one another; to respect differences of opinion, to find common ground; developing their capacities for critical thinking, evaluation and reflection; supporting their process of discovery, awareness building, and collective problem solving; and helping them develop the knowledge and skills for making a difference in their world." (Driskell, UNESCO 2002). An over ambitious wide range agenda, proves to be very difficult to achieve. In our case here most of the interviewed children tend to be more responsive than informative. They do not usually answer any question that refer to private matters, and if answered they only mention a case or an idea. On the other hand when it deals with communal information, they are open to discuss it in details.

### **Real and Virtual Worlds**

Cultural attributes, controlled by values of privacy and preservation are very intense in this part of the children world. Talking, drawing and taking pictures are three ways that lead deep into a children's world. In an attempt to better understand the children, this study asked them to take pictures of their choice. This activity would allow them to express their view of their real and virtual worlds. Nearly all took picture outside their houses; girls who did not usually get out much took pictures of their home's surroundings while they were inside, through windows and openings. This shows how they feel that privacy should be protected. It is interesting to note that children are a step ahead of adults, because they construct in their mind what the urban community could not provide them. All they need is the skill of communication, and they will solve many issues. In the long run however the imagination stops, as they grow tedious without the tools to communicate them and act upon them.

### **The Model Child**

As for a child's maturity, physically and mentally, it is either absence by intention or neglected for reasons of ignorance from the age definition. Physical maturity varies for different genders, environments and regions, but in most cases coincides with mental maturity. Mental maturity varies accordingly, from child to child, family to family and boys to girls. In our survey girls between the ages of 10-14 show that they are more mature than boys of the same age. They are more patient, interactive, responsible and aware. What does this mean? The survey was not prepared to answer the questions that its result brought up; however an investigation must be conducted into the matter.

### **The Mental Model**

Education comes first as the prime product in a child's mental development. It varies between rights, requirements, and demands. While the UN sees education as a child's right, Jordanian children apprehend it as a requirement, while local culture perceives it as a demand. The children simply do not see education as a right nor as a demand, but a requisite for universities or higher education, that will affect their job and career opportunities. In the CRC articles education and culture are related in a way, but neither was taken as a reference in writing the convention. If culture is defined as the integrated pattern of human behavior, that includes language, thought, communication, actions, customs, ethics, beliefs, institutions of racial ethnicity,

religion, social groups, then education is a factor in helping children understand their culture<sup>1</sup>, environment and scientific phenomena. This would then make education the intellectual human tool, which is wrongly seen by children as a duty.

### **The Physical Model**

In the process of interviewing children, they frequently contributed information that was not related to the question. In their spontaneous responses we found that children understand and differentiate between standard of living and values of life. The physical model basically discusses a child's needs, safety and whereabouts.

This paper classifies the children's responses into three frameworks; *the human system*; child as individual, his personality and attitudes, *the cultural system*; child as a member of the community, his conducts and codes of behavior; *the spatial system*; urban factors, his perception and cognition. In the course of discussion these frameworks will overlap in a sequential linear or parallel manner (Coleman 2001). It is worth mentioning that the original survey included most of the items in the three systems even though they were not categorized accordingly. It is worth mentioning, and beyond the scientific approach and questions, children in our survey and in the Arab culture in general, use explanatory responses more than direct ones.

## **Human system**

### **Child as an Individual**

In the CRC articles, the child is identified as a human entity with an identity and rights. This makes a child a unit in the family, community, and urban setting. Individuality should be contained within a concept which indicates that a child is a member rather than a unit in his family, community and urban setting. The difference is that an individual member while entitled to all rights also shares responsibilities and duties which are appropriate to his age, physical and mental maturity. In the case of a child being referred to as a unit all reference to responsibilities drop until the child becomes an adult. Thus the child will always strive to become an adult in order to be seen as a part of the community and that has a sense of belonging.

### **Awareness and Maturity:**

One of the main findings of the <sup>2</sup>Al-Yarmouk area interviews and survey shows that children of the selected age 10-14 years were more mature than expected. Signs of maturity and awareness were observed in several ways. The first looked at how children allocate themselves from within their age group, within a younger age group and an older age group. It is interesting to note that they perceived children below their age as noisy, annoying, immature and irresponsible, and those above their age as arrogant and reckless. The different terminologies that they used to describe the different age groups show us how they perceive each group. Nevertheless they are keen to quickly pass their age to the adolescent and adult age, where the community, the system and state parties will acknowledge their maturity.

