

Inclusion and Diversity in Education in the  
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan:

# Institutional Capacity Needs Assessment

by UNESCO / **idp**norway

with the support of the German Development Cooperation



Published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 9, Yacoub Ammari St,  
Abdoun PO Box 2270 - Amman 11181 Jordan

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This publication is produced by the support from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

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UNESCO would like to thank the UNESCO/idpnorway Research Team (listed alphabetically): Ian Kaplan; Amal Kavar; Jean-Francois Trani ; Terje Magnussønn Watterdal; as well as the Ministry of Education, the Higher Council of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and GIZ for the technical collaboration and support in preparing and implementing this assessment; and UN partners, bilateral donors, and other national and international development partners and stakeholders for their support and contribution.

## Table of Contents

<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>QUESTIONNAIRE</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>ATTITUDES AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS</i> .....	25
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES, STRENGTHS, AND SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD</i> .....	28
<b>POLICIES, STRATEGIES, AND ACTION PLANS</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS</i> .....	29
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES, STRENGTHS, AND SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD</i> .....	31
<b>INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES, LEADERSHIP, AND MANAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<i>A NOTE ON STRUCTURAL REORGANIZATION AND REFORM</i> .....	32
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS</i> .....	33
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES, STRENGTHS, AND SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD</i> .....	37
<b>FINANCING</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS</i> .....	38
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES, STRENGTHS, AND SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD</i> .....	39

<b>EDUCATION SYSTEM MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS .....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES, STRENGTHS, AND SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD .....</i>	<i>41</i>
<b>COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION, AND PLANNING .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS .....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES, STRENGTHS, AND SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD .....</i>	<i>45</i>
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE AND MATERIAL RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS .....</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES .....</i>	<i>49</i>
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS .....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES, STRENGTHS, AND SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD .....</i>	<i>53</i>
<b>TRAINING, CURRICULUM, AND SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<i>CHALLENGES AND GAPS .....</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>EXISTING CAPACITIES, STRENGTHS, AND SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD .....</i>	<i>61</i>
<b>PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES, AND STUDIES .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<i>ATTITUDES AND UNDERSTANDING OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION: .....</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>POLICIES, STRATEGIES, AND ACTION PLANS: .....</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES, LEADERSHIP, AND MANAGEMENT: .....</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES, AND STUDIES.....</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>HUMAN RESOURCES, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, CURRICULUM, MATERIAL, AND SUPPORT:.....</i>	<i>74</i>
<i>FINANCING .....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>FOLLOW UP OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS: .....</i>	<i>76</i>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>80</b>

<b>ANNEX NO. 1.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>ANNEX NO. 2.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>ANNEX NO. 3.....</b>	<b>99</b>

## List of acronyms

BMZ	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
CISLE	Cultivating Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environment Program (a USAID funded development program)
CSF	Community Systems Foundation
DATF	The disability and Age Task Force
DCU	Donor Coordination Unit (within the Ministry of Education)
DPO	Disabled Persons' Organisation
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
EQAU	Education Quality and Accountability Unit (within the MoE)
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (UK's development organization)
FMCH	Family Medicine and Community Health (a journal founded by the Chinese General Practice Press)
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
HCD	Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
HI	Humanity and Inclusion (formerly Handicap International)
HRD	National Human Resource Development Strategy
ICF	International Classification of Functioning
IDDC	International Disability and Development Consortium
IES	10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education (2020-2030)
IMCIE	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education
KG2	Kindergarten Grade 2 (the last year before entering primary education)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health

MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MoPWH	Ministry of Public Works and Housing
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
NCCD	National Centre for Curriculum Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSC	Out-of-School Children (both OSC and OOSC are used as acronyms)
OOSC	Out-Of-School Children (both OSC and OOSC are used as acronyms)
PROMISE	Promoting quality in inclusive education in Jordan
QRF	Queen Rania Foundation
QRTA	Queen Rania Teacher Academy
RAMP	Jordan Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Initiative
SCIEAP	Steering Committee on the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education and its Action Plans
SDDP	School and Directorate Development Programme
UNCRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UN SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water Sanitation and Health
WHO	World Health Organisation

## Executive summary

This *Institutional Capacity Needs Assessment* focuses on key entities responsible for the implementation of Jordan's 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education to inform the development of a comprehensive institutional capacity development plan to be implemented later in 2021. The aim of the capacity needs assessment has been to map individual and institutional gaps, capacities and needs.

The assessment process utilized three primary research methods: 1) literature review; 2) questionnaires; and 3) semi-structured interviews. Respondents included representatives of most relevant directorates and departments under the Ministry of Education (MoE) on national and sub-national levels; the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), the National Centre for Curriculum Development (NCCD), and the Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA); multilateral organizations, including UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR; bilateral donors including, FCDO, GAC, GIZ, and USAID; and Jordanian and international NGOs.

### Some key findings from the assessment

Jordan has made great strides towards inclusion over the past few years. All respondents have appreciated the work of the MoE and the HCD, and national and international development partners. Although this assessment appreciates many of the existing capacities and strengths in the Jordanian education system, it mainly focuses on the challenges and gaps and on recommendations to address these.

#### *Gaps and challenges identified include:*

We found a general lack of a comprehensive and holistic understanding about inclusion and diversity in education. Negative attitudes about disability in general and the rights and capacities of persons with disabilities in particular are common, and there is a lack of awareness of, and understanding about gender and gender related issues prevailing in Jordan.

Gaps exist between policies and strategies on one side, and actual implementation of inclusion and diversity in education on the other. While language and terminology related to disability includes outdated, disablist and 'medical model' terms.

There was a general agreement among the respondents that the current MoE organization structure is too rigid and does not always respond effectively to new developments and emerging needs. A reorganization will therefore be necessary, it can be initiated and facilitated by external actors, but to ensure broad ownership of the process, it must be driven by internal change agents.

The level of government bureaucracy seems to be a challenge across the Jordanian government, with unnecessary duplications of departments, personnel, responsibilities, and functions, and with an MoE that is not structured and organized to encourage, support, and

facilitate necessary innovation and change. The lack of effective coordination between different MoE departments, and between national and sub-national levels were highlighted by most respondents. The poor coordination, together with limited access to relevant training and career paths for teachers, school managers, and MoE staff, and a top-down Amman-centric system approach, seem to contribute to the many challenges related to competencies and motivation experienced by teachers and others within the system, challenges that has led to far too few men choosing teaching as a profession.

Respondents pointed out the lack of connections between policy makers and the reality of education practice in school communities, and a lack of effective leadership in all aspects of the system. This also results in gaps between commitments and expressed ambitions towards inclusion and diversity in education, without the necessary budget allocations.

Implementation of inclusion and diversity in education in general, and disability inclusion in particular is hindered by the lack of adequate and accessible learning spaces in schools, assistive devices and tools for 'diagnostics', and adapted curricula and teaching-learning materials, but also a lack of affordable and accessible transportation options between homes and schools. Respondents pointed to the national matriculation exam for secondary students (Tawjihi) as being another main barrier to greater inclusion and diversity in education.

Resource rooms, a potential tool for inclusion and diversity in education, contrary to best intentions are seeming to lead to exclusion and marginalization of learners with disabilities and other children with individual learning needs requiring additional support and learning resources. While many schools and learners, particularly in rural areas and income-poor areas experience limited access to IT equipment and other infrastructure that would make online or hybrid education alternatives possible.

Curricula and textbooks do not promote inclusion and diversity in education, and were found to be outdated and gender insensitive, and not adequately addressing relevant 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Teacher education and training related to inclusion and diversity in education seems to be overly theoretical and lacking in meaningful practical components which would enable participants to implement inclusion in their organisations, schools, and classrooms. Improved alignment between teacher education and training, and the curriculum will also be needed, to ensure that Jordan educates teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. Despite considerable investments in pre- and in-service teacher education and training, a general lack of knowledge, skills, and practices in relation to inclusive pedagogical approaches within the education system prevails. While the assessments of teachers in Jordan focus heavily on teachers' subject knowledge, rather than teachers' pedagogical skills and teaching-learning strategies.

The EMIS lacks disaggregation of important metrics which underpin inclusion; also work needs to be done in ensuring the accuracy of EMIS data from school level. This reduces the value a potentially vital tool for improving the access to quality education for all in Jordan.

*Existing capacities and strengths include:*

MoE, HCD and other development partners have already done a lot of good and foundational work to change negative attitudes around disability and disability inclusion in Jordan.

The strong commitment from members of the Royal family has encouraged the development of strategies, policies and regulatory frameworks which pave the way towards inclusion and diversity in education; this is laudable and a strong point for the country. Furthermore, the leadership and officials within the Ministry of Education (MoE) have begun to embrace the idea of inclusion, and much progress has been achieved over the last few years in improving the alignment of donor and multilateral funding with education system needs, even if much more work is needed.

Development partners noted that Jordan's MoE was well advanced in regard to communication and coordination, in comparison with other ministries of education in the MENA region and beyond. And there are a number of positive examples where donors and different ministries and government entities have jointly developed effective coordination mechanisms. The variety of institutional and professional coordinating bodies and networks existing in Jordan has been highlighted as being beneficial to communication and coordination.

Despite the challenges outlined above, a number of programmes and initiatives exist to increase access to quality schools and classrooms. While MoE together with HCD and QRTA, and other national and international development partners have been working to increase teacher competencies and professionalism, towards greater inclusion and diversity in education.

In spite of the need for further improvement, MoE has made significant progress in developing its EMIS system. This has involved the development of an EMIS 'roadmap' to guide the process of shaping and refining of the OpenEMIS system.

## Conclusion

When references are made to "inclusive education", many are mainly thinking about "disability inclusion", it is therefore important to create a common understanding on key terminologies among education officials, teachers, parents, and education activists.

Without a common understanding of inclusive education, the full potential of inclusion and diversity in education, as key to improving access to quality education for all, will not be realized.

Innovation and change cannot be 'project dependent' and time limited; field directorates and schools must be able to make long-term plans for effective use of additional funding resources, while the Ministry of Education and its development partners must look at the financial and social costs of not educating a relatively large percentage of children, both

with and without disabilities (e.g., children who never enrol in formal schools, or who attend school but have poor learning outcomes, or who drop out to get married or to work).

## Recommendations

The twenty recommendations are made based on more than sixty interviews with a wide range of respondents, and feedback gained through more than fifty questionnaires.

Although certain recommendations can be addressed separately from others, ultimately, the full set of recommendations are intended to be seen as offering a linked, holistic approach towards greater inclusion and diversity in education in Jordan, and not taken in isolation from one another. Education stakeholders themselves are encouraged to practically explore and define the links between recommendations, as well as the further, more specific processes of refinement, development, and implementation.

For the purposes of clarity and structure, the recommendations have been loosely grouped under categories:

- Attitudes and understanding of inclusion and diversity in education
- Policies, strategies, and action plans
- Institutional structures, leadership, and management
- Projects, activities, and studies
- Human resources, professional development, training, curriculum, material, and support
- Financing

However, these should not be seen as being mutually exclusive – inevitably, as with the categories of findings discussed above, there are overlaps and linkages between categories of recommendations. And, all recommendations include elements of awareness raising, changing attitudes, and developing a more comprehensive understanding of inclusion and diversity in education, as well as communication, coordination, and planning.

The recommendations are drafted to initiate discussions and reflections among key stakeholders within the system. Given the Jordanian education sector's current fluid stage of development, it is expected that further recommendations, as well as refinements of the recommendations specified in this report, will emerge throughout the capacity development process.

The capacity development process could begin through a series of interactive workshops and forums, the first of which will be conducted with key stakeholders within the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) as part of the finalisation of the recommendations outlined below and could involve the formulation of SMART testable indicators to measure progress, results, and impact.

## Introduction

### *Context*

Over the past decades, Jordan has made major strides towards inclusion within the education sector. The Jordanian Government has expressed its ambition of leading the region towards greater equality between persons with and without disabilities, an ambition clearly defined and articulated in the:

- 1) National Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy (2016-2025)
- 2) MoE Education Strategic Plan (2018-2022)
- 3) 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education (2020-2030).

The Jordanian MoE's strategies and plans are based on the Education 2030 Agenda and respond to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No. 4, 5, 10 and 16. The national policy environment is therefore favourable to the overall goal of improving access to and quality in education for all children and youth regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and circumstances.

In spite of the commendable efforts of the Higher Council on the Rights of persons with Disabilities and relevant Jordanian government ministries, and the existence of legal rights to equal opportunities and protection against discrimination on the labor market, and the right to employment quotas for persons with disabilities within the public and private sector (Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017), recent estimations show that only 16.1% of persons with disabilities were employed, compared with 36.6% for the total working age population in Jordan. When looking at the employment numbers for women with disabilities a mere 4.8% were employed (Thompson, 2018). The limited prospects for employment contribute to lower enrolment, retention, and completion rates within education among persons with disabilities, compared with their non-disabled peers, in addition to the exclusion of a high number of persons with disabilities within the education system.

The population of Jordan has almost doubled over the past 15 years, from 5.7 million in 2005, to 10.9 million in 2021 (Jordan Department of Statistics, 2021). In addition to a substantial population growth among Jordanian nationals, the influx of refugees since the onset of the Syrian crisis has had a massive impact on the education system. The Ministry of Education struggles to meet the need for additional learning spaces by building and renting schools and recruiting new teachers.

Thompson (2018) reports that more than 7,000 students with disabilities are enrolled in nearly 750 schools in Jordan, while statistics from the Ministry of Education (MoE) confirm that the number of students with disabilities does not exceed 20,000 (MoE, 2020). USAID (2017) reports that under the Second Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Project

ERfKE II, 60 teachers of special education were trained, and enrolment of students with disabilities increased from 13,894 in 2009 to 19,650 in 2016.

It is difficult to compare data on disabilities and learning difficulties as a common definition of disabilities is not widely known or used in Jordan, even though a legal definition on disabilities exists in article 3 of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017). Data used by key stakeholders do not always seem to include the large number of children and youth with Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD), Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD) and reading and writing difficulties that in most countries constitute a majority of children with special educational needs, learning difficulties that are not always linked to an impairment. The complexities of disabilities and learning difficulties are therefore not fully understood by all stakeholders, leading to different interpretations on how this impacts inclusion and diversity in education.

