



# What we know about teachers' status in Egypt

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Egypt is grappling with a significant crisis in the number of teachers and their poor salaries, whether those with permanent, temporary or freelance contracts. The shortage in the number of teachers in Egypt is estimated at tens of thousands. According to the current minister of education, Reda Hegazy, 20,000 teachers are needed annually to fill the deficit, while many teachers retire due to reaching retirement age<sup>1</sup>. Many educators and researchers attribute this crisis to the decision issued in 1997 by the government of Kamal al-Ganzouri to stop employing education college graduates, thus leaving many of them unemployed. So, the shortage in the number of teachers accumulated over more than 25 years.

In 2023, the first phase of an initiative to appoint 150,000 teachers over five years was launched under the auspices of the President of the Republic to fill the deficit. The first phase of recruitment of 30,000 teachers has already begun, with 90,000 teachers taking the test, which was set by the Central Agency for Organization and Administration (CAOA), of whom 28,000 passed. The education ministry had announced that it would initially prioritise the recruitment of teachers in primary schools and kindergartens according to the deficit in each school across the country<sup>2</sup>.

After the CAO A announced the test results, the education ministry organised a program to develop the capabilities of teachers who passed the competition and another for teachers' physical and mental fitness to measure their ability to tol-

erate explanations to students in the classroom<sup>3</sup>. A second round of tests was held at the Military Academy – an illegal move not even included in the ministry's announcement of the competition – for those who passed the CAO A's test.

The second phase of tests included medical examination, physical exercises (push-ups, abdominal exercises, running for 100 meters in 20 seconds, and weighing), and final assessment<sup>4</sup>.

Following these tests, thousands of male and female teachers were excluded<sup>5</sup> because of overweight, pregnancy, and childbirth, or for failing the medical, physical, mental fitness and assessment tests held at the Military Academy<sup>6</sup>, which constitutes a clear violation of the law, the constitution and international conventions.

Shedding light on the actual employment conditions in this vital sector, this paper reviews a number of facts and figures revealing the conditions of teachers in Egypt in terms of average wages in both the private and public sectors, the disparity in wages between males and females, and the total number of teachers and their academic qualifications, in public and private schools and at the rural and urban levels. The paper also reviews the student-to-teacher ratios in Egypt compared with the global ones, and finally, the figures of government spending on education.

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1 Mariam Raafat, Wafaa Yahya, We need 20,000 new teachers annually.. What did Reda Hegazy say about the crisis of teachers?, 1-1-2024, Al-Masry Al-Youm; <https://2u.pw/VxFnjkl>

2 Ahmed Hafez, Competition for recruiting 150,000 teachers.. Conditions, specializations, method of application, and selection criteria, 11-2-2022, Al-Ahram Gate; <https://2u.pw/TIXH6eQ>

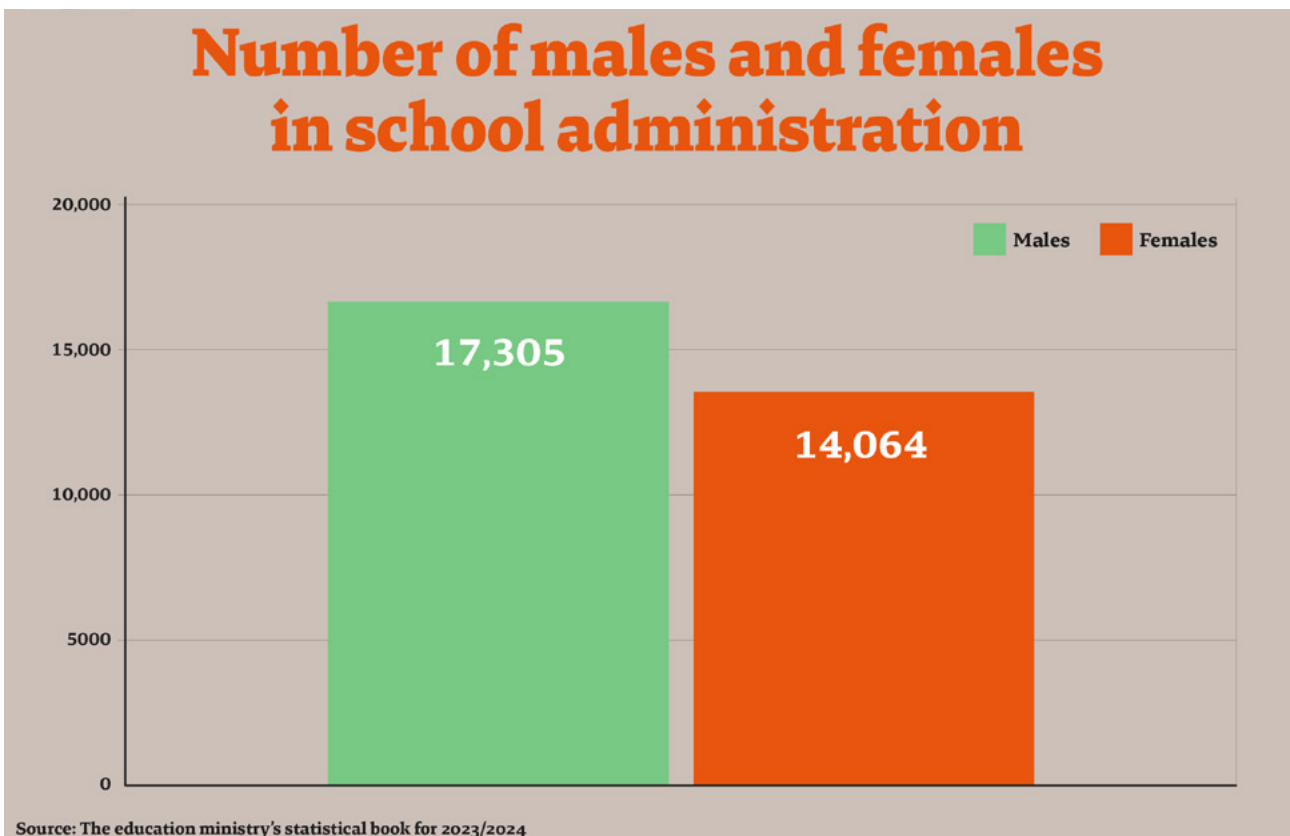
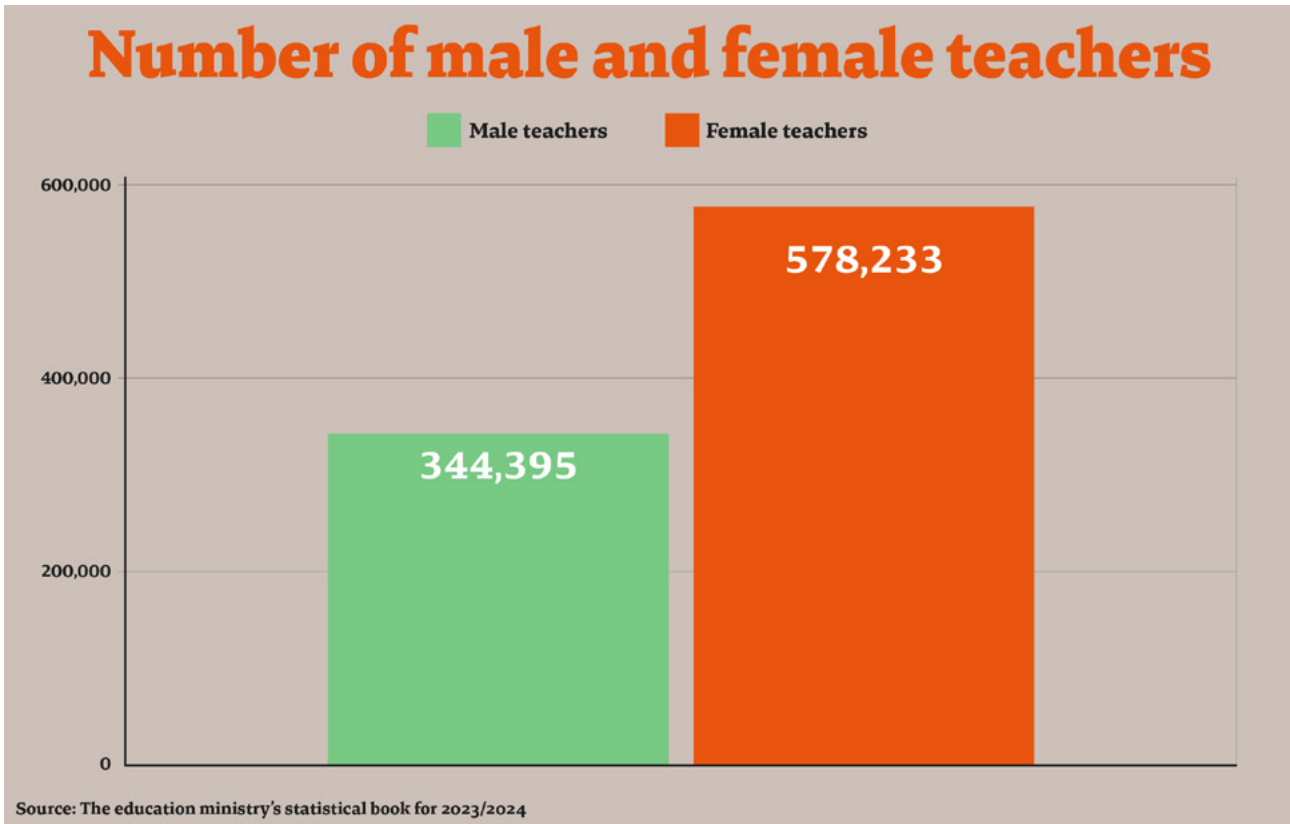
3 Mariam Raafat, Wafaa Yahya, 30,000 teachers to be appointed annually.. the education ministry's plan to fill the teachers' deficit during 2023, 30-12-2023, Al-Masry Al-Youm; <https://2u.pw/zTkrHBX>