In certain quotations about playing outside their houses, nearly all girls and a reasonable number of boys replied that they are too big to play outside. When asked 'do you mind to play with your brothers or

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<sup>1</sup> Universities in Jordan have increased credits and topic related to cultural issues. At the same time decreased those related to specialty, technology and profession, as Graduates prove to be culturally incompetence.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Yarmouk is of a low income planed district compose of a group on neighborhoods such as Al-Manara, Al-Quasmeh, Al-ashrafiah, Al-Wehdat and other small neighborhood

sisters' all of them replied that they were shy to do so. This is because the elders would look at them as 'children' and not mature individuals if they did so in public or around grownups. Children however associate their mental maturity with their body growth.

Another example is that most girls in the group who were above 12 mentioned that they like to walk outside their houses but they tend to stay away from places where males would watch them, which they consider to be an improper behavior. They would love to go out if they had a little more privacy and freedom. Also in getting out and farther away from their home and known surroundings they begin to gain more confidence in themselves. Staying at home because they do not want to deal with being stared at may have more effect on the girls than is visibly obvious. The concept of maturity and immaturity in children in this region remains to be of big concern to children, families and their communities. In all cases children give up their childhood joys for the sake of convincing their families and communities that they are mature adults. It is the dilemma of what comes first, the body or the mind; in this region the maturity of the body is a key factor in judging a child's maturity.

### **Awareness is a sign of Maturity.**

Proper judgment of children for their surroundings is another tool that has been used to show that children at the selected age show that they are mature. Most children did not criticize or complaint about their standards of living, their houses being nice or ugly neither about their family income, but rather their neighborhood, being clam or noisy, safe or danger serene and rustic. Some issues that the children frequently mentioned have to do with noise that comes from children playing in the streets adjacent to their houses. Family privacy, care and integrity always came before the number of rooms, services and commodities they had. "Places did not change but people did", a twelve years old girl response to the question of, did the image of your place of living change in your memory from one year to next. The same girl elaborates that in old times everybody played together, now each person plays alone, with family or extended family. In an answer to the question of whether these changes occurred for better or for worse the same girl said "in old times, because of the intimate neighborly relations, people found themselves in big trouble because they did not know the limits of such relations, they entered the neighbors house with no permission, it's better to bring back the relation but in an organized and controlled manner". These kinds of replies show us that these children are mature and capable of contributing positively to the community.

### **Expression:**

The use of expression forms a person's attitude and how they deal with their surroundings. Children use expressions to describe their view of themselves, their identity and behavior. They don't hesitate to give their opinions about themselves or others. One child said that she practiced studying and singing in front her mother's mirror so as to see what became her more. Some words such as 'like, don't like, optimistic, pessimistic, vulgar, lower class, no manners, nasty, and rude' are an example of the vast terminologies that the children used to express their opinions and judgment. Children in their responses frequently used expressions; even if they were not a necessity for answering the questions. Their answers were expressive and scaled. They would not say it was 'good or bad' they would say it was 'vulgar or gentle.' This shows us that they able to express themselves and have the capability of communication if only they are given the chance.

### **Preferences**

It was clear in the interview results that the targeted group, have accommodated themselves with their living conditions, none of them showed that they were not satisfied with their values of life, nor their

standard of living. In order for us to check what they actually preferred, new questions were added in which they were asked to compare their urban setting with those they see in western movies and series. Answers prove that, nearly all of them admired the standards of living found in the west; the wide spreads of greenery; the manifested pitched roofs (children in the target area don't see pitched roofs because all buildings in their area have flat roofs), the wide use of coloring, spacious and calm spaces and wide streets. Some added that although they prefer to live in such urban settings they would never accept the ways and values of the western world. This shows us that the children are really content with their values. They however would not mind seeing their standards of living change if it doesn't affect their values.

## **Cultural system**

### **Child as a members of the community**

#### **Rights and Responsibilities**

The concept of the child varies from one culture to another. The UN and CRC conventions have worked hard to bring the different cultures and nations together. The United Nation and its agencies left no project, or research, without studying it and trying to implement their understandings. Jordan likes many other countries and nations have certain reservation on articles related to culture and religion. As the UN refers to culture and religion as a part of the free rights of the child, some nations see it as the child's responsibility. While responsibilities vary, its necessity grows and fades as humans change and go through life. Rights however, remain constant and here lies the problem as it holds many constants with little variable. It is clear that responsibilities and participation should be included as some of the variables that are dealt with in addition to the constants.