According to a Ministry official, "19.5% of the schools in Jordan are rented, and due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic it is expected that 135,000 students will shift from private to public schools in 2021." He added "55 new schools are needed, while around 10 schools are in the planning." This has resulted in over-crowding in some schools and has increased the number of schools operating with double shifts, which has, in turn, increased pressures on the infrastructure and the school environment and decreasing the number of hours of instruction for children in those schools, which eventually has led to a decline in the quality of education (MoE, 2017). According to a senior official, the Ministry is therefore thinking of alternative online, or hybrid solutions to meet the need for quality education among a rapidly growing student population, both due to capacity challenges in schools and possible constraints related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the need for more schools and teachers to face a growing population, the Ministry of Education is placing increasing importance on Early Childhood Development (ECD).

With regard to the education of children with disabilities, the 10-Year Strategy on Inclusive Education (2020-2030) reports that less than 25% of children with disabilities receive some form of education. However, any numbers reported on are estimates as there are different understanding of what constitutes disability among different actors as mentioned earlier, and a lack of assessment capacities in school, field directorates and on a national level. Regardless of definitions, and assessments, it is safe to assume that the vast majority of school-aged persons with disabilities are therefore completely outside the scope of any formal, or informal educational provision. However, MoE has invested considerable efforts on strengthening capacities and system in regard to education data management through their EMIS, and to some extent data linked to inclusion in its broader definition is available, such as disaggregated data by sex on enrolment and completion, number of refugee students enrolled, number of teachers, number of schools, data on out-of-school children etc. Further support is needed to improve the data collection and data use for evidence-based planning. It is critical to actively use EMIS to plan, monitor and evaluate efforts towards greater inclusion and diversity in education.

Although there may be concerns in Jordan about the financial costs of including children with disabilities in education, it is important to consider that the costs of exclusion – both financial and social – stand to be *much* higher. As an International Disability and Development Consortium (International Disability and Development Consortium, 2016:8) report on disability-responsive education financing notes:

"The cost of exclusion from education is significant for both the individual and the country. Countries lose billions of dollars of potential income when persons with disabilities are not educated or working."

*International Disability and Development Consortium (2016)*

### *Rationale*

In spite of the many barriers to inclusion and diversity in education, the Ministry of Education is committed to moving towards greater relevance, inclusiveness, and quality of education, highlighted through the six domains outlined in the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2018-2022), the 10-Year Strategy on Inclusive Education (2020-2030), and the 3-Years Action Plan on Inclusive Education (2020-2022).

This is further emphasised by the Ministry of Education adopting the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, and his endeavour to "create an educational system that achieves distinction, mastery and quality by investing human resources, available opportunities and knowledge as a strategic national wealth".

GIZ and UNESCO have initiated collaboration aiming at providing technical assistance to the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) in their efforts towards inclusion in line with the goals and priorities outlined in the National 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education. This partnership is in the framework of the GIZ PROMISE Programme. GIZ has developed and is implementing, jointly with the MoE, the programme 'Promoting quality in inclusive education in Jordan' (PROMISE), funded through the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). PROMISE aims at improving equal access to and quality of primary and secondary public schools in Jordan. The programme focuses on school children from KG2 to Grade 10 with particular focus on children with disabilities and is a direct contribution to the national 10 year- Strategy for Inclusive Education (IES) and the Education Strategic Plan 2 2018-2022 (ESP), as well as to SDG 4- Inclusive and equitable quality education, SDG 5- Gender equality and SDG 3- Health. UNESCO will support the following two main components of the PROMISE programme: (1) System Strengthening (Policy, National Planning and Management); and (2) Capacity Development.

The Jordanian Ministry of Education and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) requested for GIZ and UNESCO to conduct an institutional capacity needs assessment of key entities responsible for the implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education, providing information for the development of a comprehensive institutional capacity development plan to be implemented later in a second stage. The aim of the capacity needs assessment is to map individual and institutional gaps, capacities and

needs, all in support of an effective implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education and the recently developed action plan.

Relevant stakeholders linked to the GIZ PROMISE programme, from schools to other sub-national and national levels, participated in the capacity needs assessment of the education system in regards to innovation, and greater inclusion and diversity in education. This is to ensure that the views and perspectives of education practitioners in schools are included, as their views might differ from those generated through the self-assessment of education officials on sub-national and national levels. The more inclusive and participatory the capacity needs assessment is, the greater the ownership of the process will be.

The full impact COVID-19 has on the access to, and quality of education and the social and emotional development of students and teachers will continue to emerge in the months and years after the pandemic. It is therefore important for the Ministry to prioritize inclusion and diversity in education in general, and disability inclusion in particular to reach the goals of UN SDG 4, and the goals, targets and aspirations outlined in the 10-Year Strategy on Inclusive Education (2020-2030) and the 3 years Action Plan.

## Methodology

The assessment involved a mixed methods approach and utilized three primary research methods: 1) literature review; 2) questionnaires; and 3) semi-structured interviews. The development and implementation of the research methods and related tools is discussed as follows.

Both the questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were developed in English and translated into Arabic. Before sending out questionnaires and conducting interviews the tools were consulted with both the MoE and the HCD and approved by those responsible for research and inclusion within the Ministry of Education. The process has therefore been participatory from the beginning of the work with the assessment and remained participatory and consultative throughout the implementation process. It is essential in broadening the understanding of different interests and perspectives (World Bank, 2001).

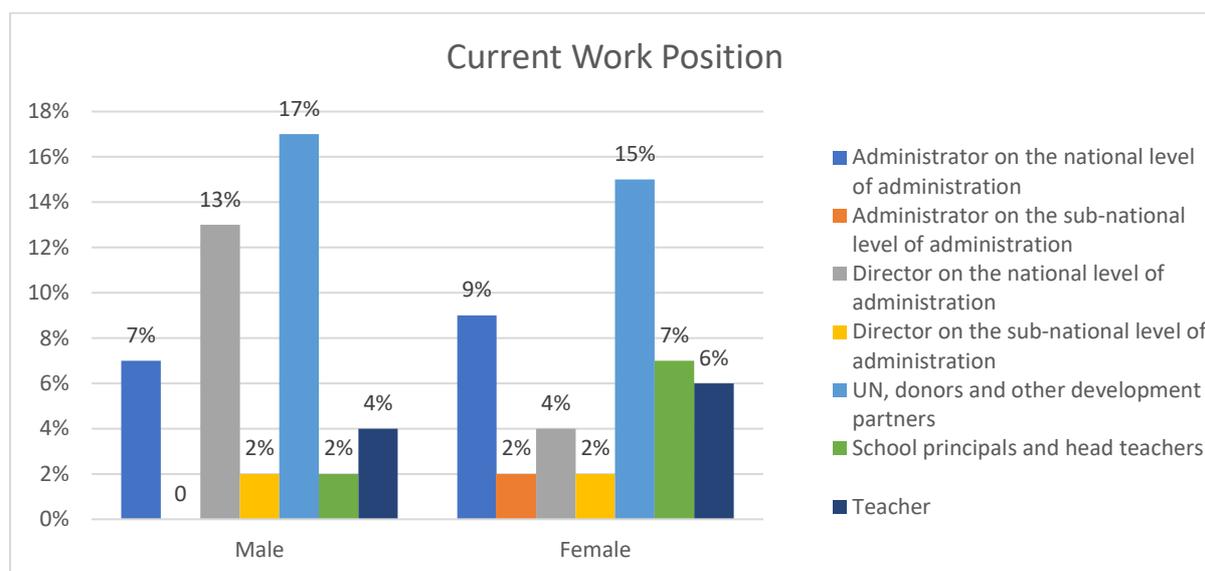
Prior to being interviewed, or responding to the questionnaire, respondents were requested to complete a research information and consent form (see Annex 3) in accordance with international research standards.

To ensure the inclusion of persons with visual impairment as questionnaire respondents, the research team could receive feedback by phone unless the selected respondent had access to appropriate assistive devices.

Data collection involved the use of Google Form, which is an opensource software for data collection, through which the collected information was automatically entered into a spreadsheet. Although there are alternative paid solutions, e.g., Survey Monkey, it was important to develop systems that could later be adopted by the Ministry of Education (MoE), and therefore, when possible, open-source options were used to reduce costs for later follow-up surveys and thus increase the sustainability of the initiatives.

Respondents included representatives of most relevant directorates and departments under the MoE on national and sub-national levels; the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), the National Centre for Curriculum Development (NCCD), and the Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA); multilateral organizations, including UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR; bilateral donors including, FCDO, GAC, GIZ, and USAID; and Jordanian and international NGOs.

Respondents were selected to be representative with regard to position (senior, medium and junior levels), age, and gender balance and the inclusion of persons with disabilities.



*Figure no. 1*

### *Challenges and Limitations*

Before detailing the specific challenges and limitations of the assessment in practice, it is important to address more overarching issues related to its design, purpose, and implementation.

The assessment was designed to provide an overview of the Jordanian education system related to disability inclusion and more broadly to inclusion and diversity in education. It was an independent, external assessment, responding to expressed needs by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD). The recommendations are intended to provide guidance for the implementation of the Strategy on Inclusive Education and the Action Plan, highlighting key challenges, gaps and existing strengths in regards to inclusion and diversity capacities within the education system. It follows that the assessment:

- was never intended to be an audit of the Ministry of Education (MoE), or its development partners and was likewise never designed to dig down into the details of MoE departmental structures, nor provide in-depth analyses of the workings of MoE departments in practice, specific inclusion initiatives, or specific training programmes;
- does not attempt to provide prescriptive recommendations for MoE restructuring, or reform, but rather promote reflections within the existing structures, on how they can best be organized to support innovation and change, and;
- does not evaluate or judge existing activities and initiatives related to inclusion and diversity.

To get into the deeper, thornier, and more detailed issues of systemic reform towards greater inclusion and diversity in education would require a different set of processes involving the MoE and other development partners, including being embedded into the

MoE over time. This was neither within the scope of the assessment, nor would it have been possible due to the pandemic related movement and travel restrictions. Such processes, as mentioned later in the report, can be a part of the next stage of capacity development initiatives following the assessment.

Although being external, the design of the assessment was developed in close coordination with the MoE and HCD. While the actual process of implementing the assessment was shaped by the internal structures and workings of the education system, in practice this means that the communication gaps, exacerbated by COVID-19, between national and sub-national levels of the MoE (highlighted in the 'findings' section of the report), made it difficult for the assessment team to access education actors at field directorate and school community levels. This, coupled with time limitations, and the expectations to expand the focus to include additional aspects of the system, has come at the expense of a more in-depth look at inclusion and diversity capacity needs and strengths within field directorates and school communities. However, the perspectives of stakeholders within field directorates and school communities, alongside the practices within and between these institutions, are essential and need to be engaged while going forward.

Although the assessment team understands and agrees with the importance of teacher education and training in connection with inclusion and diversity in education, the assessment was not designed to focus, in-depth, on pre-service teacher education. However, teacher education and training will also need more attention going forward as it is important to ensure that teachers are enabled to address the challenges and embrace the potentials of greater inclusion and diversity in education.

### *Other, more specific challenges and limitations*

Some issues related to gender; substance abuse; cultural, ethnic, and religious minorities; nationality and citizenship; and challenging socio-economic in many families, have not been addressed in this report due to expressed cultural and religious sensitivities.

"Identity, background and ability dictate education opportunities. [...] only 18 of the poorest youth complete secondary school for every 100 of the richest youth. One in three teachers in 43 mostly upper-middle- and high-income countries in 2018 reported that they did not adjust their teaching to students' cultural diversity."

*UNESCO, Global Education Monitoring Report (2020)*

However, these are important inclusion issues which deserve attention and discussion in future, to reduce many of the exclusion mechanisms children and youth in Jordan suffer from. The issue of gender is in some ways being addressed but remains under-researched. Issues around gender, not only adversely affect women and girls, as data shows that more boys drop out of school than girls, and less boys than girls continue their education beyond

Grade 10 (UNICEF, 2020), and that the options for both boys and girls for vocational education (Grade 11 and 12) remain limited due to gender biases (MoE, 2017).

"Equal rights and opportunities for girls and boys help all children fulfil their potential."

*UNICEF (2021)*

Respecting public health restriction in response to COVID-19, no focus group discussions were conducted; instead, individual interviews were conducted online and by phone, and questionnaires were distributed by email. During the evaluation, Jordan experienced a COVID-19 surge, also directly impacting the Ministry of Education, contributing to delays and adding complexities in regard to data collection.

Since the identification of respondents was delayed, there was limited time to conduct interviews, analyse the feedback from respondents (interviews and questionnaires), and draft the report. A further detailed and substantive capacity needs-assessment would have required much more time, and for the researchers to be embedded into the Ministry of Education, over time. Furthermore, due to COVID-19 and related national and international travel restrictions, the assessment team was not able to conduct face-to-face interviews, or focus group discussions with Ministry colleagues, or to visit field directorates and schools, and observe any of the innovative programmes reported by respondents.

The researchers have been careful not to draw too fine a line between capacity needs assessment and capacity development. The reflective process of the initial assessment is in itself a step towards capacity development and certain needs and strengths that were not uncovered during the initial assessment will be more likely to emerge through the deeper level engagement of the next capacity development phase of this partnership. This integrated approach to capacity needs assessment and capacity development has been feature of discussion between the partners since the initiation of the collaboration between UNESCO, GIZ, MoE and HCD.

### *Literature review*

A review of relevant literature was conducted, with special emphasis on documents, pre-selected by UNESCO in coordination with partners, relevant to the project implementation and this specific assignment, including: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Law No. (20) for the Year 2017 – Article 17; the Education Strategic Plan (2018-2022); the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education(2020-2030) (IES); the 3-year IE action plan (2020-2022) of the IES; RTI's 'Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Initiative (RAMP)'; Assessment on Education of Students with Disabilities in Jordan: Final Report; CISLE-II external evaluation report. The process also involved a review of organisational charts related to the MoE and other relevant authorities on macro- and meso level.

"The strategy embraces the values of justice, equality, and the acceptance of diversity. It views students with disabilities as part of the student community, and at the core of the

learning-teaching process. It promotes their right to quality education alongside their counterparts without disabilities in an inclusive learning environment."

*The 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education (2020-2030)*

## Questionnaire

The evaluation team developed and administered a capacity assessment questionnaire with two parts, the first which assessed the respondent's personal capacity in relation to inclusion in education (with a focus on disability inclusion), their background and experience; and the second which assessed the respondent's perspective on the institutional capacity of their workplace in regards to the institution itself, the respondent's role within the institution and the institution's relationships with other institutions.