4 Rana Mamdouh, Female teachers fail the fitness test, 3-8-2023, Mada Masr; <https://2u.pw/jo7e1B>

5 Hind Adel, Breakthrough in the crisis of those excluded from the 30,000 teachers' competition... MP says, 8-11-2023, Youm7; <https://2u.pw/FgG0bsW>

6 Abdullah Abu Deif, Due to overweight and pregnancy.. The story of those excluded from the 30,000 teachers' competition, 21-7-2023, Al-Masry Al-Youm; <https://2u.pw/ZNfQyCR>

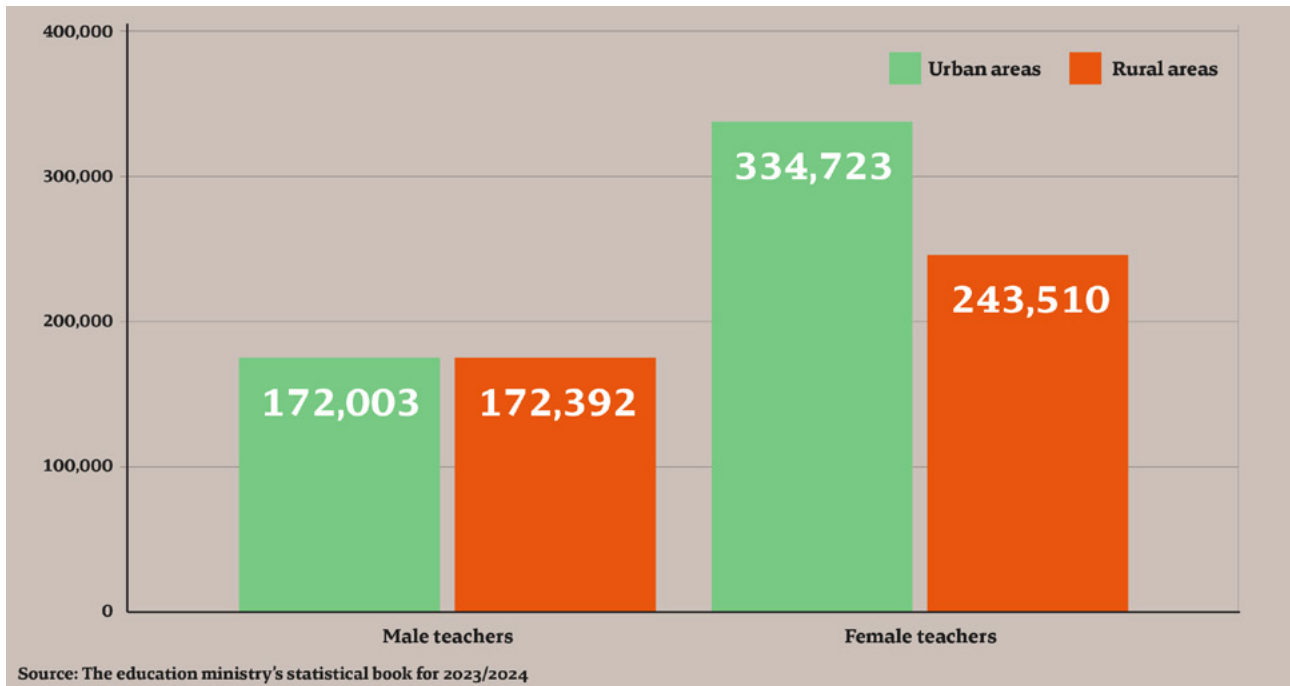
# 1- A majority of female teachers, but not in the administration or the syndicate



Female teachers hold the majority of jobs in the pre-university education sector, accounting for 62.6%, while male teachers make up 37.3%. Meanwhile, female teachers make up 44.9% of

school administrations compared with 55.1% of males. Males got the majority of promotions carried out by the education ministry recently<sup>7</sup>, a structural defect that should be addressed.