#### **Participation**

CRC concepts inspired the GUIC project in an effort to solve problems related to the child. They want to create an environment that would encourage healthy, educated, caring, interactive child. They did this by retaining the child's rights and which then should ease the burden of responsibilities or duties they may have (responsibilities in this case refers to child labor, which is in many cases the reason why some organizations do not include responsibilities in the frame works they present). The absence of responsibilities in these concepts, have created negative impacts on children's conducts, interaction levels, and behaviorisms. The overlooking of such prime subjects create negative effects on the urban setting, planning, environment, family, community and social condition as well as many other aspects of life. Participation is probably the most democratic term that can be used to express what is needed in the society.

Participation and responsibilities play a huge role in a child's world. The problem is they are usually initiated by others, and is made up of burdens. Many projects and programs including the GUIC project looked at participation as a key method for the solution of communal and urban problems. Participation is "an active involvement in certain activities, exercises and opinion. Responsibility refers to having control or authority, and to be able to take action or decisions without supervision." The goal now is to promote and encourage the active participation of children.

The GUIC program in interviews and questionnaires, which received verbal and imaginative expressions in response, studied their current roles. Out of the participatory action in the GUIC project, the children gave good, but contained responses. Their limited experiences showed that their interactions were not sustainable. The ability to participate and be a member of society from a communal or family perspective is limited and thus creates an unnecessary boundary between a child and the world around them. The survey proves that children who hold certain participatory activities in their family; neighborhood and community were more inclined to participate in the GUIC program than those who did not. Some examples

of the participation that the children were involved in were limited to family and close neighborhood settings. Cleaning, cooking, shopping from near shops, taking care of younger relatives, teaching them, attending to them, bringing them from school, as well as helping with the family income or family shop were the main sources of participation that the children were involved in.

In certain cases children are trained to keep the family business running which is a sustainable investment in the child's future. Levels of participation held by children in their families and neighborhoods need to extend in cultural and environmental directions. Children need to be allowed to spread their wings and touch upon all the different aspects of life.

### **Neighbors**

The concept of neighbors and relatives produced a heightened level of interest from the children and their responses. Added Question about who they preferred to be their nearest neighbor, unanimously put grandparents first; girls preferred their mother sisters second, especially those with daughters of their age; boys secondly preferred their father's relatives especially if they had sons. Classmates come in third place. We can conclude from these GUIC surveys, that neighbor, relations have widely deteriorated. Many children expressed their worries, as neighbors are becoming a source of more and more nuisances which cause them trouble and anxiety. Children see friends from school as better neighbors than neighbors who just happen to be near. Presence of peers as neighbors for both genders is connected widely with outdoor activities, more than home visits or studying.

### **Friends**

Girls enjoy walking and shopping while boys enjoy playing, gathering, and chatting. Gender segregation is clear after the age of 10-11 and a must after the age of 13-14. While boys can stay, gather and group in certain areas and places outside their houses, girls have to stay on the move. It is accepted to find boys standing outside, but not girls and if they do it is in the very close proximity to their homes. Intimate relations between adult neighbors, always create a friendly atmosphere for their children; the same can be said about children as their relationships also affect adults. . A working mother is another factor that affects children neighbor preferences. Working mothers usually have their colleagues as friends that may affect their direct neighborly relations in a negative way. In peculiar cases when children have a family car they prefer that their grandparents and relatives not to be near their homes. Distance thus can be overcome and they are given a good chance for frequent or weekly visit or trips outside their residential vicinity. For those who do not have easy transportation, it is clear that they prefer their relatives to live near them. Family ties and relation persist to be the main source of cross social and cultural activities and frequent celebrations in the region. Nevertheless, it is still widely accepted that friendly relationship with non-relative neighbors proves to be a source of safe and settled living.

### **Gender**

Gender is one of the main factors found to have a set of preferences and priorities for children. In general both boys and girls classify their preferences according to their family priorities. In their social life, girls show more interactive attitudes towards organizing their peers according to their mother's relation and visits; they prove to be more dependent on Mom's priorities. Boys are rather independent in their social life although they prefer to connect themselves to their father's activities. A father's absence in the daily social activities obliges them to rely on themselves or on their bigger brothers. Vivid and active female social life compensates girls for the absence of outdoor activities. Boys however, are more enthused to have their male relatives living nearby; it means direct and quick support in case of trouble and emergencies. Education and

reputation comes first for girls, while career, admiration and respect come first for boys. Clean, calm, and safe streets and gardens are highly requested by girls, while wide streets, spaces, yards and park availability is of big importance to boys. Girls tend to talk more about family, house and relations, while boys like to play and sports. The way each gender deals with specific activities and leisure time shows us that they prefer being segregated. It provides growing children with a way to express themselves with one another without worrying about what a person from the opposite gender may think. It is also how they create an environment that they are more comfortable in.