The questionnaire was designed to be administered to all relevant actors including: MoE staff (and staff other relevant ministries) at national and sub-national levels; teachers and school managers; donor, multilateral, and NGO staff. Initially, it was intended that the questionnaire be administered to two hundred respondents.

However, linked notably to challenges mentioned above, and in view of insufficient feedback from questionnaire respondents, the number of interviewees were increased while decreasing the number of respondents for the questionnaires. For future studies, it may be advisable to either conduct a series of interviews, structured, semi-structured, or open, with less respondents, or send out questionnaires to a larger number of selected respondents, to avoid giving the impression of having two tiers of respondents, those "more important" being interviewed, and those "less important" receiving questionnaires. Although a two-tier approach was not intended by the researchers, nevertheless, some respondents may have understood it this way.

The following table details the organizations and corresponding number of questionnaire respondents:

Organisation	Number of respondents
Ministry of Education on national and field directorate levels	31
Pilot schools through (GIZ)	7
Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD)	13
Development Partners (DP)	1
<b>Total number of questionnaires</b>	<b>52</b>

### *Semi-structured interviews*

The development and conducting of semi-structured interviews focused on gaining a deeper understanding of respondents' perspectives on existing capacities, gaps and meaningful experiences related to inclusion in education and disability inclusion more specifically, for themselves and their institutions.

The conducting of semi-structured interviews consisted of a dialogue between the researchers and participants, guided by a flexible interview guide and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes and comments. The method allowed the researchers to collect open-ended data, explore participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic, and delve into personal and sometimes sensitive issues (DeJonckheere and Vaughn, 2019).

Interviews were conducted in English language with 22 respondents in MoE, HCD, and with national and international staff in UN agencies and other development partners. The revised and approved version of the semi-structured interview guide was translated into Arabic and quality assured by the team and then used for interviews with 45 respondents from the Ministry of Education on macro and meso levels (Education Field Directorate located in Amman), and with other development partners.

To ensure inclusion of persons with hearing and visual impairment, opportunities were offered for interviews to be conducted through mobile phone, or online chat functions, although in the end this was not needed. Spoken interviews were conducted using a range of virtual meeting platforms, namely, Google Meet, Skype, Teams and Zoom.

The following table details the organizations and corresponding number of semi-structured interview respondents:

Organisation	Number of respondents
Ministry of Education (MoE) on national and field directorate levels	27
Pilot schools (GIZ)	10
Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD)	9
Development partners (donors, multilateral organizations, other Jordanian governmental organizations, and NGOs) (FCDO, GIZ, Mercy Corps, NCCD, QRTA, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, and USAID)	21
<b>Total number of interviews</b>	<b>67</b>

### *Data analysis*

For quantitative data analysis, R Markdown in R Studio were used for questionnaire data. These are opensource software solutions which reduces costs for future follow-up surveys and data collection. R Markdown is a language and environment for statistical computing management, analysis, and graphics.

Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews was analysed and coded, to identify key themes and patterns, which were used to generate, refine, and populate the categories of findings represented in the following section of the report.

## Findings

The terms of reference for the institutional capacity needs assessment, the agreed design of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, as well as analysis of the data subsequently collected, have helped in shaping the categories of findings detailed below. However, these categories are not intended to be discreet, or mutually exclusive – inevitably, there are areas of overlap and connection between them.

The categories of findings are listed as follows, with accompanying brief descriptions:

- ***Attitudes and understandings of inclusion and diversity in education*** address what stakeholders believe and what they know about different aspects of inclusion, in particular disability inclusion.
- ***Policies, strategies, and action plans*** address the policy and strategic development dynamics of inclusion and diversity in education.
- ***Institutional structures, leadership, and management*** address the structure and organization of the MoE (and to a certain extent, other development partners) and how it is led and managed.
- ***Financing*** addresses the funding of inclusion and diversity implementers and related programmes, projects, and activities.
- ***Education system monitoring and evaluation*** address how inclusion and diversity in education specifically, and education more generally, are monitored, evaluated, and managed both by MoE and other development partners, with attention to EMIS and other forms of data.
- ***Communication, coordination, and planning*** address how the MoE and development partners manage their work, both internally (e.g., between different departments within the same institution) and externally (e.g., between different institutions, or between institutions and the public).
- ***Infrastructure and material resources*** address school buildings, teaching and learning materials, transport and other issues related to infrastructure and resources.
- ***Human resources and professional development*** address the people working within the wider education system as well as the more specific system of professional development which they are part of.
- ***Curriculum, training, and support*** are closely related to professional development and addresses issues of curriculum development and education and training in relation to inclusion and diversity in education, as well as the nature and types of related support available (e.g., for teachers, schools, MoE administrators, etc.).
- ***Programmes, projects, activities, and studies*** address specific initiatives related to inclusion and diversity in education, which are not otherwise addressed in other categories of findings, and/or which bear further scrutiny.

Within each of the above listed categories, the findings are further divided into the following sub-categories, when relevant:

- ***Challenges and gaps***
- ***Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward***

As this is a capacity needs assessment, with the emphasis on evaluating needs, findings related to *gaps and challenges* are presented before those relating to *capacities and strengths*. However, this is not to suggest that the capacities and strengths that already exist in the Jordanian education system, are more limited, or less important than the gaps and challenges. Indeed, a reckoning with what already works well, or has potential to work well within the system, is an essential part of the processes of developing capacity and bringing change. Jordan has many assets (in terms of people, policies, and practices) which already benefit the country's movement towards greater inclusion and diversity in education.

### Attitudes and understandings of inclusion and diversity in education

If there can be considered one, overarching, category of barriers or enablers to inclusion and diversity in education, it would be *attitudes*. This is because people's attitudes towards inclusion and diversity in education impact all aspects of education policy and practice, from policy formulation to curriculum development, to infrastructure planning, to teacher education and training, to classroom practice, to support services and beyond. Attitudes are inevitably influenced by the understandings derived from lived experience and learning (Villegas, 2015).

It follows that education stakeholders' attitudes and understandings about inclusion and diversity in education are critical in shaping the planning, implementation and management of inclusion in education in Jordan.

Needs assessment participants' own understandings about inclusion and diversity in education were varied. Given the origin and nature of the assessment, there was a focus on inclusion of persons with disability, although many participants, when asked to represent their own understandings of the issues, emphasized that inclusion was crosscutting and should cover education for all, not only for learners with disability (this included participants from the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD)). As a representative from the HCD said, "Diversity means that everybody must accept the other one. There shall be no discrimination or exclusion, because of your disability, or because of anything else. I mean, there is no grounds that could justify being discriminated against or excluded". However, some participants felt that addressing the full complexity of inclusion and diversity in education could not be done all at once, but that rather it needed to be handled in stages, with the inclusion of learners with disability being a starting point. Also, several interview respondents expressed their perspective that making schools and classrooms inclusive for learners with disability will confer benefits for all learners. As a representative from HCD explained, "We have a saying that what is good for students with

disability is good for everybody. And by including persons with disability in this call, this means that you are overcoming barriers, with regard to behavioural barriers related to not accepting the difference between people, like being a female, or male, or being black, or white, coming to school walking, or coming to school using a wheelchair." Also, as another interview respondent pointed out, additional learning support can benefit all learners, not just those with disability: "Research shows that even students without disabilities have benefited and they have shown great results in math and languages learning, for example, because they've benefited from the extra exercises that the teachers used to give to students with disabilities".

### *Challenges and gaps*

Although many needs assessment participants shared the perspective that inclusion and diversity in education covers a range of inclusion categories, such as disability, gender, and refugees (as some key examples relevant to the Jordanian context), it was difficult for participants to articulate practical strategies and approaches for addressing these issues holistically. This would mean making the connections between them in the actual implementation of inclusion and diversity in education in schools and classrooms. The fragmentation of different inclusion issues – e.g., disability being addressed separately from gender, which is addressed separately from refugees – across the education system, in education policy, structurally within the MoE, and in practice, is a barrier to conceptualizing and implementing a holistic vision of inclusion.

As a related challenge, a lack of a clear and shared understanding, or vision of inclusion in MoE (and elsewhere) was highlighted by several needs-assessment participants. As one interview respondent expressed, "I don't think you will find two or three people in our whole ministry who will agree on what inclusive education is."

Confusion and misunderstandings around the differences between inclusion and integration are also problematic and seem to have led to negative consequences in regard to inclusion of learners with disability. A representative from the HCD explained, "One of the real problems we have here in Jordan [...] there is a kind of misconception, a kind of misusing of terms and concepts. In Jordan, people they are mixing and using interchangeably integration and inclusion. This led to some unsuccessful practices and experiences in Jordan. For example, what we experience with the resource rooms in some of the public schools. The main principle, as far as I understand, is that the purpose of resource rooms is to support the students in a specific subject, and maybe for some behavioural support, but they are not supposed to replace all the inclusive settings in the school. Persons with disabilities, in particular with intellectual disabilities, usually are being isolated in these rooms, or maybe in special classes. They are not included in social activities in the schools. Having this physical existence of students (with disabilities) in the schools, unfortunately, is being perceived, even by many of our colleagues [...], as inclusion".

The issue of change broadly, and cultural change more specifically, was raised during the needs-assessment in relation to attitudes (the issue of change is discussed in more detail

further in this report). Resistance to change was noted by a number of participants as stemming from a reluctance to challenge the status quo. Other participants noted resistance to change as being a product of certain religious and cultural beliefs and fear of ideas coming from outside the country, culture, religion. As one interview respondent put it, "Any entity coming to introduce something new, something that is sometimes witnessed or seen or perceived as being Western, or not local, sometimes there's a bit of resistance. "

The need to change attitudes and increase awareness and understanding of inclusion and diversity in education within Jordan was a common theme to emerge from the assessment. This pertains to those working in government – leadership included – but also members of the general public, school community members (e.g., teachers, school managers and parents) in particular. Respondents explained that some of the people in leadership positions within the Ministry and its development partners were unaware of the inclusion agenda, and that it was not a priority for them.

Key issues raised include:

- A lack of a comprehensive and holistic understanding about inclusion and diversity in education. It was noted, for example, that many in the MoE understand inclusion as solely being about disability. Indeed, as noted previously, the literature review done for this needs assessment, and subsequent interviews have highlighted, that different aspects of a more holistic concept of inclusion (e.g., disability, gender, out of school children), are siloed in different areas of education planning, policy, and practice.
- Negative attitudes about disability in general and the rights and capacities of persons with disabilities in particular. Negative attitudes about disability were seen by needs assessment participants as being pervasive in Jordanian society. Such attitudes were noted as being informed by a combination of ignorance and negative cultural beliefs (e.g., disability as being a punishment from Allah). Ignorance about disability can lead to negative attitudes and behaviours which create barriers to the inclusion of learners with disability in education. As an interview respondent explained, "One of the pushbacks that we are going to face is that the parents and the families of children without disabilities might refuse, or they might object to children with disabilities being in the class with their children. Somebody once told me of a story where a parent objected, because the school had accepted a child with diabetes".

There can be a vicious circle that happens when negative attitudes and related stereotypes about persons with disability lead to repression and other negative treatment of persons with disability, which further reinforces negative attitudes. A respondent from the HCD explained, "If I were to go out into the street and stop somebody and say, 'Do you know somebody with a disability', most likely if they say yes, they will be thinking about a person with disabilities who is stuck at home, who has not gone out, who has not been educated, who is illiterate and not enabled to

be productive in society. So, the general impression of persons with disabilities is a negative impression."

- Related to the previous point, needs assessment participants pointed to a lack of positive representations of persons with disability in the media, in curricular materials, and elsewhere in society – such positive representations are essential in challenging negative attitudes and educating the public about the rights and potentials of persons with disability to full participation in education and other aspects of society.
- Concerns were expressed by some interview respondents of a risks that 'model inclusive schools' (although this concept needs to be unpacked and explored more deeply), which has facilities and resources for including learners with disability, will be transformed into special schools if they continue to receive children with disabilities. There were also concerns expressed that existing special schools, despite their benefits for learners with disabilities, risked: isolating and alienating learners with disability from their peers without disability; perpetuating negative attitudes and stereotypes about disability; and causing learners with disability long-lasting emotional and psychological harm.
- The perception that inclusion is an added burden and not a benefit. Discussing this issue, one interview respondent explained that it is sometimes the perception within the MoE to be a burden, in addition to a question of mindset. He added as well that it has been also perceived as the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development for decades.
- A lack of awareness of understanding about gender and gender related issues faced in Jordan. Several interview respondents noted that there is a high degree of sensitivity around discussions of gender in Jordanian society (such sensitivity, typically being linked to religious/cultural beliefs), and also that misunderstandings about gender are common (e.g., that gender is only about women and girls). Most Jordanian public schools are gender segregated after grade 3 (QRF, 2018).

Consequently, it can be difficult to openly discuss, let alone meaningfully address, the gender issues Jordan does face in education and other areas of society. Such issues include:

- a lack of female representation in formal employment in Jordan (teaching being a notable exception);
- the presence of negative gender stereotypes in the curriculum, textbooks and related teaching/learning resources;
- poor education performance and outcomes for boys in comparison with girls, leading to many disaffected boys dropping out of school early and related

societal problems (e.g., unemployment, crime, increased domestic violence, etc).

### *Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward*

Many interview respondents suggested that there needs to be more work done on disability inclusion and other aspects of inclusion (e.g., gender, out-of-school children) awareness raising at all levels of the education system, from the level of senior leadership, down to school communities.

Going forward, respondents expressed the need to define the requirements more clearly for implementing inclusion and diversity in education in relation to awareness, training, human and material resources.

Although awareness raising and training, are closely related and often interlinked in practice, however, issues related to more substantive and involved training are discussed under the category 'curriculum, training and support' below.

### **Disability**

Needs assessment participants emphasized that the HCD and other development partners have already done a lot of good and foundational work to change negative attitudes around disability and disability inclusion in Jordan, and that this has become more evident over time. As a representative from the HCD explained, "We at least succeeded in changing the notion and we started to show the people in the community that people with disabilities have the same rights of persons without disabilities to join the schools. Although some people are still a little bit resistant to it, there is not as much resistance as there used to be. Lots of things have changed".

When smaller positive changes are observed, documented, and promoted, they enable greater positive change. As another interview respondent put it, "The more children with disabilities are being educated and the more success stories we have in the future, the more in society things will change."