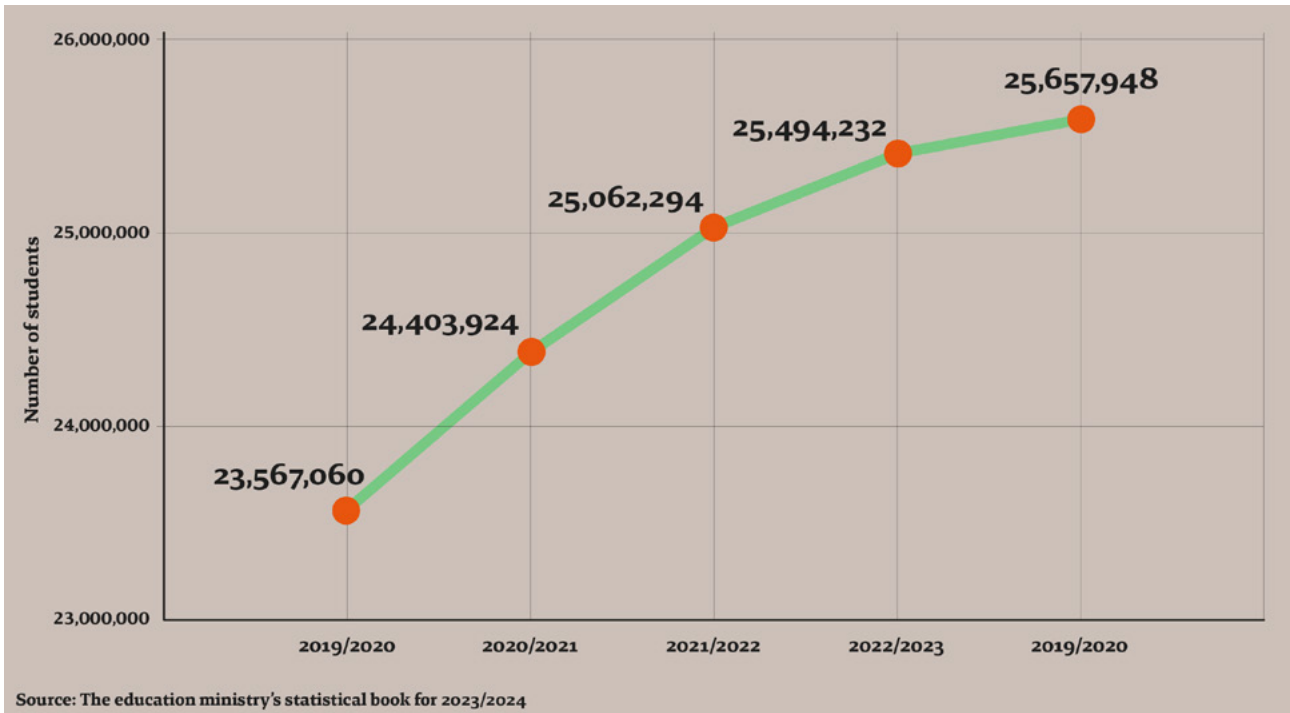
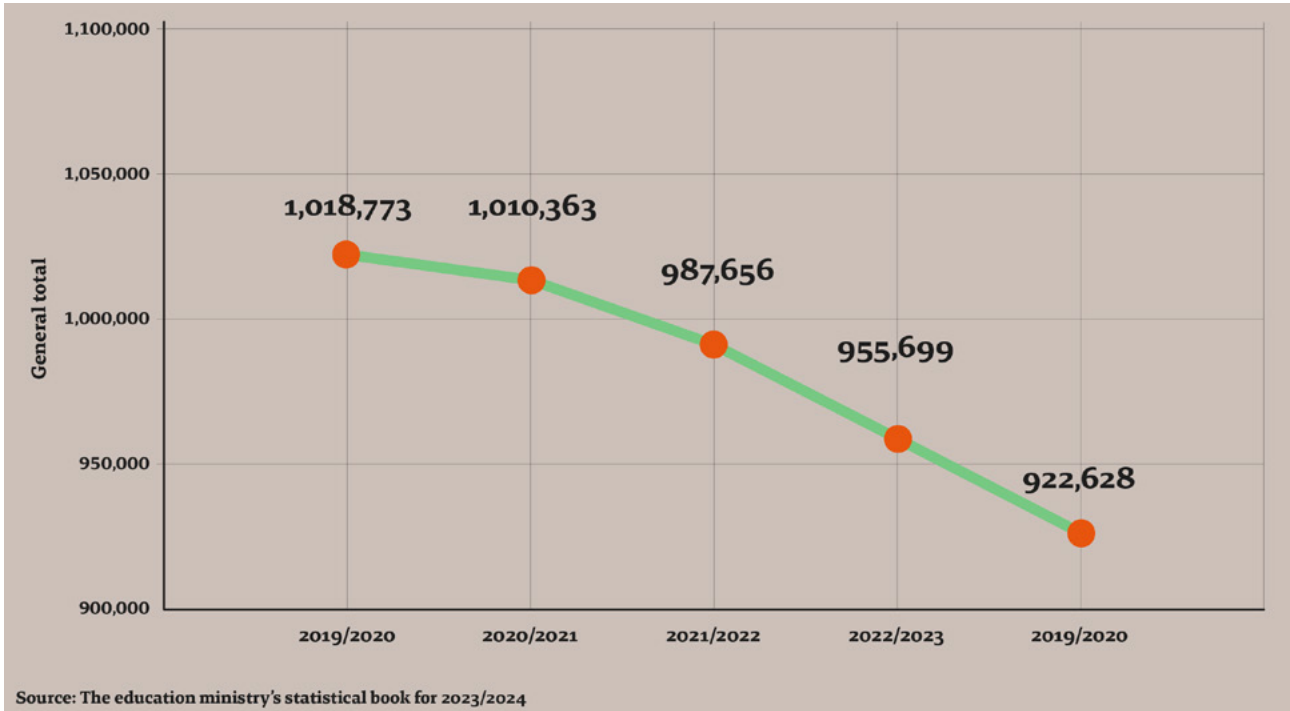
## 2- The numbers of male and female teachers are equal in urban areas, uneven in rural areas



The figure above shows that the numbers of male and female teachers in urban areas are almost equal, unlike in rural areas where there is a marked disparity. This may be due to the high rates of early marriage and divorce of rural women, the prevalence of illiteracy in the countryside, especially among women, and the high rates of rural poverty, which leads to dropping out of school.

<sup>7</sup> By names.. Details of promotion of directors of educational departments, 8-2-2024, Masrawy; <https://m-r.pw/CFUS>

### 3- Five years of shrinking teacher numbers and increasing student numbers



Data shows that the number of teachers is constantly declining due to the lack of new appointments in the ministry and the retirement of many teachers. The figures above include only teachers with temporary and permanent contracts, not counting the administration staff, workers, and specialists.