### **Adults**

Another form of segregation that is very new to children is found in transforming what used to be communal activities to more formalized and adult activities. An example would be weddings, feasts, celebrations and other cultural activities. Fancy weddings in hotels are replacing conventional house and garden weddings. Children, as in many places, are not welcomed any more. Their participation in one of the most cultural and social events is becoming a matter of the past. It is rather sad that as cultural and social activities develop and modernize children are being isolated and their participation is not sought after or accepted. The events that used to be a source of enjoyment for children and their families are becoming more formal and less inviting for active participation of the younger generations. This is splitting up the family unit and is not creating a positive alternative for children.

### **Ethics and Codes of Behavior**

Like responsibilities, ethics and code of behavior are expected to be beyond the scope of a child. Their conducts in general where ethics and codes of behavior is judged tends to be reserved and shy. They pay considerable attention to how others look at them, their walking, talking and dressing. Their conducts vary according to place, time and company. This information was not directly asked for but was gathered from the way children responded to questions and how they dealt with different situations.

Children use comparative values and terms that are usually used by their parents, teachers, and neighbors. They express how the differences in present behaviors are compared to those of the past; and they see change happening in the present and how it will affect the future. The past is referred to as though were there and have evolved with its progression into the present. The children differentiate in their expressions between metaphoric symbols and sign names. They don't explain their use of expressions when being interviewed because they assume that everyone understands their use of local expressions. Most stated that people relations and behavior was much better in old days than it is now, because they pay attention to what their elders say and how they act.

## **Spatial system**

### **Child Urban Figure**

The movement of children around their houses, on their way to school, in and out of their residential areas and in the city follows certain patterns which are directed by available facilities, interests and communal participation. The interaction of children with their surroundings in reality is different than that in their mental map. Most children, who were surveyed when asked to draw a map of the area around their home, and to show locations of things they knew, draw what we may call a conscious map, and not a mental map. They worked hard to visualize their surrounding through what they thought about and knew, not what they saw. They added places, elements, trees, shapes, colors which they thought should be there. When those maps were compared with their verbal response, we were able to reconstruct the actual sequence of their facilities, interests and participation. Frequent use of spaces laid the structure of the map

with facilities such as schools, shops, bakeries, grocer, relative houses and adjacent play spaces. The secondary spaces were restaurants, candy, ice cream and accessory shops, shops, places of walk and play, bus stop and places of gatherings. The last category of interests contained public parks, gardens, play grounds, mosques, markets and ruins. It is interesting to see that spaces that should hold great importance come in at the end of their priority list.

### **Measured Thinking**

Distances, sizes, scales, materials colors, details, shapes, new and old are all complementary factors in defining a child's map setting. Distance plays a very important role in the way children deal with spaces. They prefer places that are linked to their responsibilities to be close to their homes as they usually want go alone. These kinds of tasks they try to get done as soon as possible. However, when it comes to places of interest they prefer them to be at a reasonable distance from their homes. When they go to these places they usually go in a group and is directly linked with their enjoyment and free time. Walking is part of the enjoyment where children spend some time chatting, eating or playing. Visits to relatives, Friday Congregation Prayer, picnics to natural and historical sites, or of attendance of public games, all performed with adults, are part of their link to communal activities. Communal participation, if not in another town, has to be far, and reached by mean of private or public transport.

It was clear in the sequence of importance that a child's gender and age played a key factor in their preferences. With no doubts we can say that there is a system that separates the genders in our society. Also there is a dynamic shift in children's interests and gender segregation as they grow. Gender integration and age generalization in Jordan and the MENA region is accepted in social activities and celebrations and is not looked at as discrimination. It is something that must be admitted especially because it plays such a big role in the way different genders interact with the community.