There was a hope expressed by several members of the HCD, that if they are successful in their work, in future there will not need to be an HCD as it is currently structured and functioning. The idea being that if inclusion is successfully mainstreamed into the system, the HCD, could become more of an advisory, or consultative body and be less of an implementer, or enforcement body. A representative from HCD suggested, "The main mission, to be honest, for the council is to really relinquish the council in the future, so we don't need any council in the future. Our mission is to mainstream the rights, the issues of persons with disabilities, in the public policies and strategies, programmes and plans. So, each ministry or each executive entity here in this country knows exactly its duties with regard to persons with disabilities, in making their, for example, annual action plans and their budgets. And at the end of the day, you do not need anybody. Like in the United States, for example, they have the NCD, the National Council for Disabled People, and this council is purely a consultative council".

There is a need to work more explicitly on strategies for countering negative attitudes about disability and inclusion – this can be part of a comprehensive approach to inclusion and diversity advocacy at national and subnational levels of government and in communities.

Another key inclusion issue which needs to be addressed going forward is the special school system and the relationship between special schools and ‘mainstream’ schools. Although the assessment did not look deeply into special schooling, there were some indications that there is potential for using expertise and resources within the special school system in supporting the inclusion of learners with disability in mainstream schools. These issues will need careful consideration and further study.

### Gender

The Gender Division of the MoE has been flagged by a range of needs assessment participants as being particularly effective in promoting the importance of gender, as a crosscutting issue, across the education system.

Interview respondents pointed out the support of development partners as being instrumental of the MoE Gender Division’s work.

Positive and promising Gender Division initiatives include:

- The development of a gender strategy and action plan aligned with the ESP.
- The development of a tool for analysing curricula and textbooks from a gender perspective.
- The development of a manual for training teachers on gender sensitivity.
- The initiation of research into the gender gap in performance on exams (girls achieving more than boys) – this was begun in 2020 but has been delayed due to COVID-19.

### Policies, strategies, and action plans

#### *Challenges and Gaps*

Several important issues were raised by needs assessment participants, including:

- The existence of multiple policies, strategies, and plans. Some interview respondents shared their concern that a large number of policies, strategies, and plans, which in some way address inclusion and diversity in education, exist in the system and that these can lack alignment and even be contradictory. Alignment of policies never guarantee that implementation will not sometimes be fragmented and lacking in coherence, but it helps mitigating this risk. This perception of some respondents is in some ways backed up by the literature review done for the needs assessment, which noted discrepancies and lack of alignment between some strategies and plans. For example, although gender is referenced specifically in the 3-Year Action Plan, it is only obliquely referenced in the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education and there is no clear guidance in either document as to their alignment with MoE’s specific

gender strategies and plans. Ultimately, having policies, strategies and plans which lack alignment, can lead to confusion, unnecessary duplication of efforts, disaffection, and inaction. This has led, in the views of some respondents to a distrust of policies and strategies in Jordan, which is reinforced by a record of challenges in implementation.

- In connection with the previous point, gaps have been identified between policies/strategies and actual implementation of inclusion and diversity in education.
- In general, there is an evident lack of connectivity between key broad-based inclusion in education issues and this has implications for specific disability inclusion, as well as for the inclusion of all learners. For example, a need to develop a more comprehensive and deeper system of assessment is highlighted within the ESP's *quality* domain, under 'curriculum and assessment' (ESP, Pg. 50). This would, in a more holistic approach, be linked to the development of 'diagnostics' as discussed under the section in the ESP on inclusion (ESP, Pg. 34).
- Language and terminology related to disability includes outdated, disablist and 'medical model'\* terms, such as 'mentally challenged' (see ESP, Pg. 9), and 'diagnostics' (ESP, Pg. 34; 3-Year IE Action Plan, Pg. 15). Assessment of needs is one thing, but there is always a risk that an overfocus on diagnostics will ultimately put pressure on teachers and related educators to become diagnosticians, that is to diagnose impairments, rather than focus on better understanding students' learning needs. Even the ESP's focus on creating more MOE diagnostic centres, and related mobile teams to travel to schools and do diagnoses (ESP, Pg. 35), raises questions about what this diagnostic process actually means in the context of impairment, disability, and inclusion. The IES notes the need for "integrated and comprehensive educational assessment" which focuses on students' with disabilities educational and learning needs (ESP, Pg. 17).
- An organization structure that is too rigid and does not always respond effectively to new development and emerging needs. E.g., some departments are overworked and understaffed, other are underutilized due to gaps in management and coordination, while again others may be obsolete as the responsibilities and developments have

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\* 'Disablism' refers to discrimination and prejudice against persons with disability. There is a long history of disability primarily being considered as a medical issue, with a focus on curing or fixing impairments – the 'medical model' of disability. As a result, persons with disability have tended to be viewed as deficient and been labelled and defined by their impairments and what they cannot do, rather than what they can do. Often, the classification, identification, and 'treatment' of persons with disability was in the hands of medical professionals. The persons with disability themselves were not usually considered able, qualified, or worthy to participate in this process. This approach to disability is countered by the 'social model' of disability. As Miles (1999) notes, in relation to education "... (with) the medical (individual) model of disability and the social model of disability. The focus on "fixing" the individual is replaced by an attempt to change the environment and (in the case of education) to change the context in which children are expected to learn".

shifted. This highlights the need for greater organisational fluidity (Laihonen and Huhtamäki, 2020).

- School rationalization, i.e., the "Continuous integration of small schools (less than 100 students) into bigger schools" (ESP, Pg. 32) can be an inclusion barrier, as this may increase the distances between homes and schools for children in rural areas and may put pressure on the schools in which students are integrated by increasing the numbers of students. In addition, this approach to 'integration' runs is potentially in contradiction with UNESCO's definition of inclusive education, as espoused in the IES (Pg. 9), which mandates that all children should have access to education "in their age-appropriate general education classes in their neighbourhood schools."
- Decentralization is an issue flagged in the ESP (Pg. 39), and the continuation of a highly centralized approach to education means that, as noted in the ESP, "The directorates and schools have only limited autonomy in planning and decision-making" (ESP, pg. 39). The ESP also acknowledges a lack of "clear coordination, specific channels of communication, or a clear and comprehensive strategic path" (ibid), as being challenges in this regard. This is an inclusion issue, as such autonomy is crucial to adapting the school environment, the curriculum and related teaching and learning to meet the needs of all learners. The ESP also notes the importance of the "active participation of local community and supporters" (ibid) in such endeavours.
- Resource rooms are mentioned in three key policy and planning documents (in the ESP on pages 116 and 127; in the IES as a footnote on page 12; in the 3-Year IE Action Plan of the IES on Pgs. 34-35) as a provision for students with disabilities. However, it is important that resource rooms are understood and utilized as more flexible spaces for use by *any* student who needs additional time, support and/or space. In addition, the relationship of resource rooms to the schools in which they are based needs careful attention, so that such rooms do not become spaces for 'warehousing' students with disabilities, i.e., serving as integration environments within otherwise inclusive settings. Resource rooms are discussed in more detail further in this report.

#### *Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward*

Despite the challenges and gaps, many representatives from donor and multilateral organizations consulted during the needs assessment credited the MoE, with support from the HCD and other development partners, in having done well in developing inclusion and diversity in education laws, policies, strategies and plans. Several bilateral donors and multilateral interview respondents expressed the perspective that Jordan was quite progressive in this area in comparison with many other countries in the MENA region and beyond, particularly in regards to policy development related to inclusion. This may be due

to the support for disability inclusion from the upper echelons of Jordanian government and society.

The effort already put into policy and regulatory development towards inclusion and diversity in education is laudable and a strong point for the country. Key policy, planning and regulatory documents which already exist include, the following:

- Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2017); (and article 17 which pertains to education)
- MoE Education Strategic Plan (2018-2022)
- 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education (2020-2030)
- 3-Year Inclusive Education Action Plan.

Alongside suggestions for the better alignment of regulations, policies, strategies, and plans, in promotion of a comprehensive approach to inclusion and diversity in education, several needs assessment participants noted the importance of identifying, empowering or if needed restructuring underutilized MoE departments and units in working towards inclusion goals. This will allow promoting greater organisational hybridity and fluidity, increasing the importance of flexibility and dynamism, and the decreasing importance of established organisational boundaries, structures, and processes (Laihonen and Huhtamäki, 2020).

An example of this can be found in the initial literature review done for this needs assessment, which highlighted the MoE's 'Education Quality and Accountability Unit' (EQUA), noted as aiming to "...improve and develop the educational process in public schools according to specific criteria and indicators" (ESP, Pg. 14). There is good potential for this unit to be involved in promoting a comprehensive approach to inclusion in education.

### Institutional structures, leadership, and management

#### *A note on structural reorganization and reform*

Some structural reorganization and related institutional reform within the MoE have potential to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and inclusivity of the education system overall, and more specifically benefit inclusion and diversity in education. However, it would be beyond the scope of this capacity needs assessment to recommend specific changes and not relevant, as the stakeholders who will lead the implementation of changes should outline those specific recommendations. Rather, this assessment should be seen as a part of a reflexive turn for Jordan's education stakeholders. That is, the assessment can be used as both a part of, and a stimulus to, a deeper level of reflection amongst the MoE and other development partners, which has the potential to guide meaningful institutional reforms. The capacity development phase to be supported through the GIZ and UNESCO initiative as a follow-up to this assessment can be seen as an opportunity to consider institutional reform in greater depth.

When implementing innovation and change it is often tempting to propose structural reorganisation linked to one specific innovation instead of encouraging reflection within an organisation on how it can structure itself to be more innovation-friendly. This can be achieved by establishing cross-departmental, or cross-sectoral working groups and task forces with clear, time bound mandates in order to ensure the necessary hybridity and fluidity to respond effectively to complex and dynamic needs. Experience from Afghanistan, Indonesia and Lao PDR shows that the good intentions of increasing focus on disability inclusion by establishing new fixed structures within ministries of education (e.g., special needs or inclusive education departments) ultimately led to more bureaucracy, higher costs, but less impacts on general education systems as a whole. In retrospect, it would have been more effective to establish an inclusive education taskforce with senior members from different relevant departments, with clear goals, accountability, and a time bound mandate to ensure greater inclusion and diversity within the general education system.

### *Challenges and gaps*

#### **MoE structure**

The current structure of the MoE was flagged by some interview respondents as making it difficult for particular departments and divisions to function effectively. One example given was the Gender Division, which although currently under the management of MoE's Administrative Secretary General, is however, tasked with working with the MoE's Technical Secretary General in promoting gender as a crosscutting issue across all MoE directorates at national and sub-national levels.

Challenges related to cross cutting issues such as gender, show the limitations of existing organisational boundaries, structures, and processes, which do not always provide sufficient support for effective implementation of complex and multidimensional interventions. The same will be the case for implementing inclusion and diversity in education, where a separate inclusive education department, would bring some advantages, but many more challenges, as inclusion would be seen as a separate, non-crosscutting issue and not the responsibility of other MoE departments. Instead, greater organisational hybridity and fluidity (Laihonen and Huhtamäki, 2020) with less fixed structures and organizational boundaries would be needed.

#### **Political will**

Redundancies and unnecessary duplications of departments, personnel, responsibilities, and functions in the MoE do represent challenges to inclusion and diversity and the efficiency and effectiveness of the MoE overall. As mentioned above, these issues will need much more careful and in-depth consideration than can be covered by this needs-assessment. Nevertheless, the complex issue of political context and its implications for inclusion and diversity, were raised by needs assessment participants. Points raised include:

- Efforts to streamline the MoE, structurally, and reduce unnecessary duplications may result in the loss of departments/units, positions, and jobs. Unsurprisingly,

there can be a lack of political will from government leaders to do anything that threatens people's jobs or positions.

- Political will is also a function of leadership in the sense that individual leaders vary in terms of their interest and enthusiasm in driving and promoting inclusion and diversity in education.

### Bureaucracy

Government bureaucracy was highlighted as being a challenge across government by many needs-assessment participants, not only within the MoE, but also in the interactions between different government departments and agencies (e.g., between MoE and MoSD, and the Civil Service Bureau and MoE). Bureaucracy is seen as hindering effective implementation of policies, strategies and plans across the education sector, including with inclusion and diversity in education:

- Respondents raised the issue that some government departments work directly with national and international donors without proper coordination with the MoE Development and Coordination Unit (DCU) and other relevant stakeholders. Working directly without proper coordination may reduce bureaucratic hurdles and speed up implementation short term, however it may also reduce cost effectiveness and impact of interventions related to disability inclusion as there may be parallel and duplicating programs with conflicting concepts and philosophies, and therefore reduce any chance for comprehensive and sustainable actions.
- Although, as discussed previously, political will was noted by several needs assessment participants as being a key factor in inclusion and diversity in education, some felt that political will was a secondary concern to bureaucratic government regulations.
- Bureaucracy in hiring the right people and retaining them can be a challenge. A lack of flexibility in the system can make it difficult to recruit and retain talented staff for MoE, HCD and other entities. Individual government entities, as well as units and departments within, are not generally able to recruit staff directly, rather staff must come through the Civil Service Bureau. This is not necessarily a problem – following civil service rules and procedures can curb corruption and work to ensure a more equitable system – however, it can make it difficult to ensure that the most knowledgeable and skilled people, with the greatest capacities for promoting inclusion and diversity are in the right positions to drive positive change. Being competitive in terms of salaries to hire the most qualified candidates is also an issue. *Note - although hiring is addressed in this section of the findings, of course, this is also an issue related to human resources and professional development on national, field directorate and school levels.*
- A heavily centralized bureaucracy can mean that different ministries, departments, and individual leaders lack autonomy to make decisions. This can create barriers to both empowerment and efficiency. As explained by some respondents, decisions related to relatively minor issues of daily work and more important, substantive

issues are treated at the same very high level, while the former does not require such a high level of decision-making.

- Bureaucracy can lead to disconnection and isolation. As one interview respondent put it in describing the MoE, "Often the person in one office doesn't know what the person next door to him is doing. There are people who are working in silos".