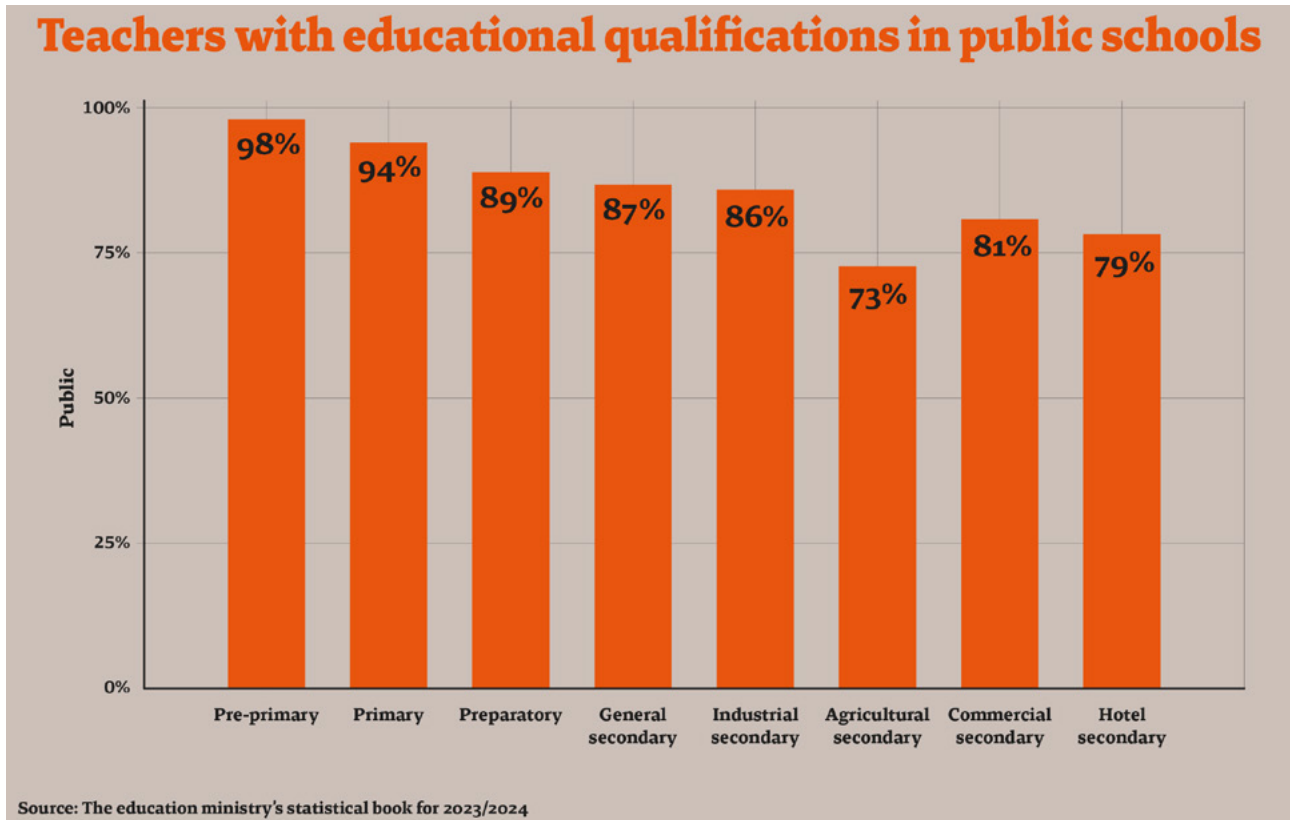
About 96,000 teachers retired between the 2019/2020 academic year and the current academic year 2023/2024. The number of students increases every year. Two million students joined the educational process in the last five years. There is also a major crisis in the absence



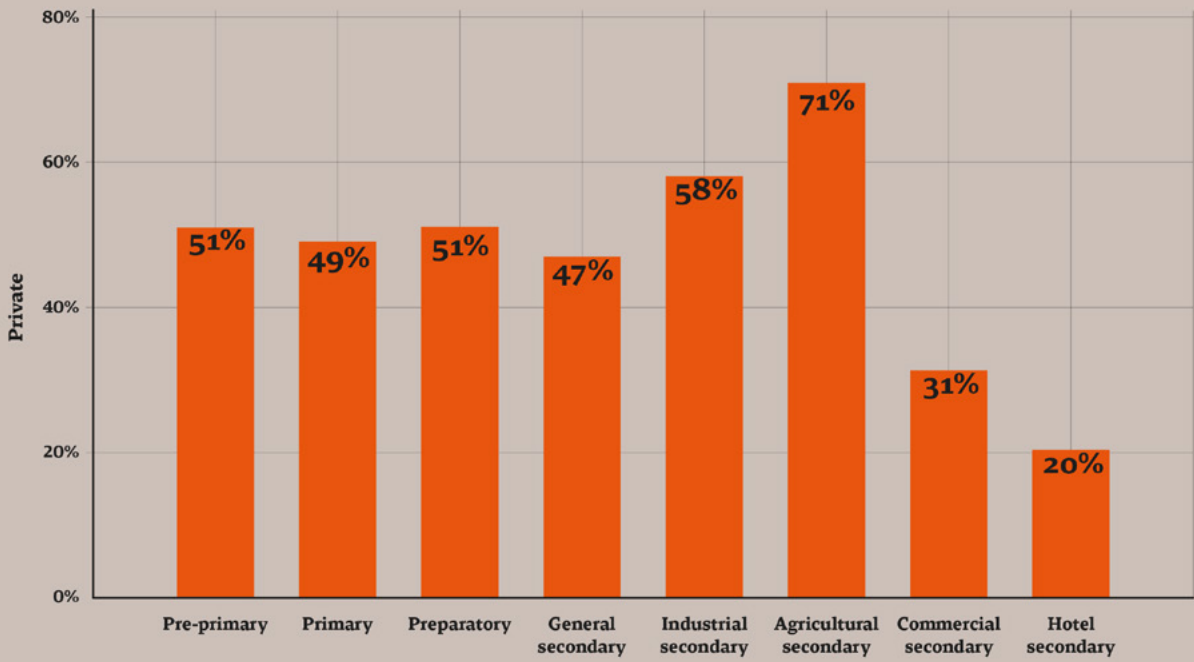
of teachers of some specialties in schools, in addition to overcrowded classrooms due to shortages in classrooms and teachers, which resulted

from the suspension of teacher appointments for a long time.