### **Size and Scale**

Size and scale have a two-way effect on children's vision. It may be interesting and appealing for some of them and scary and uncomfortable for others. Big sizes and scales draw a child's curiosity, but if these sizes are associated with adult activities and not accessible to them, curiosities will turn to dismay. Regular use of spaces and buildings by children become bigger as they draw them in plans, while those not used by them become smaller and are drawn in elevations. Children draw their houses and their relative's houses in plan and in bigger sizes than their schools mosques and neighbors' houses, which also are drawn in elevation only. They also perceive things in 3D when the object is closely tied to them and in 2D when its tie is not very strong. This shows us the level of impact different spaces have on a child's memory and its effect on their conscious mind.

### **New and Old**

New and old building and spaces are both interesting to children. They like moving to new areas but without changing their homes. Also they mentioned demolishing old buildings and constructing new ones but that does not include their houses; they want to see new building with clear colors, new shapes, curved and inclined walls, pitched roofs, glass and stone. A new thing is associated with progress and growing up, knowledge and understanding. Old is the source of stories and information, nearly most children between the age of 8-12 prefer to visit open natural and historical sites, but after that age, as they enter the age of adolescent, their interests shift to urban parks and malls. Children usually look forward to visiting their grandparents which also changes when become twelve or older. As they grow, time distribution and interest is gradually shifted towards giving more attention to themselves. Their focus turns to the inside. Yet it is

difficult for us to put an age restriction as to when a child is no longer a child. The number eighteen is not a measure of how and when a child grows up.

### **Space Evaluation**

Space hierarchy, definition and transition is clear in the conscious map of the surveyed children; walls, doors, roofs, balconies, gardens, and yards all plays a key factor in their movements and presence. The openness or closeness of a space differentiates as to a child approach it. Spaces are generally divided into four areas. The external space which is anything that is outside their home's boundary. The internal space is anything inside their house's boundary, and includes interior and exterior spaces. Interior spaces are connected to the inside of their homes while things that are attached to this interior space are considered an exterior space. The way that these spaces are synthesized allows us to understand how children put different standards to the different spaces that they interact with on a daily basis. It is also important that we understand that children do not have the same image for their surroundings that we may have. And thus the way we deal with spaces and their connection to the child should be studied and focused on.

### **Results and Conclusion**

Urban issues are becoming more and more on the agenda of the international community. Conventions and charters developed, from within a preconceived idea, that children conditions and environments in the world, and in particular the developing world are deteriorating. A universal or international problem needs an international solution. Self sustained agendas turned into strategies that in turn developed into internationally motivated programs, objects, and exercises. Standards and norms spared no effort in trying to solve the problem. New terminological concepts such as sustainable, friendly, better, attachment, authentic etc. took the initiative and produced frameworks and manuals of implementation. The size of the children's' problem and the scale of rapid urban deterioration prove to be growing faster and much bigger than the effort and success achieved in all attempts. All efforts work hard to mobilize local communities, organizations, children, and families to participate in solving, or at least lessening their problems. Yet the approach remains that they have to adopt the international standards, norms and processes to reach the right solution. For a long time, since the spread of the international style in urbanism and architecture and until now, potential values and qualities held in communal cultures and beliefs have been neglected or ignored and in cases believed to be useless. This paper proves (although it was not planed in the GUIC survey) that children in this region usually refer to concepts they are familiar with; to create the values of their life and not the standards of living. From questions included in the GUIC project and more questions added to enhance the research goal, we concluded that solving this problem and improving their urban conditions and enhancing their participation, could be achieved through the actual structure of their age and gender. Generalization in age and sex of children prove to be confusing and disturbing to the international world. Yet if projects and programs in this region are to be successful if they have to recognize gender definitions and age gradations. Maturity is one of the main factors that highly directs and controls children's conduct, behavior, relations, and activities in nearly all aspects of their lives. It is of big importance to recognize that a child's maturity while affected by gender and age; is directly associated with body and physical maturity. Preference, awareness, responsibilities, satisfaction, consideration, ethics and many qualitative concepts can better explain these children than those of quantitative dimension, such as; unit, information, edge, etc. Questions holding qualitative measures produce more responsive replies than informative questions. The conducts and behavior of children and their use of space and urban setting are not manipulated by, planning standards and criteria or urban design concepts and frameworks, but rather by availability, interests, and participation.

Children draw what they think of and know, more than what they see or perceive. They live inside their conscious where things are much better than what are actually outside. If planning and urban design, do not have the power or ability to find such spaces or place for them, let's assist them to find it themselves, if not in reality why not in their conscious map.

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