### **Institutional culture**

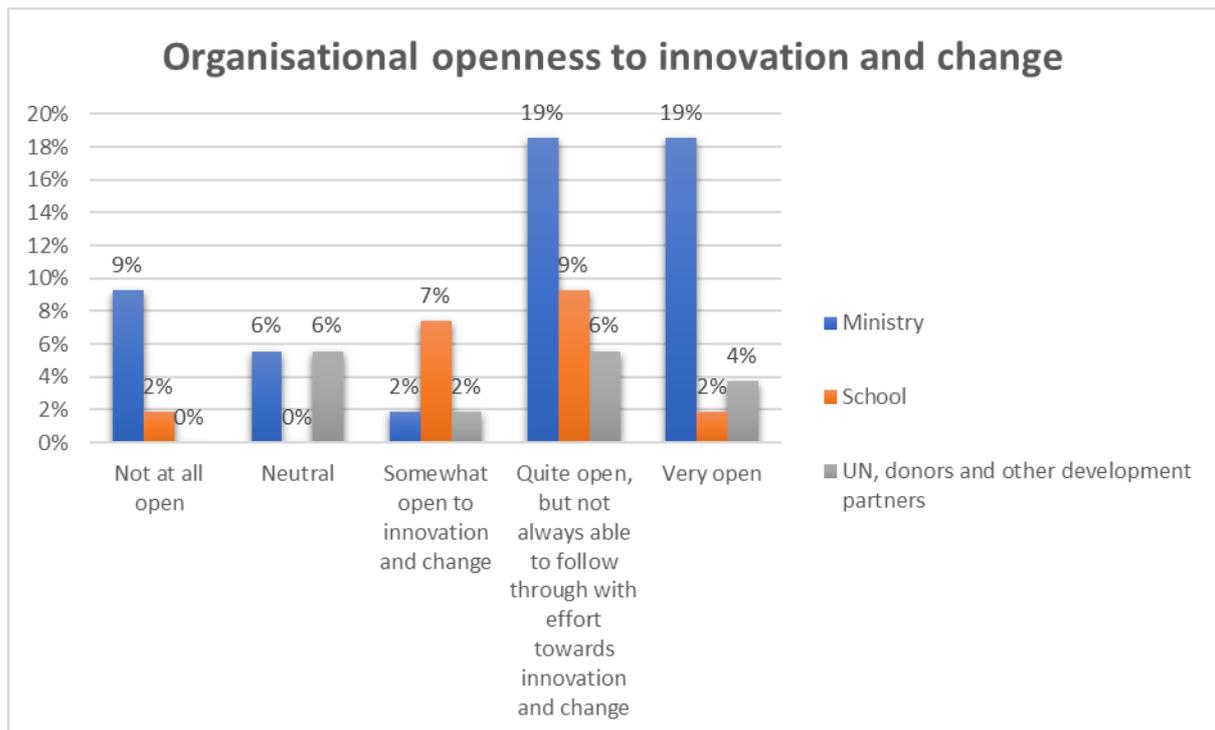
An institution's openness to innovation and change is a defining aspect of what can be termed its 'culture'. For any institution involved in education in Jordan, a lack of openness to innovation and change is ultimately a barrier towards increasing access to and quality of education in the country.

While acknowledging that no government institution is a monolith – there will inevitably be a range of, sometimes contradictory, attitudes and practices within any institution – the needs assessment focused on getting a general sense of the openness of the MoE and its development partners towards innovation and change.

Many needs assessment participants credited particular individuals within the MoE (both those in political and leadership positions, as well as technical staff) as being open to innovation and change. Also, in answering the questionnaire, MoE respondents rated the MoE well in regard to its openness to innovation and change (see figure 2 below). However, in a more in-depth exploration of this issue through interviews with other MoE respondents and other development partner respondents, the institution's openness in this regard was discussed in less favourable terms.

### **Lack of connection between policy makers and the reality of education practice in school communities**

An important issue raised during the needs-assessment was that although there are a variety of strategies and action plans related to inclusion and diversity in education, implementation is challenging, and it is not always clear that these strategies/plans are actually being put into practice 'on the ground'. This touches on a challenge that exists for many development partners and members of MoE who are not working directly in school communities, which is that it can be difficult to see the impacts of their work in planning and strategic development, on actual beneficiaries at school community level. The lack of connection – the gap – between those working at the level of policy making and planning, and the school communities their work is addressed towards, is a challenge in most education systems. However, finding ways to bridge this gap is important, as without it there is a risk that education planning will lack 'real world' relevance and that actual needs and strengths in the system are not being recognized.



*Figure no. 2\**

In the interviews conducted during the needs-assessment, a lack of openness sometimes in the MoE to innovation and change was cited both by MoE's development partners and MoE staff (including leadership) as being a challenge.

In practical terms, a lack of openness to innovation and change translates to a lack of progress in increasing inclusion and diversity in education because, as some respondents stated that there are no major investments in new people and new ideas. And other needs assessment participants (both those representing MoE and other development partners) expressed that as result of the lack of investment in human resources, younger and more junior level MoE staff, who have the potential for long careers and will be essential for promoting innovation and change over time, are not sufficiently nurtured and supported to gain capacities and take on leadership roles. This problem is, of course, related to professional development and the lack of a well-functioning, merit-based and transparent professional development system across the MoE – from national level to sub-national and school community levels (professional development is discussed in more detail under the 'human resources and professional development' section in this report).

Another critical issue raised by interview respondents was the prevalence of unrealistic expectations for change. As several respondents noted, meaningful and sustainable change takes time, and so the expectation that such change can be achieved within the relatively short time frames that typically define project and political cycles, is problematic. As

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\* Note – the category 'Ministry' in the figure above includes national and field directorate level respondents.

barriers to inclusion and diversity in education are often systemic and deeply entrenched, it is even less likely that these can be overcome quickly. One respondent expressed that there has been a lot of successes, but still, they are dealing with cumulative problems from the past, meaning that change will take time, and we must manage our expectations.

A related barrier to change noted by needs assessment participants is the, sometimes, rapid pace of changes in leadership and other key personnel in MoE and its development partners, which make continuity and sustainability difficult.

Another aspect of challenging institutional culture, raised during the needs assessment, was the expectation from some working in the MoE, that their participation in inclusion and diversity trainings, research, and other activities, demanded incentives, or financial compensation. It was impossible for this assessment to gauge how pervasive such a 'pay for play' attitude is within the MoE, but several interview respondents noted it as being a concern. As one respondent put it: "There is a tendency in the ministry of education, that people will not go out of their way if there isn't a financial compensation". This may be due to relatively low salaries within the government sector, but it has also become an institutional culture issue within many departments, a culture that needs to change to if real innovation and change is to be achieved in the years to come.

### **Leadership**

The selection/appointment, recruitment and the professional development of education leaders is also a problematic issue and certainly one that the MoE is aware of. The ESP (page 16) notes two key challenges in relation to the selection and development of leadership at all administrative levels:

- A lack of effective leadership in all aspects of the system.
- An absence of a system granting licenses to school leaders, where the system of recruitment in leadership positions is currently based largely on the duration of service and not on personal performance and potential.

### *Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward*

A high level of commitment from key members of MoE leadership and MoE staff to inclusion and diversity in education is something that was highlighted from a number of development partners. One donor representative expressed this by saying; "I do think that the ministry (of education) cares deeply, I feel that it's not just lip service for our ministry counterparts. [...] for example, the strategy developer; we developed an action plan for the strategy on inclusive education and I noted, the high level of participation and commitment on the part of our ministry and government counterparts".

Although some restructuring and reform within MoE, and elsewhere in the system, could potentially be useful in improving communication and coordination around implementing inclusion and diversity in education, as noted previously, the issue of MoE restructuring and reform needs much more careful analysis and is beyond the scope of this needs assessment.

That being said, a few general institutional reform suggestions which have arisen from the assessment are detailed below:

- When implementing innovation and change, it is tempting to suggest institutional restructuring addressing emerging needs. However, based on experience in a number of other countries, as discussed above, this mainly leads to inflated bureaucracy and presents “permanent solutions” to “temporary problems”. Instead, more hybridity and fluidity are called for, with the formation of taskforces with clear terms of references and mandates, with limited time and scope to address specific gaps and challenges. Based on the results of the work of such taskforces, the need for more permanent restructuring may emerge.
- Making better use of existing strengths. Working to further strengthen the participation and alignment of different public sector education actors, e.g., MoE, MoSD, HCD, NCCD, QRF, QRTA, along shared inclusion and diversity in education goals is certainly warranted. A respondent recommended to make better use of NCCD as they are small, agile, have good resources, but seem to be perceived somewhat underutilised.
- Another issue raised, in terms of suggested ways forward, was how to address the complex intersection of competing inclusion and diversity priorities and donor support to MoE. Respondents suggested that MoE could focus on a few selected priorities and key goals outlined in the strategy, as focusing on multiple, complex challenges simultaneously may lead to confusion and lack of progress. It is also important to realise that change takes time, and success does not happen overnight. Innovation therefore needs to be seen as an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary process. This constitutes the difference between disruption and a more evolutionary process of innovation (Meltzer, 2018).

## Financing

### *Challenges and gaps*

A range of financing related challenges and gaps were raised by needs assessment participants, including:

- There are gaps in terms of the MoE’s budget allocation towards inclusion and diversity in education – as this area of service provision is underfunded in the face of the many inclusion needs and challenges that exist.
- Many of the programmes, projects and activities which address inclusion and diversity in education are funded through off-budget support by donors, multilaterals, and NGOs. This is an issue in regard to the sustainability of such efforts, as donor funding, at least for some aspects of inclusion, is seen to be

shrinking, which is already leading to gaps in service provision. This highlights the need for the MoE to prioritise inclusion and diversity differently in their budgets and also reflects that MoE responsibility for disability inclusion is relatively new and this will take time. Again, this emphasises the need for greater hybridity and fluidity within government structures.

- The perception in parts of the Jordanian government and society, that funding for disability inclusion is a luxury threatens inclusion gains which have already been made, as well as further progress towards inclusion. This reiterates the need to expand from disability inclusion to a more comprehensive approach to inclusion and diversity in education, ensuring that inclusion initiatives will lead to greater quality and relevance of education for all.
- The perception that the system of financing education is overly complex and bureaucratic leading to delays in spending the money, which is technically available. As one interview respondent put it, "They have procedures, and they have system how to spend this money. If you want to spend any money from a donor, for example, you have to take the approval of the Prime Minister, then you have to take the approval from the Finance Minister, maybe this will take six or seven months."
- Competing funding priorities, which dilute funding for inclusion and diversity, and hinder efforts to improve the overall access to and the quality of the Jordanian education system. As one interview respondent noted, the MoE's need to accelerate school construction to meet the needs of the growing population is having a negative impact on quality. The respondent explained: "As far as I know, one of the biggest problems we have in Jordan, is the fact that our birth rate is so high. And because our birth rate is so high, our Ministry of Education is just totally consumed every year by having to build new skills, new schools, just continually building and building and building new schools to accommodate all the children that have been born. Rather than spending surplus money on raising the standards of the schools that already exist, the total obsession is with just having to build new schools to accommodate the needs. If we were not in the position to have to build new schools the whole time, we could spend that money on upgrading and bettering the levels of teaching in the schools and then major reform in our educational system".

#### *Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward*

Several donor, multilateral and MoE interview respondents suggested that although there has been some good progress over the last few years in improving the alignment of donor/multilateral funding with education system needs, more work needs to be done in ensuring that donors and multilaterals are able to fund (and otherwise support) work towards inclusion and diversity in education, in a way which balances their particular interests and areas of expertise, with the actual gaps and needs in the system in order to increase collaboration and avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

More work also needs to be done to increase sustainability by bringing funding for inclusion and diversity work into the MoE budget. As noted previously, although off budget funding of programmes, projects and activities does have its advantages, it does create sustainability risks.

### Education system monitoring and evaluation

In order to increase inclusion and diversity in education within the Jordanian education system, attention must be paid to the way in which this system is monitored and evaluated and how this informs system management.

#### *Challenges and Gaps*

##### **EMIS**

MoE has made significant progress in developing its Education Management Information System (EMIS), with support from technical partners and donors. MoE chose the OpenEMIS Platform which is a flexible system and able to incorporate a wide range of types of data. This process has led to the development of an EMIS ‘roadmap’, which outlines the process of EMIS development going forward. Having a high quality, relevant and accessible EMIS system is critical to the implementation of inclusion and diversity of education in Jordan, as amongst other reasons, it is an essential tool for decentralized education planning and management.

Despite good progress in developing their EMIS system, the MoE still needs to address challenges and gaps in some key areas:

- Ensuring the accuracy of data from school level;
- Ensuring disaggregation of important metrics which underpin inclusion, for example, disability, geographical location (e.g., urban, or rural) and economic status.

EMIS data quality is less a function of the EMIS system itself and more about the humans that collect and enter the data into the system. This raises issues of accountability at the school level. As an interview respondent put it, “Now we need to also be accountable when we enter the data. So, school principals or teachers that had the responsibility to enter all the basic data linked to their students have the responsibility to make sure that the data is accurate and linked to the actual records of the students”. In this sense, improving the quality of data is linked both to the quality of communication and coordination from national to sub-national levels in the MoE, and school level staffs’ awareness of and capacity in using the EMIS system.

A more comprehensive approach to raising awareness about the reasons that different types of EMIS data are useful and to be used in evidence-based planning (e.g., the value of collecting data on children’s disability in better understanding exclusion and inclusion of children in education) and the importance of accurately collecting such data is something which is needed across the MoE, from central level, down to school community level.

Another key aspect of improving the quality of data is to support key stakeholders in being able to see what the data means in their specific contexts. This necessitates the development of tools, such as dashboards and related reporting mechanisms, which allow users easy access to relevant, disaggregated data, whether they are the Minister of Education, an MoE staff member with responsibility for management of EMIS at the central level, a headteacher, or teacher in a school. As an interview respondent put it, "...if you provide the tools to the school principal, to generate whatever reports she/he needs, to be able to assess the performance of their schools, see where the gaps are, dashboards, prediction tools, reports on their level of the school division, and this way they will feel the benefit, or the advantage, of the data they entered into their system. Many reports that (have been generated) may cover the needs of the field directorate, but on the school level, we do not have sufficient dashboards, or analysis tools, and no reports on the school level. So, the more this is provided to schools, the more they will be committed and engaged in the process of accurate data collection. This system is not about data collection just for the purpose of data collection, we need to make use of this data."

Having relevant and accurate data available in this manner is also a way of increasing transparency and building trust in the education system.

### Research studies

Needs assessment participants provided a range of, sometimes contradictory, perspectives about challenges and gaps in inclusion and diversity related educational research. Although some interview respondents suggested there was a need for much more research into inclusion and diversity themes in order to inform action, others suggested that there was already a lot of data available, which could inform education planning and implementation, but that it was not being used. As one MoE respondent explained: "Now, this is the problem that when we finish the research and put our recommendations, there is no guarantee that that senior level officials will take these recommendations into consideration". Several suggested areas for further research are detailed under the section on 'Existing capacities, strengths and suggested ways forward', below.