## 4- Educationally qualified teachers are concentrated in public schools



## Teachers with educational qualifications in private schools

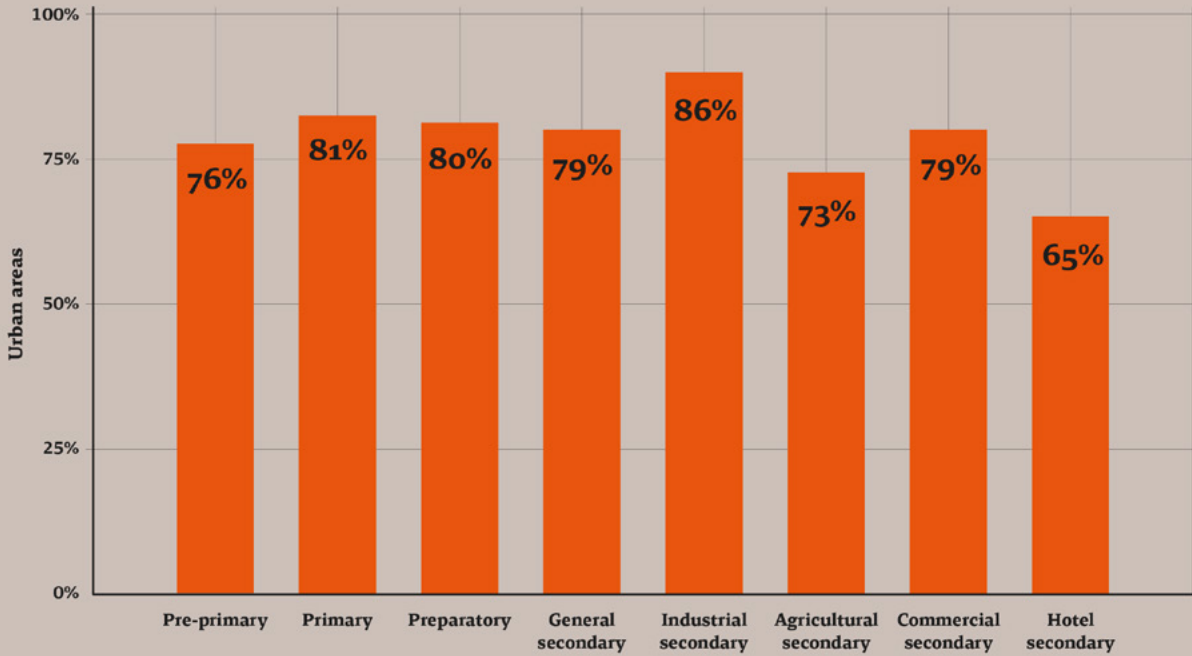


Source: The education ministry's statistical book for 2023/2024

There are apparent differences between public and private schools in terms of ratios of educational qualifications, and at the level of educational stages. In public schools, the majority of teachers have pedagogical qualifications, making up 98% in the pre-primary stage, 94% in the primary stage, and 89% in the preparatory stage. In private schools, meanwhile, teachers with pedagogical qualifications make up 51% in the pre-primary stage, 49% in the primary stage, and 51% in the preparatory stage.

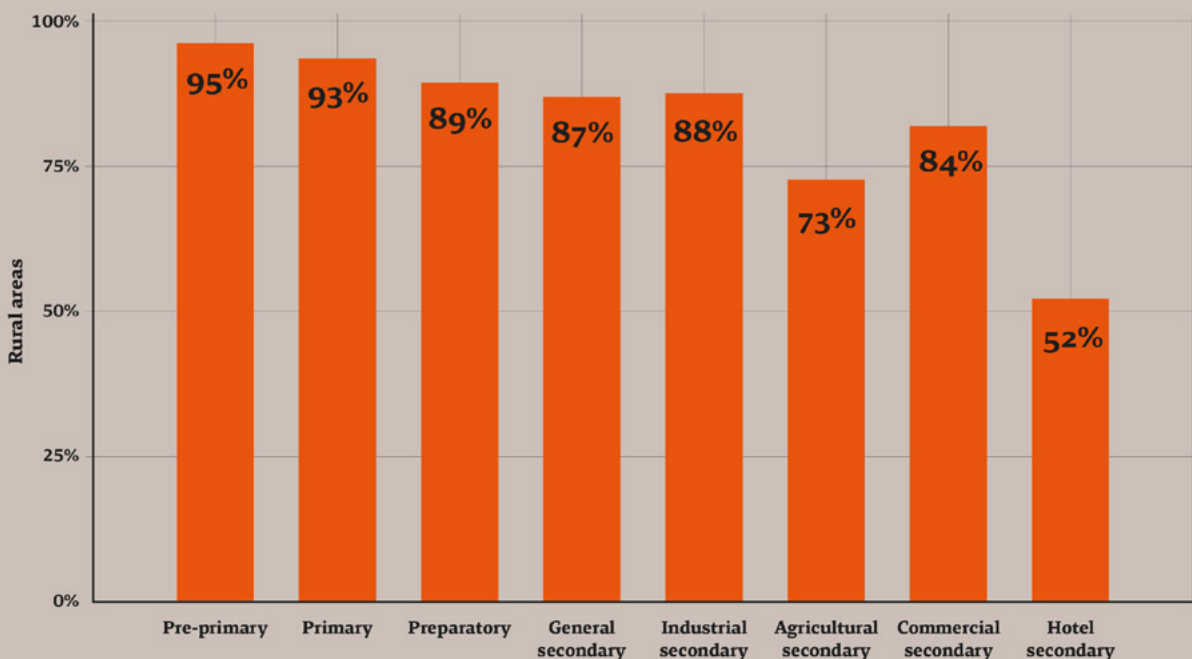
## 5- The rural areas are better in terms of educational qualification

### Teachers with educational qualifications in urban areas



Source: The education ministry's statistical book for 2023/2024

### Teachers with educational qualifications in rural areas

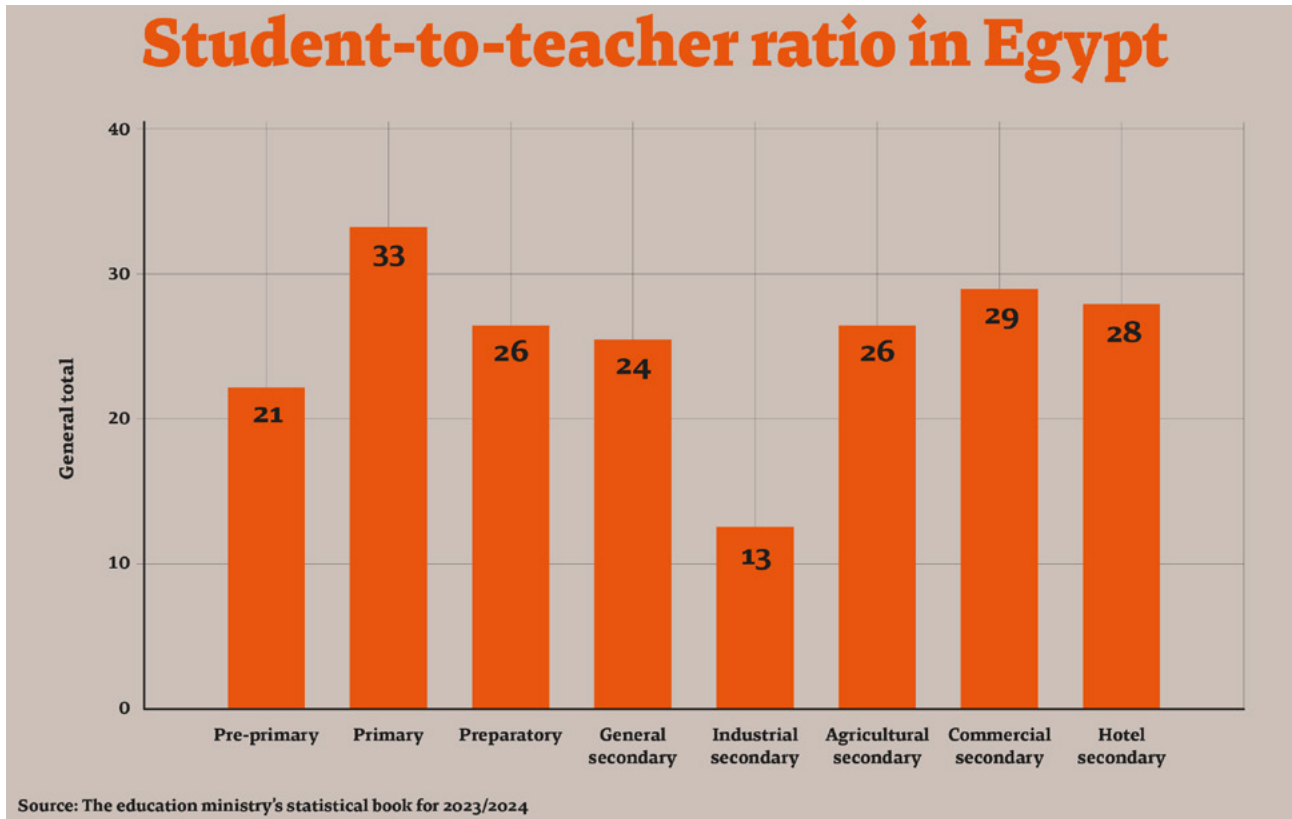


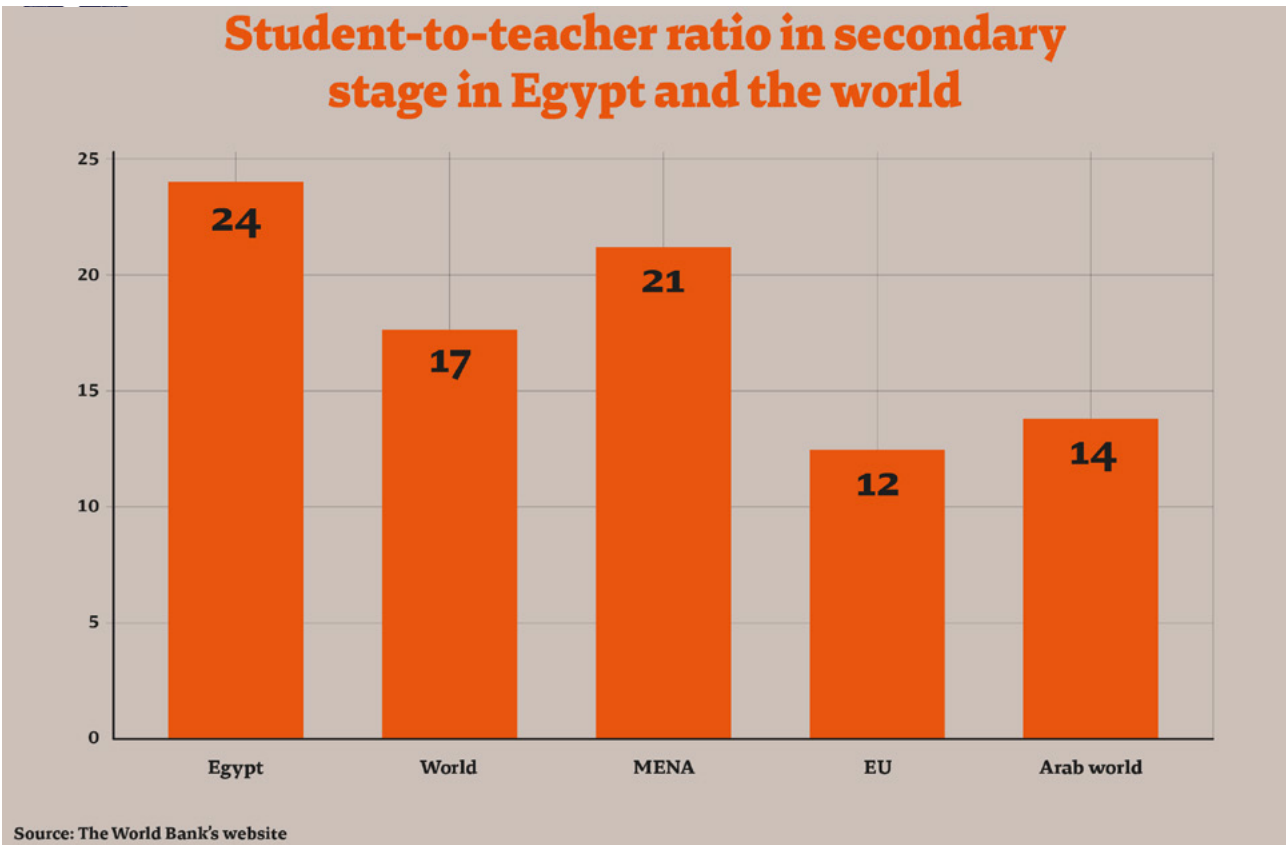
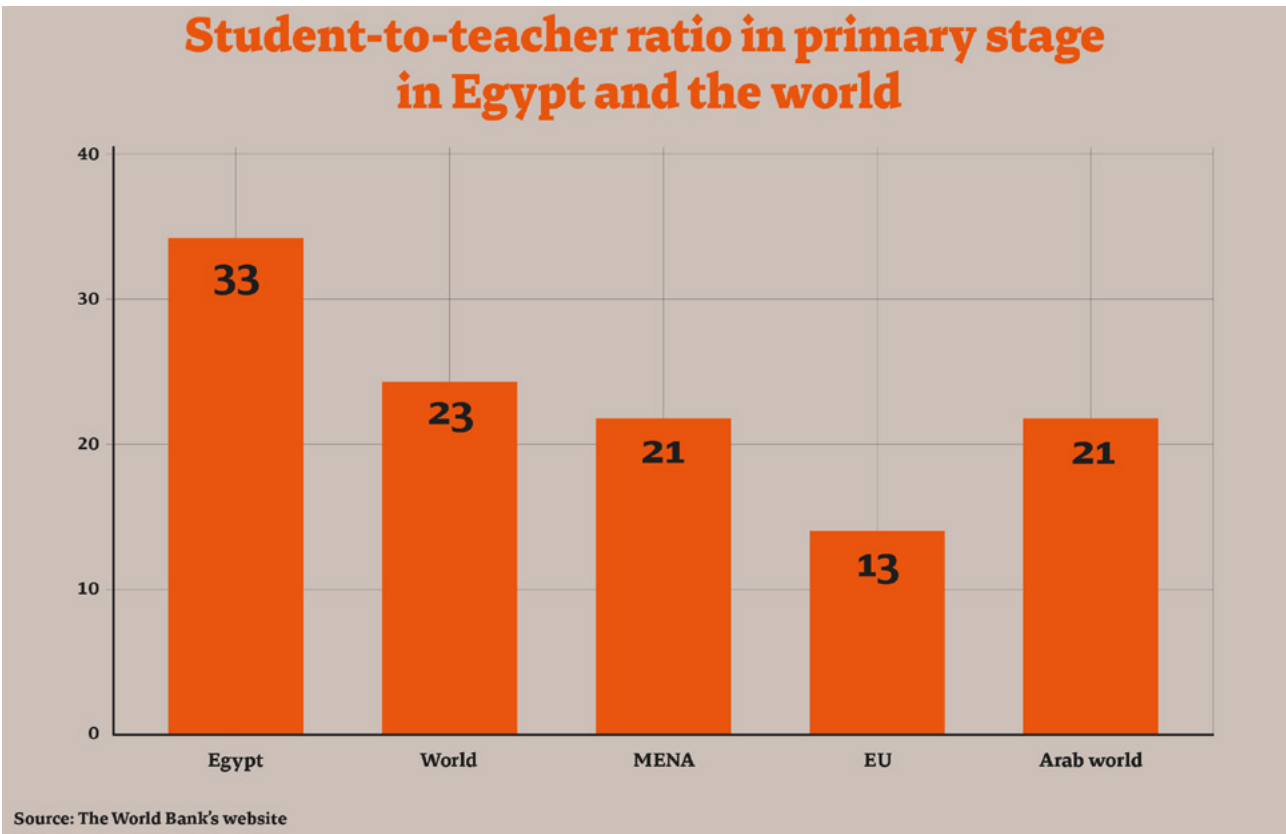
Source: The education ministry's statistical book for 2023/2024