### *Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward*

#### EMIS

As mentioned previously, the MoE has made significant progress in developing its EMIS system. This has involved the development of an EMIS 'roadmap' to guide the process of developing and refining of the OpenEMIS system. The 'roadmap' specifies several innovations, which are currently under development, and which will serve to strengthen the EMIS system, including:

- The development of specialized dashboards, such as 'report cards' for schools, which highlight key indicators (such as absentee rates, students' performance in specific subject areas, etc.), that school managers are interested in, on a daily basis, or whenever needed.

- A related innovation will also allow school management to generate other kinds of 'dynamic' reports, such as reports on the process of data collection which, as an interview respondent put it, show: "[...] how the situation is going in terms of data completion, data quality, data collection and other reports that we would like to see".

Based on some respondents' feedback it seems that the partnership for developing the EMIS has been highly positive and productive with the MoE taking increasing ownership of their EMIS system.

Interview respondents have suggested that more work needs to be done in raising awareness about the importance of EMIS data and the value of accurate collection of data. As part of this, more support for school level actors (e.g. teachers and school principals) is seen as valuable, also for the effective implementation of inclusion and diversity in education. This includes support in understanding the purposes/uses of different types of data, and data disaggregation; how to accurately collect and enter data into the system; and how to generate and use data reports for classroom and school planning and management. This is important towards ensuring that key data related to inclusion and other aspects of education is understood at all levels of the system, is being collected accurately and analysed properly to guide improvements.

Also, as noted previously, the work already being done on developing better reporting functions at school level is highly valuable and should be continued. This is needed because, as a respondent put it, "Every year, school principals are entering data without being able to see the benefit of what they entered [...] the actual results because OpenEMIS now doesn't have the necessary sufficient number of reports on school level".

Further, as the OpenEMIS system becomes more comprehensive and sophisticated, this comes with implications in regard to the need for better internet connectivity and better IT support for users.

### **Research studies**

It has been suggested by a number of needs assessment participants that conducting more research in relation to different aspects of inclusion and diversity in education is warranted in order to inform policy and practice initiatives. Additional research in relation to the following focus areas has been suggested:

- Disability prevalence in Jordanian school communities.
- Disability prevalence in refugee school communities.
- Out-of-school children. Although research and attention to the issue of out-of-school children (OSC) does exist in Jordan, for example the recent (2020) UNICEF report on OSC, this does not preclude the need for further research, particularly into sensitive areas such as street children and working children.
- Existing inclusion and diversity in programs, projects, and activities.

- Teacher education and its role in preparing and supporting teachers to implement inclusion and diversity in schools.

## Communication, coordination, and planning

### *Challenges and gaps*

A variety of assessment participants, from across the education system, noted communication and coordination gaps and challenges. Many of these involve gaps in communication and coordination between different MoE entities (i.e., departments and units) have led to confusion, lack of ownership of inclusion initiatives, unnecessary duplication of functions and sometimes contradictory approaches to education implementation. Also noted were communication and coordination gaps between other government entities, e.g., MoSD, MoH, HCD, and MoPIC.

Such gaps and challenges include:

- A lack of coordination between MoE departments around curriculum development and teacher education.
- Overlap and duplication of functions and lack of coordination between the MoE's Curriculum and Textbook Management Department and the NCCD (both of which share some responsibility for curriculum development and implementation).
- Needs assessment participants indicated that there are some unnecessary overlaps in responsibilities that can create tensions. For example, the MoE's Department of Educational Supervision and Training and the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Center for Education and Information Technology sometimes have overlaps.
- A lack of good coordination between curriculum development and examination system development.
- A lack of good coordination between school supervision and assessment entities.
- A further issue raised by some interview respondents was the relative vastness of the inclusion and diversity in education agenda and the disadvantage for the MoE being that this has led to them having too many priorities, with the risk that focus can be lost and implementation superficial. This has also made it challenging for some donors to know how best to support the MoE in achieving their inclusion and diversity in education goals.
- In relation to the previous point, the large number of education activities being done by MoE (and other development partners), can make communication and

coordination a challenge. As one interview respondent put it, "There's a lot being done within the Ministry [...], sometimes we find ourselves not knowing about these projects, or these issues and this kind of connectivity."

- Poor communication and coordination not only risk unnecessary duplications, but also that resources are not utilized in an efficient, equitable and needs-based way. Confusion about HCD and MoE respective organizations' mandates in relation to inclusion was mentioned by some respondents. Clarifications would help addressing and contributing to communication and coordination challenges.
- Poor communication and coordination between different ministries and government entities make it particularly difficult to address inclusion issues, such as transitions for learners with disability from under the Ministry of Social Development's care to the Ministry of Education and inclusion in 'mainstream' schools. As one interview respondent explained; "[...] between the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education, there is not that much cooperation between the two ministries in order to make this transitional stage as smooth as possible and to give all the support needed to the Ministry of Education to take these students (with disability) back to school. I believe this should have been planned in a much better way than they are doing now in order just to move the students from the auspices of the Ministry of Social Development into the Ministry of Education, without preparing the students, without preparing the staff, without even doing a study to evaluate what is the situation and what should be done in order to support these students before including them into the Ministry of Education schools."
- Lack of coordination sometimes between individual MoE departments and DCU, which amongst other problems, potentially leads to overspending in some areas and underspending in others. This is not only the "fault" of government departments and agencies, but also due to donors, sometimes shortcutting proper government processes which can be perceived to be overly bureaucratic (this has been noted previously).
- Lack of communication and coordination between different levels within MoE, e.g., national, field directorate and school levels. For instance, it was mentioned that many field directorates' staff are unaware of the IES.
- Another coordination gap was identified as existing between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. As a representative from the HCD explained, "Unfortunately the medical diagnosis is now the one that controlling how to label a student with disabilities. Also, the Ministry of Health, they do regular visits to school to do a regular check-up on the students and do some type of referral for further investigation, if they notice that, for example, a child is having a kind of problem with

vision, or health condition, but this is not connected to the support being provided by the Ministry of Education".

### **Coordination of technical support for schools**

The existence of two MoE entities - the Department of Educational Supervision and Training and the Education Quality and Accountability Unit - with separate approaches to school supervision, assessment and support involves a degree of overlap and has led to some confusion within MoE and at school level.

Another MoE entity, which specifically supports private schools, particularly in regard to disability inclusion, is the Special Education Department. Several, gaps, and challenges in relation to private schooling and the work of this department emerged from the assessment, including:

- Inflexible licensing requirements for private schools (e.g., licensing is based on a standard, set, number of students, but in reality, such numbers vary locally).
- There is a lack of connectivity between the private and public education sectors – as several assessment participants noted good, innovative work on inclusion being done in some private schools, there could be benefits from better linking with the public sector.
- The Department is isolated from other MoE departments and has no authority on its own.

### *Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward*

Inevitably, in any complex system like the education system in Jordan, there will be challenges and gaps in communication and coordination. Despite the challenges/gaps identified, needs assessment participants also pointed to a number of existing capacities and strengths. These include:

- Donor and multilateral development partners emphasized the willingness of MoE to engage in coordination with their development partners. A number of donor/multilateral interview respondents who had more long-term experience with the MoE – some with over 10-years' experience of working with Jordan's MoE – noted that they had witnessed progressive improvement in communication and coordination over the years, particularly as the MoE has increased its focus on strategic development.
- Improvements have been noticed as well since the development of the ESP has not only partners align further to the strategic directions of the MoE, but also because the MoE has greater leadership and ownership on service delivery interventions, previously led by implementing partners sometimes.

- MoE's development partners who have had experience working in other countries also highlighted that Jordan's MoE was well advanced in regard to communication and coordination, in comparison with other ministries of education they had worked with in the MENA region and beyond. This included what was perceived as being a favourable environment with well-functioning communication and coordination between donors, multilaterals, NGOs and the MoE.
- Building on and strengthening the existing system of ministerial liaison officers was seen as being important. As one interview respondent put it, "Usually it helps if you have liaison officers within these ministries to facilitate the communication with the ministry, because sometimes you have very small issues that you don't need to discuss with the Minister, or the Secretary General, or you can't finish your discussion with the director of one of the departments, so an officer that could do that."
- Positive examples of donors supporting coordination between different ministries/government entities were also highlighted by several interview respondents. This included donor coordination on school construction with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH).
- It was also suggested that it would be beneficial to have a trained facilitator as part of the steering committee on the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education, to help in general organization and in managing discussion, dialogue, inputs, and follow-up.
- More work is needed in linking central/national MoE planning and coordination with what is taking place at a sub-national level. One interview respondent highlighted this point, saying, "Decentralized planning is very important and it (needs to be) linked to successful, proper centralized planning ... linked to not only the SDDP, the School and Directorate Development Programme, but also to the ESP".
- Needs assessment participants highlighted that other national/sub-national governance actors, such as parliamentarians and mayors, need to be included in communication and coordination efforts, as well.
- Communication and coordination around inclusion and diversity in education, also as a means of advocacy, needs to involve the Ministry of Religious Affairs and religious institutions and actors at community level. As a representative from HCD put it, "We have to do a lot of work on this front also with our Mosques and Churches, also to convince the local communities that this is the way it should be and, and this is the trend. This cannot just be parachuted upon the communities, it has to be persuasive, and people have to understand that this is the right thing to do, and it's, after all, our sons and daughters that need to be educated".

- Coordination between different ministries/government entities can be linked to specific inclusion initiatives. A key example given was the need to structure coordination around the referral system for learners with disability. This can be used to foster better coordination between the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transport, for example. As one interview respondent put it, "So, I believe we still we need to build a strong relationship between these ministries, and at the same time to build a kind of referral system between the three ministries in order for the child not to be negatively affected if he/she moves from one place to another."
- It was suggested that better coordination is needed around the inclusion of refugees, both in education generally and even in relation to inclusion in EMIS data. However, several interview respondents reported that the MoE, with UNESCO and UNHCR, are currently working together to strengthen coordination in this area.
- Communication and coordination are not just important amongst government (national and sub-national levels), donors, multilaterals, and NGOs, but also between government and communities. One interview respondent highlighted the need for communication between different levels of the Ministry of Education, but with local communities and tribal elders: "liaising with communities is absolutely fundamental for the successful implementation of inclusive education." Engagement at community level, is essential, but also comes with a set of challenges around managing community expectations, as the interview respondent continued, "It is a double-edged sword because, we have to liaise with communities, but this engagement will also raise people's expectations. They will automatically think that all their children will be able to go to school. But we know that we are unable to accommodate everybody, so what do we do?"

### **Coordination bodies and networks**

A variety of institutional and professional coordinating bodies and networks exist which have been highlighted as being beneficial to communication and coordination as well as to other aspects of work towards inclusion and diversity in education. However, issues were raised about the need to ensure that participants in such coordination mechanisms, are committed, consistent in their participation and accountable for reporting back to their institution/department and for practical actions, which stem from coordination meetings. As one interview respondent put it, "We need to find a way to actually strengthen the ownership and participation in committees, like the awareness raising and changing attitudes, because if you believe, you can cross all borders".

Existing coordination bodies and networks, which were seen as being positive and/or having potential include:

- The DCU, which coordinates support for inclusion in education between the MOE and other development partners. The DCU has mapped a range of activities related to inclusion and diversity in education, linked to the 3-year Strategy for Inclusive Education.
- An inter-ministerial gender network including representation of gender divisions from different Jordanian government ministries (noted as being particularly helpful in aiding the work of MoE's Gender Division).
- The Disability and Age Task Force (DATF) under UNHCR and HI, working on the safe identification of persons with disabilities and improvement of access to quality specialised services among refugee populations.
- The Steering Committee on the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education and its Action Plans (SCIEAP).
- Five technical joint teams, composed from the HCD and the two ministries (MoE and MoSD) which evaluate special education centres.
- The coordination body around the development of social protection policy.
- The coordination body around the development of sexual and reproductive health policy.
- The Gender Based Violence Sub-Working Group (GBV SWG) aims to strengthen GBV prevention and response in the context of the Syrian emergency in Jordan. It works to facilitate multi-sectoral, inter-agency action aimed at preventing GBV, and ensuring the provision of accessible, prompt, confidential, and appropriate services to survivors of GBV. It is chaired by UNFPA and UNHCR and it is a sub-working group of the Community-Based Protection Working Group. Members of the Sub-Working Group include UN agencies, international and national NGOs and institutions working in these sectors.
- In regard to the lack of communication and coordination between the Curriculum and Textbook Management Department and the NCCD, a recent development of a staff position which works between both entities has potential for communication and coordination strengthening.

## Infrastructure and material resources

### *Challenges and gaps*

#### **School buildings and related infrastructure**

A common theme to emerge from interviews were challenges and gaps related to a lack of adequate and accessible school spaces. These challenges and gaps include:

- A lack of schools to serve the needs of the existing population of students. This has been exacerbated by the influx of refugees into Jordan.
- Related to the previous point, it has been noted that many schools are overcrowded.

- It was noted that many buildings being used as schools (estimated at over 20%), were not designed as schools and are not the property of the Jordanian government, but are rather rented, or leased from private individuals, or businesses. This means that many of these rented buildings are not appropriate spaces in terms of size, or design. Such an approach also lacks sustainability.
- The issue of school maintenance was also raised, as needs assessment participants explained that many schools are poorly maintained, and as one MoE respondent put it, have "urgent and comprehensive maintenance needs". One reason cited for schools falling into disrepair is the lack of a special programme/fund for preventative maintenance for schools.
- Many schools were seen as being not comfortable, or welcoming places for any learners.
- In particular, most schools are not accessible for persons with disability (e.g. they lack ramps, accessible WASH facilities, etc.).
- A lack of safe and adequate WASH facilities in schools, in general.

### Transport

A lack of adequate and accessible transportation options between homes and schools is a problem noted by many needs assessment participants. This is an issue for learners who live at too far a distance from their closest schools but is particularly a problem for learners with disability.

### Textbooks and other curricular material

Particular gaps in teaching, learning and assessment resources identified include a lack of:

- Quality textbooks which promote inclusion and diversity (issues related to curriculum and textbook development are addressed in more detail in the following section on *curriculum, training and support*);
- Assistive devices for learners with disability;
- IT hardware (e.g., laptops and tablets) for many schools and learners, particularly those in rural areas and those from more income poor families;
- Tools for diagnostics related to learners with disability;
- Textbooks and other curricula material adapted for learners with disability.