The rural areas have the most significant proportion of pedagogical qualifications among teachers, accounting for 95% in the pre-primary stage, 93% in the primary stage, and 89% in the prepa-

ratory stage. In urban areas, meanwhile, teachers with pedagogical qualifications make up 76% in the pre-primary stage, 81% in the primary stage, and 80% in the preparatory stage.

## 6- The student-to-teacher ratio in primary schools is three times that of Europe





The World Bank measures the quality of education using two metrics: student-to-teacher (STR) and student-to-classroom ratios (SCR). Less-crowded classrooms help teachers provide

quality education and help students learn. Egypt faces two problems: overcrowded classrooms and high student-to-teacher ratios.

Due to the acute shortage in the number of

teachers at the education ministry, the gap between the number of teachers and the number of students grows every year. There are no updated official figures on the deficit at the level of stages, governorates, and subjects. Former minister Tarek Shawky made the last official clarification that gives us some details about the deficit at the parliament in December 2021, when he said that the deficit in the number of teachers amounted to 323,000<sup>8</sup>, of whom 126,000 in the basic stage, 8,800 in technical education schools, 163,000 in services and activities, and 25,000 in the Decent Life schools<sup>9</sup> (the Decent Life Initiative, launched by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in January 2019, aims to provide a decent life for the most vulnerable groups nationwide). The head of the Teachers Syndicate said in 2023 that the deficit reached 400,000 teachers<sup>10</sup>. This shortage in the number of teachers leads to a continuous increase in the student-to-teacher ratio.

The graphs above show the student-to-teacher ratios in Egypt. According to the ministry of education, the ratios are higher than required. In the primary stage, the ratio is 33 students per teacher, higher than the global and local ratios. According to the World Bank, the global ratio is 23, the ratio in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and the Arab world is 21. In contrast, the European Union ratio is 13<sup>11</sup>. In the secondary stage, the current ratio is 24, much higher than the global and local ratios. The global

ratio is 17, the MENA ratio is 21, the Arab world ratio is 14, and the European Union ratio is 12<sup>12</sup>.

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8 These remarks were made in December 2021, which means that two batches of students joined the educational process, a number of teachers retired, and no new teachers were appointed.

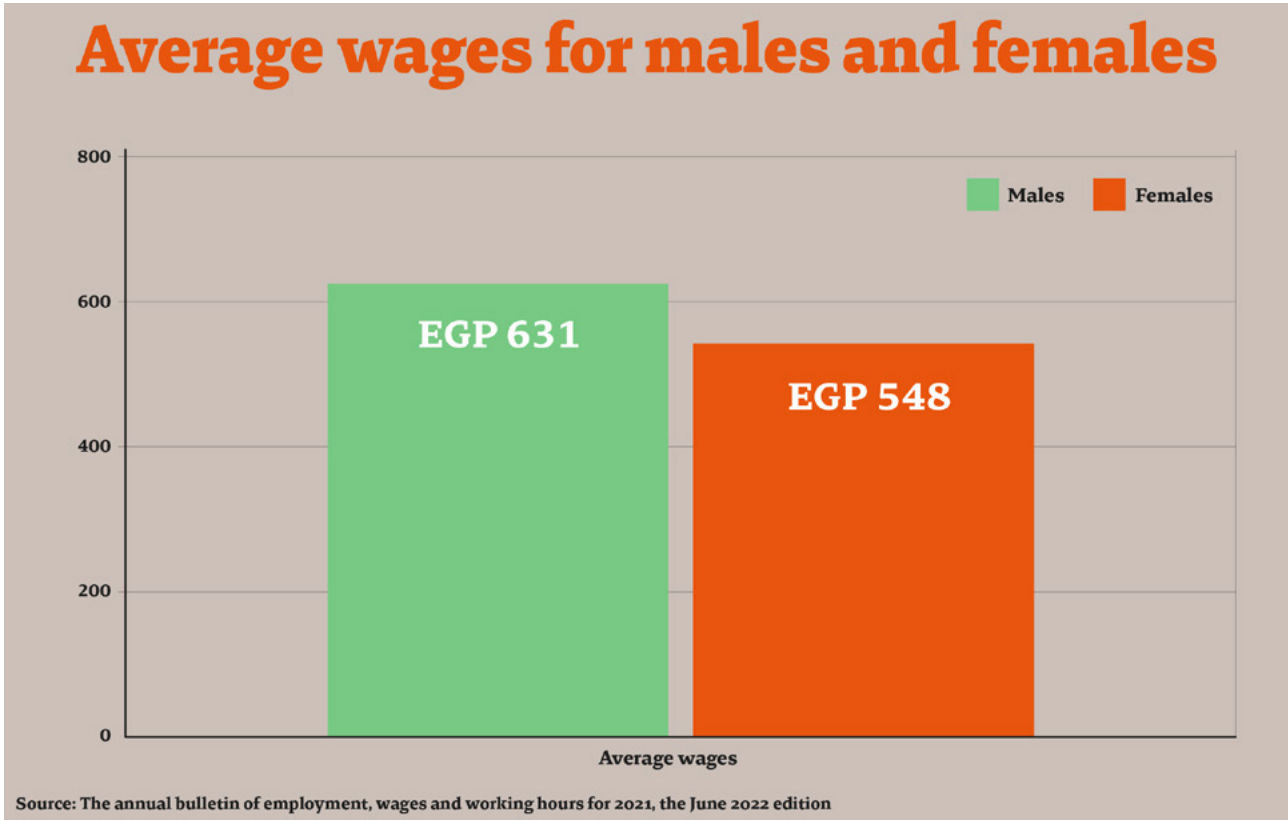
9 Sameh Lasheen - Mohamed Abdel Hamid, Minister of Education before the House of Representatives: The deficit in the number of teachers amounts to 323,000, and appointment of new teachers was stopped due to lack of budget, Al-Ahram Daily, 29-12-2021; <https://2h.ae/NYyw>

10 Atef Badr - Reham Saeed Ahmed, Head of the Teachers Syndicate during the national dialogue: The deficit in the number of teachers reached 400,000 in various specializations, Al-Masry Al-Youm, 25-5-2023; <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2895209>

11 World Bank, student-to-teacher ratio in the primary stage; <https://data.albankaldawli.org/indicator/SE.PRM.ENRL.TC.ZS>

12 World Bank, student-to-teacher ratio in the secondary stage; <https://data.albankaldawli.org/indicator/SE.SEC.ENRL.TC.ZS>

## 7- The education sector comes at the bottom of the payroll



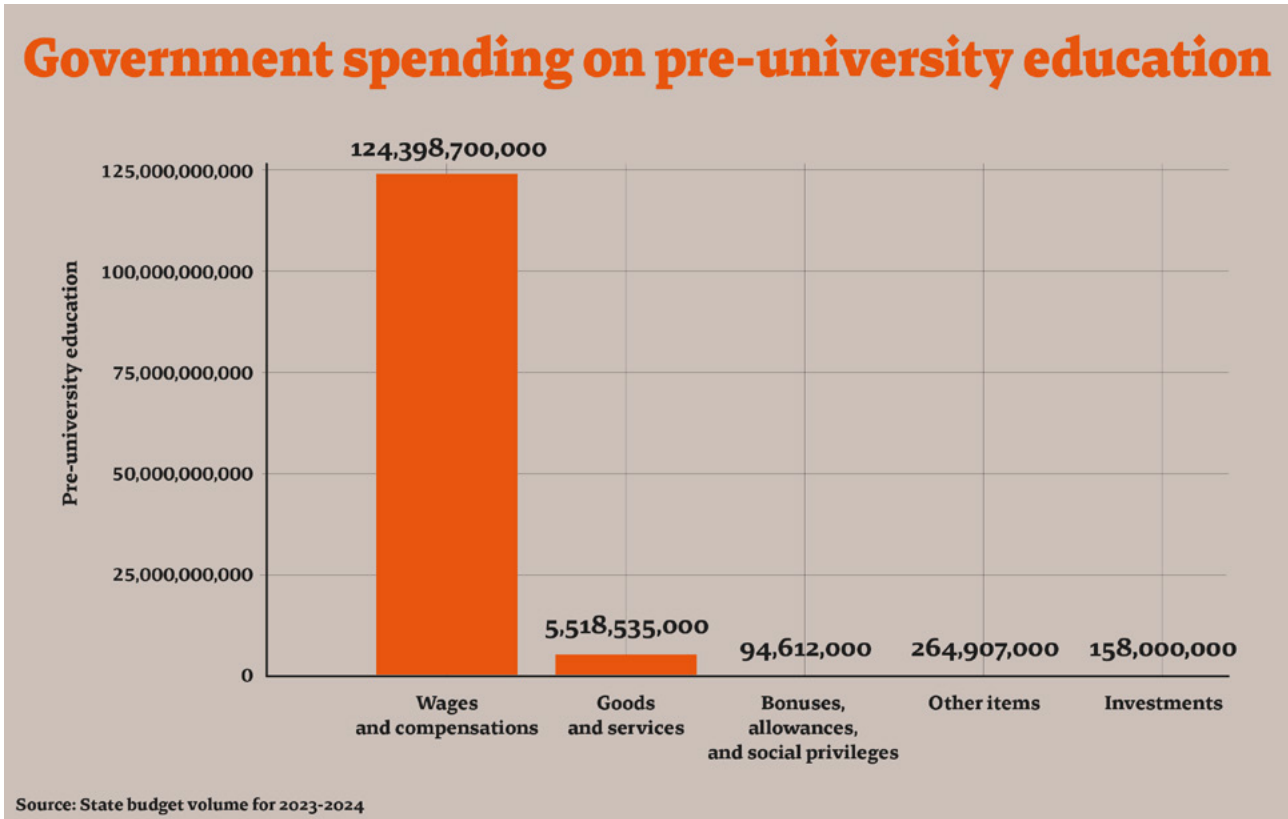
The 2023/2024 education budget amounts to EGP 130 billion, with wages and workers' compensation making up 95%. However, teachers in Egypt receive meagre salaries, leading them to resort to private lessons to improve their income and cope with the hard living conditions. According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the education sector comes at the bottom of the payroll in Egypt<sup>13</sup>. The graph on the average wages of the education sector employees per week shows a noticeable difference between the wages of males and females. The average wage of a male teacher hits EGP 631 with an average of 48 working hours per week, while the average wage of a female teacher is EGP 548 with an average of 47 working hours per week, despite the fact that female teachers constitute the majority in the education sector.

receive EGP 20 per class, with a maximum of 24 classes per week, which means that the monthly wage would not exceed EGP 1,920. The government's minimum wage currently stands at EGP 6,000, meaning teachers' salaries do not even amount to a third of the official minimum wage.

Teachers on contracts receive low wages. They

<sup>13</sup> CAPMAS, The annual bulletin of employment, wages and working hours for 2021, the June 2022 edition

## 8- The government does not adhere to the official minimum wage, while wages have the lion's share of the government spending despite their disparity



Pre-university education consumes 4.3% of the public spending in the current budget, which amounts to EGP 2.99 trillion. The government allocates EGP 130 billion for pre-university education, but 95% of that sum goes to wages. In comparison, the remaining 5% is distributed to goods and services (4.23%), bonuses and allowances (0.072%), investments (0.12%), and other expenses (0.2%)<sup>14</sup>. These allocations do not meet the constitutionally stipulated minimum expenditure on education, which must not be less than 4% of GDP according to Article 19 of the constitution<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> The Ministry of Finance, the 2023/2024 budget, <https://shorturl.at/EGVZ7>

<sup>15</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, [Ten facts about education spending in Egypt](#), December 2021