### *Existing capacities*

The infrastructure and material resource challenges and gaps faced in the education system in Jordan, need to be understood in the context of, as previously noted, the tremendous pressure on the MoE to build new schools to keep up with rising demand.

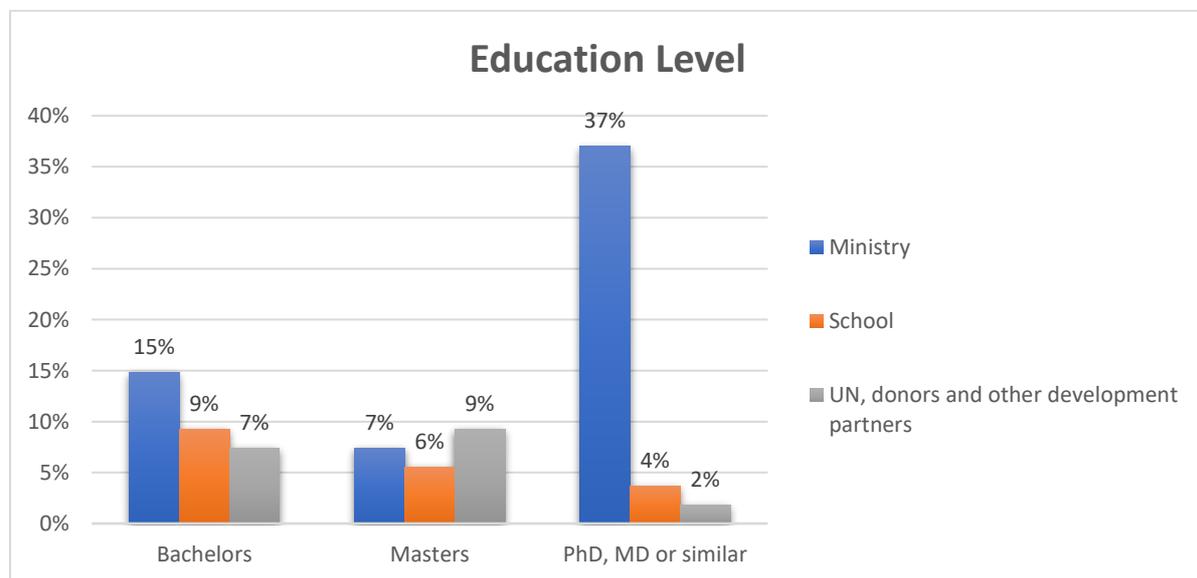
Despite the challenges, a number of programmes and initiatives exist to increase access to accessible, quality schools, classrooms, and resources (e.g., teaching and learning materials, including assistive devices). This includes school community mapping and construction.

## Human resources and professional development

### *Challenges and Gaps*

#### **MoE departments/units with a focus on inclusion and diversity in education**

Although the majority of interview respondents credited the MoE with having many committed and diligent staff who are interested in working towards greater inclusion and diversity in Jordan, there were concerns that the actual capacities among MoE staff to do so are limited. This was noted as being a human resource issue, both in terms of not having enough staff in some departments and units, but also in that most existing staff lack proper awareness of and knowledge about inclusion and diversity issues (disability and gender, particularly), as well as technical capacity in these areas.



*Figure no. 3 – Education levels of respondents*

The education level among MoE respondents was generally high (see figure no. 3 above), however the lack of MoE staff' capacity to plan for, implement, manage and support inclusion was an overarching concern, raised by many of the needs assessment participants.

For example, although the MoE has a Special Education Department, with a particular focus on disability, several interview respondents expressed the perspective that this department lacked adequate numbers of staff with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to provide meaningful oversight in the implementation of disability inclusion.

Key stakeholders for inclusion and diversity in education have a range of different backgrounds, few directly related to the specific area they are tasked to manage or work within. This is the case both within government ministries and entities, and international development partners.

The specific educational backgrounds of assessment respondents are displayed in Figure 4, below.

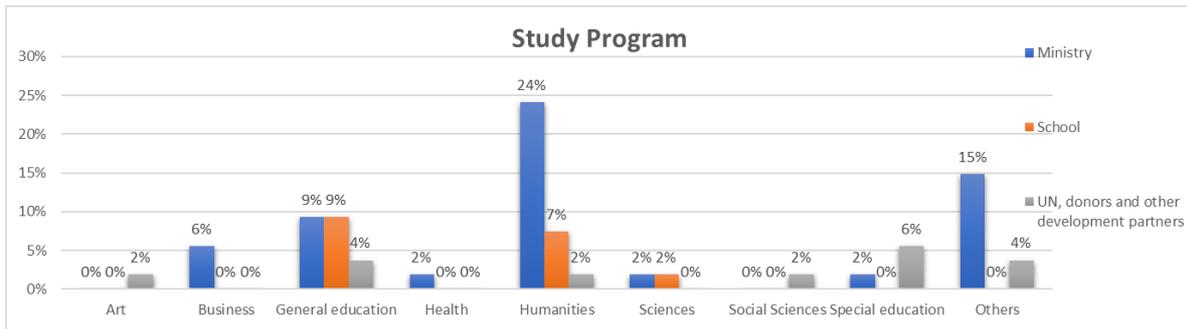


Figure no. 4: Specific educational backgrounds of assessment respondents

Discussing these issues, one interview respondent explained, "People who are working on inclusive education, few have graduated or are holding a degree in special education, but inclusive education is not only about having a degree in special education. You need to be trained on strategies policies, best practices, you need to have the knowledge and the knowhow. And I believe that the Ministry of Education is lacking staff with these experiences".

Respondents identified a number of professional development needs, both for themselves and for colleagues within in their units, departments, and institutions, but also other forms of support to enable them to effectively implement inclusion and diversity in education: (see figure below).

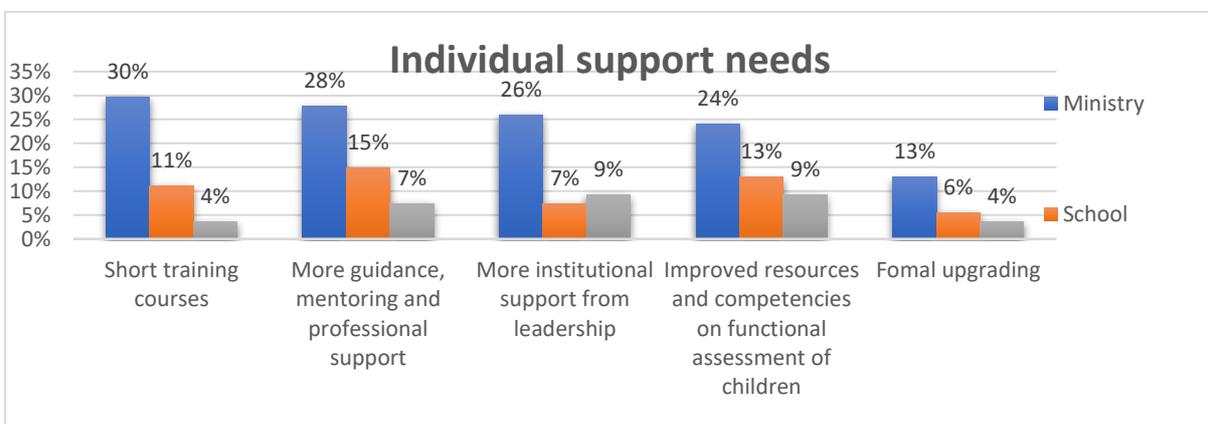


Figure no. 5: Identified needs for support and individual capacity development

### Teachers

Issues concerning teachers, and their knowledge, skills and motivation were raised by a number of assessment participants.

A number of needs assessment participants indicated that the (government) teaching profession in Jordan has a relatively low bar to entry which negatively impacts on the quality of teachers in the system. In addition, several interview respondents expressed their views of teaching as being a relatively well paid 'job for life', which has resulted in some teachers being less invested, or complacent, as they feel they are beyond reproach.

Contrary to this view, perceptions shared by other assessment participants were more sympathetic to teachers and cognizant of the challenges that many teachers face in schools and classrooms, including: often, large numbers of students to teach with limited space; poor facilities; a lack of access to adequate teaching and learning resources of quality; a variety of complex learning needs to address with limited support; and limited, if any, access to relevant, quality, in-service training, or other professional development opportunities.

As with any large and complex system, the actual state of the teaching profession will involve a combination of both perspectives, represented above.

Taking account of a range of perspectives, key capacity development gaps and challenges have emerged, and these include:

- The need to balance efforts to raise the standards of entry to the teaching profession with a proper, comprehensive, merit-based, and well-functioning system of professional development and support.
- Poor teacher motivation has been raised as being a critical issue. As one interview respondent explained, "If you see the answers from the survey that was conducted by the Queen Rania Foundation, a lot of them (teachers) say this was their last choice, this was never their dream job. They're only doing this to get a base salary". Note - several needs assessment participants referenced a recent QRTA survey on teachers, mentioning that evidence shows challenges with teachers related to quality, motivation, and gender. Poor teacher motivation is, however, more than just linked to people joining the teaching profession with a lack of aptitude for, or interest in the job of being a teacher, or perceptions of poor remuneration. The lack of a comprehensive, merit-based, and well-functioning system of professional development for teachers must also be considered as contributing to poor teacher motivation.
- Another related set of linked issues raised are the relative lack of male teachers in the system and the perspective of a number of assessment participants that male teachers have relatively poor motivation. Also, in connection to this, several interview respondents expressed the view that male teachers are, in general, less competent, and professional than their female counterparts. It was impossible, in this limited assessment, to evaluate the levels of motivation, quality and professionalism of male teachers, however there are clearly valid concerns that were raised which need further attention. There is a sense that contributing factors to the relatively low numbers and quality of male teachers in the Jordanian system, include the wide-spread societal perception of teaching as being 'women's work', coupled with women's limited employment options in Jordan – with teaching being one of the few avenues for employment open to women (this may also contribute to the

high quality of female teachers, in comparison with males, as there is more competition for females in the system).

- Poorly trained, supported, and motivated teachers will struggle to provide access to quality education for *any* children, let alone those with disabilities, or those with other factors that put them at risk of exclusion from and marginalization within education. Again, it is worth reemphasizing that is a foundational issue, which affects access to quality education for all.
- Communication and coordination – although these topics are covered elsewhere in this report, there are existing challenges in the capacity of the MoE to communicate with its teaching force. The fact that very few of the government teachers consulted during this assessment utilized email (or even had functioning email addresses) is evidence of the lack of a comprehensive, consistent, and well-functioning system of communication between teachers and other parts of the MoE.
- Licencing and professional development for teachers remains problematic, as, the ESP (page 16) notes, “The Ministry does not have an integrated system for professional licensing, evaluation and promotion of teachers”. In addition, the development and recognition of professional capacities in inclusion and diversity in education need to be part of the professional development system, which is not the case currently.

### *Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward*

Despite gaps and challenges, a number of development partners, together with MoE, have been working towards increasing teacher competencies and professionalism, towards greater inclusion and diversity in education. Specific initiatives in this regard are detailed further in this report on the findings section ‘programmes, projects and activities’.

A number of interview respondents suggested that encouraging innovation and change among staff in government institutions is an important means of working towards improved professional development and ultimately in achieving greater inclusion and diversity in education. As one interview respondent explained (and this touches on issues of training which are addressed in the following section of the report), "What we are trying to do is always find and encourage them (staff) not to be traditional governmental employees, just waiting for things to be asked from him or her to do. So, I think we need to support innovation, creativity, all these things. We need to support our employees with critical thinking and creativity and all these things and to deliver training for some of our employees, and we are going to evaluate it if it's really good and successful we will continue it".

## Training, curriculum, and support

### *Challenges and gaps*

#### **Training**

Training related to inclusion and diversity in education has been touched on previously in this report. The term ‘training’, itself, has different connotations for different stakeholders. Although there is broad consensus that the implementation of inclusion and diversity in education will require more training at all levels of the education system, quite what such training should be, conceptually and practically, has been more difficult to pin down.

Needs assessment participants noted gaps in the content and methodologies of training available, particularly in regard to technical aspects of inclusion. The following challenges and gaps were highlighted:

- More training opportunities are needed on disability inclusion (e.g., knowledge about disabilities and impairments; assessment; identification of learning needs; methods of curriculum adaptation, teaching, learning, assessment, and support for learners with disability).
- More training opportunities are needed on gender (e.g., understanding the concept of gender; gender mainstreaming; challenging negative gender stereotypes; understanding the concept of gender in relation to religion; supporting marginalized, or excluded girls and boys in education).
- There is also a need for crosscutting inclusion issues – e.g., disability and gender – to be integrated into other trainings, instead of just being addressed as stand-alone topics. This means that, for example, subject specific training for teachers (e.g., in mathematics, or science) being designed to address issues of gender and disability in connection with the subject being taught. This has implications both for in-service training for teachers and others in the MoE, as well as for pre-service training.
- It was also noted that much of existing trainings related to inclusion and diversity in education was overly theoretical and lacked meaningful practical components, which would enable actual implementation. Accordingly, many teachers and others who have been through such trainings have struggled to implement what they have learned in their work.
- Another key issue raised by a number of needs assessment participants was the need to provide training on psychosocial support for teachers, school managers, and MoE supervision/evaluation staff.

- The need for teaching assistants, who are trained in inclusion, to support teachers in schools and classrooms was also raised.

### **Curriculum and textbook development**

The MoE's Curriculum and Textbook Management Department was identified as facing a series of challenges and gaps which include:

- A lack of understanding about disability inclusion in general and more specifically about how to develop, revise, or adapt curriculum to support the learning of students with disability.
- Having curricula materials which are outdated and are not developed with gender sensitivity, do not adequately address relevant life skills and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (e.g., critical thinking, IT, etc.).
- The promotion of values and morals about inclusion and diversity in education are not adequately reflected in the content of existing textbooks. This is an inclusion issue in the sense that the practice of inclusive values (e.g. coexistence, anti-discrimination, empathy, welcoming diversity, etc.) benefit from being addressed both implicitly and explicitly in the curriculum and curricular resources.

NCCD, which also deals with curriculum and textbook development, noted some similar challenges, including, a lack of access to highly skilled textbook editors and graphic designers. As a representative from NCCD explained, "It's not very easy to find good book editors and graphic designers, so that they (the books) come out in good shape".

Further, representatives from the MoE's Planning Department highlighted challenges concerning the MoE's lack of a curriculum, or curricular adaptations, which are relevant and accessible for learners with disability and, as noted in the previous section of this report, a lack of related technical skills amongst staff who work in curriculum development.

### **Inclusive pedagogy**

A general lack of knowledge, skills, and practices in relation to inclusive pedagogical approaches within the education system was raised as a concern by many needs assessment participants. Such pedagogical approaches include differentiation of teaching and learning; formative and inclusive assessment of/for learning; activity and project-based forms of teaching and learning; critical thinking; and positive classroom and behaviour management (positive discipline). In addition, MoE respondents with responsibility for developing and implementing examinations noted a lack of comprehensive standards for the assessment of higher and critical thinking skills and a lack of learning assessments of such skills. For example, one interviewee explained that the summative assessments of learning which are dominant in the Jordanian education system, focus mostly on factual knowledge, not learning processes, or critical thinking skills.

This means that many teachers and school principals have limited awareness of such pedagogical approaches, but also that sub-national MoE staff, including MoE supervisors, teacher educators, and more senior MoE staff at central level, have significant gaps in knowledge and skills related to inclusive pedagogy. In this sense, there are significant pedagogy awareness raising and training needs across the education system.

Ad hoc training of Jordanian teachers in inclusive forms of pedagogy may lead to some positive changes in certain schools and classrooms, but without a more comprehensive, systemic approach, such changes are likely to be limited, superficial and unsustainable.

### Assessments of learning

Several needs assessment participants raised the issue that existing examinations and related assessment measures are relatively shallow and overly weighted towards assessing learners' memorization of factual subject knowledge, and poorly suited to assessment of learners' life skills, such as communication, self-regulation, and critical thinking.

The national matriculation exam for secondary students (Tawjihi) was singled out by a number of assessment participants as being a barrier to inclusion because of:

- The education system's over-reliance on this form of standardized, summative testing as an accurate measure of learning and development.
- The burden that lengthy preparation for this test places on learners and their families (this also means that test preparation can take up a high percentage of time in and outside of classrooms, which could be spent on more meaningful learning).
- The inaccessibility of such testing for learners with disability and indeed, any learner who struggles with learning and/or testing.

#### COVID-19 and online learning

Although this needs assessment was not originally intended to focus on COVID-19, it has nevertheless been undertaken during the pandemic. Although the pandemic led to a variety of delays and other challenges in conducting the needs assessment, the situation has also provided the assessment team with an opportunity to consider some of the impacts of COVID-19 on the education system in Jordan, alongside the MoE's and its development partners' responses. This is an inclusion issue, in part, because the education system's capacity to respond to the pandemic speaks to its capacity to respond to emergencies more broadly.

As noted previously, the MoE has had some notable successes in developing and implementing online learning. Although shifting to remote and virtual work and teaching within the MoE and between the MoE and other partners seems to have been relatively successful for those with good IT and internet access, this has highlighted the stark gaps in IT and internet access for many schools and communities. This has been a particular challenge with the shift to online teaching and learning during school closures. Interview participants from the MoE explained that many school communities lacked access to IT hardware (e.g., tablets, laptops, smartphones) and adequate internet connection making it difficult, or impossible for them to properly engage in online learning. However, this was not the only issue, as MoE representatives also raised concerns that teachers lacked the pedagogical training and skills to meaningfully facilitate online learning.

It is likely that in Jordan (as elsewhere) some of the changes from face-to face to virtual learning will continue even when the pandemic subsides and this has implications for access – and the need to bridge the 'digital divide' – as well as pedagogy (Davies, 2020); (OECD, 2021).

It was noted during the needs-assessment that certain disadvantaged groups, such as refugees, are increasingly gaining access to internet connectivity and IT hardware. This, along with the potential adaptability of digital learning tools to fit the needs of learners with disability, is promising. Indeed, attention to the potential benefits, as well as disadvantages, of using digital tools and online learning in supporting inclusion in education has been growing over the last decade and will no doubt continue. However, in the sense that COVID-19 has provided an ‘acid test’ of the inclusivity of a more general shift of education systems from face-to-face to virtual learning, the results have been negative for the majority of the world’s learners who lack good IT and internet access (this is the case for many communities in Jordan, as elsewhere) and even for those who do have the access, resources, and support to make good use of virtual learning. There is growing evidence (Frey, 2020) (Gaeta, 2020) that many of the social benefits of face-to-face learning (e.g., physical engagement with peers, multi-sensory stimulation, etc.) are not easily replicable in virtual spaces.

### **Supporting teachers in schools and classrooms**

Although, as discussed previously, an in-service support system involving both supervisors and evaluators does exist and has positive aspects, which can be built on in moving towards greater inclusion (this includes passionate and motivated staff), there remain some challenges in the system.

Interview respondents from the MoE and other development partner institutions noted that assessments of teachers in Jordan focus heavily on teachers’ subject knowledge, rather than teachers’ teaching skills and teaching/learning strategies. There were suggestions that a more comprehensive approach to assessing teachers is needed. This fits with the needs of an inclusive education system, which demands that teachers are able to implement a range of diverse methods and strategies for teaching and learning in classrooms (e.g., differentiation) and are properly supported to do so.

A lack of a comprehensive approach to teacher assessment makes it difficult for teachers, school managers, supervisors and other MoE staff to know which teachers have, or lack, inclusive pedagogical skills and accordingly, makes it difficult to provide relevant in-service teacher education and related professional development opportunities. In addition, an assessment system, which prioritizes teachers’ subject knowledge over teaching skills, likely leads a lack of emphasis on learner- and learning-centred teaching and support in schools and classrooms.

### **Supervision, evaluation, and assessment**

Specific challenges and gaps in relation to each of the two MoE entities which deal with supervision, evaluation, and assessment (the Education Quality and Accountability Unit and the Department of Educational Supervision and Training) are detailed as follows:

*Education Quality and Accountability Unit*

- It was also noted that Unit's reports on schools contain a lot of data, some of which is not actually used.
- The Unit lacks evaluators with the capacity to support learners with disabilities (particularly in regard to supporting schools in having accessible physical and learning environments).
- Although some school principals have found the Unit's assessment visits to be helpful in providing guidance for positive change, other principals have found the visits to be stressful, with feedback that is repetitive and lacking in practical solutions to problems their schools face. The mixed reviews here indicate that the nature and quality of an assessment will depend on the skills and personalities of specific evaluators, on the one hand, and the receptiveness of the schools being assessed, on the other.
- There is a lack of gender balance of assessment staff – more males than females.

*Department of Educational Supervision and Training*

- Some of the Department's supervision staff lack specialized education knowledge, which would aid their work.
- There is a general lack of school community (and media) awareness about the Department and its work in schools.

**Resource rooms**

The development and use of resource rooms in schools is both an infrastructure and a support issue, as this involves the physical space of the rooms, as well as the activities that take place within them. In terms of challenges and gaps, the following issues were raised during the needs assessment:

- Coverage – out of more than 5000 schools in Jordan, only 837 have resource rooms. Ultimately, all Jordanian schools would benefit from well designed and utilized resource rooms, in moving towards greater inclusion of learners with disability.
- Existing resource rooms that are disused and/or not fit for purpose (e.g., not accessible, poorly maintained).
- Resource rooms which are not properly used in supporting all learners. Specifically, although resource rooms are being used, to some extent, to support students with learning difficulties in specific subjects, learners with disability are not typically being accommodated. There were also some concerns that resource rooms, if/when they are being used to support learners with disability, these are more as places to 'warehouse' learners whose school would otherwise struggle to include into regular classrooms – a form of integration, rather than genuine inclusion. Also, there is no indication that resource rooms are being used to support learners with behavioural challenges and psychosocial needs.

- Resource room teachers need more training and support in regards to supporting learners with disability, but also in supporting other staff and students in their schools in learning about inclusion and related practices.

### **Teacher education and training**

Both in regard to pre-service and in-service teacher education and training, a range of challenges and gaps were identified by interview and questionnaire respondents during the needs-assessment. These include:

- Much of pre-service and in-service education that is available is heavily focused on theory and lacks the practical focus, which would prepare and support teachers in actually implementing inclusion and diversity in education in schools and classrooms.
- In-service training often lacks depth, continuity, and opportunities for reflective practice. In addition, teachers are rarely accountable for, or encouraged to utilize in-service training in their schools/classrooms; there is a lack of follow-up on and evaluation of trainings. Further, there is a lack of a comprehensive transparent, merit-based system of in-service training opportunities, linked to actual teacher/school needs.
- Work needs to be done in better aligning teacher education and training with the curriculum (and related desired teacher and learner competencies) and in aligning pre-service teacher education with in-service training.
- Both pre-service and in-service teacher education and training lack focus on building teachers' competencies in foundational skills, which support the provision of quality education for all learners, including in: critical thinking, reflective practice, inclusive pedagogy and assessment, communication and collaboration, positive classroom and behaviour management, and development and adaptation of teaching/learning resources.
- There is a lack of comprehensive training in a number of areas, including educational psychological evaluation; early intervention; inclusive pedagogy; and curriculum development and adaptation.
- There is a lack of training in supporting persons with developmental impairments and persons on the autistic spectrum (e.g., training in awareness raising, presenting seminars and workshops, multimedia, other accessible tools, etc.).
- There is a lack of training in sign language and support for persons with visual impairments.

### *Existing capacities, strengths, and suggested ways forward*

Effective, practically oriented training on issues of inclusion and diversity in education does exist and a number of needs assessment participants were able to provide examples of such forms of training:

- A representor from the MoE's Gender Division provided an example, explaining, "We conducted training for the engineers, from the Directorate for Construction. We conducted two workshops for those engineers, males, and females, on how to mainstream gender in infrastructure. During this workshop we also talked about persons with disabilities, and how construction should address the needs of these people. We looked at pictures from the schools, the good schools and bad schools and make a comparison between them and asked participants, how they as engineers want to think about design or maintenance of the schools and how the schools will be sensitive for the needs of both boys and girls, and children with disabilities".
- QRTA has been providing pre-service and in-service training, which at least to some extent, addresses crosscutting inclusion and diversity issues.

There are also some existing capacities and promising practices that were highlighted by needs assessment participants in regard to pedagogy, assessment, and support. These include:

- The MoE's Department for Administration of Examinations has been able to make some accommodations for learners with support needs (e.g., through providing additional time to complete exams, and designated readers and writers to support learners with disability).
- As noted previously, the MoE's Department of Educational Supervision and Training is a provider of support for teachers and schools. This support includes school and classroom visits and meetings with teachers in which supervisors, who are trained subject specialists, take detailed technical notes, and provide recommendations to teachers. The nature and quality of support provided by supervisors from the Department of Educational Supervision and Training was generally seen as favourable by school principals and 'resource room' teachers interviewed during the assessment (although it must be emphasized that this was a small number – 5 school principals and 3 resource room teachers – of interviewees). There were also reports that, increasingly, schools have been asking more for supervision visits to address specific needs.

In regard to ways forward, needs assessment participants suggested the following:

- To improve overall synergy, communication, and coordination and effective collaboration between the Education Quality and Accountability Unit and Department of Educational Supervision and Training:

- There is a need for collaboration between these two entities in re-defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations in order to provide a better continuity of comprehensive support at school community level. This process should seek to avoid unnecessary duplications, as well as to identify potential gaps in service.
  - There is a need to foster more positive and productive working relationships between supervisors from the Department for Educational Supervision and Training, and evaluators from the Education Quality and Accountability Unit, to ensure comprehensive, relevant, and effective support for schools.
- Likewise, to ensure better communication and coordination between MoE's Department of Educational Supervision and Training and the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Centre for Education and Information Technology, it was suggested that a plan of cooperation be developed between the two entities.
  - Work needs to be done in better aligning teacher education and training with the curriculum (and related desired teacher and learner competencies) and in aligning pre-service teacher education with in-service training.
  - Both pre-service and in-service teacher education and training need more focus on building teachers' competencies in foundational skills, which support the provision of quality education for all learners, including in: critical thinking, reflective practice, inclusive pedagogy and assessment, communication and collaboration, positive classroom and behaviour management, and development and adaptation of teaching/learning resources.
  - There is a need for comprehensive training in a number of areas, including: educational psychological evaluation; early intervention; inclusive pedagogy; curriculum development and adaptation. It was noted that some training already exists in these areas, including training, which is provided by the Sharjah Center for Humanitarian Services (Emirates), QRF and NCCD.
  - Training is needed for supporting persons with: developmental impairments and persons on the autistic spectrum (e.g., training in awareness raising, presenting seminars and workshops, multimedia, and other accessible tools).
  - There is a need for training in sign language and support for persons with visual impairments.
  - There is a need, generally across the system for more training in English language. This was raised as an issue, in part, because so many inclusion and diversity in education resources are currently only available in English language – of course this raises the related issue of the need for Arabic translations and adaptations of existing resources for the Jordanian context.

## Programmes, projects, activities, and studies

There are a number of existing (and past) programmes, projects and activities which address aspects of inclusion and diversity in education, and which have been discussed, or at least mentioned, by needs assessment participants. Many of these are pilot projects, and/or stand-alone activities that are donor funded and not part of the general education budget.

Some of the programmes, projects, activities, and studies listed below have been referred to elsewhere in this report, but in any case, it will be valuable to explore these in more depth as part of future capacity building activities:

- 'Shadow teachers'. UNICEF had supported a 'shadow teacher' project in 37 pilot schools, in which, as a UNICEF representative explained, "The deployment of shadow teachers was key actually to ensure integration\* of children with disabilities in these schools. The focus of our training was on grade one, two, and three teachers. Then we started moving from the school level to the directorate level, so looking at building the capacity of supervisors, not all directorates have special education supervisors, so we looked at general supervisors and special education supervisors, and we provided training so that they could provide the needed technical support to teachers at the school level, but to be honest, the ones who really played a key role in the integration of children with disabilities at the school level, were the shadow teachers."

This project has now stopped, in part, because it was not included into regular MoE programmes, plans and priorities.

- UNHCR has been working on service mapping in relation to referral processes in regard to refugees and protection.
- USAID has been supporting school construction with a focus on physical accessibility.
- NCCD has developed a tool for gender mainstreaming in textbooks and other curricular resources.
- USAID has been supporting the professional development of teachers through working with the MoE on a professional database/learning management system through which teachers can track their own professional development.
- USAID has supported a number of coaching and mentoring activities in schools.
- A committee for promoting the opening of nurseries for children with disabilities has been established under the leadership of the MoSD and including the MoH and Humanity and Inclusion (HI).

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\* The word 'integration' here probably most accurately describes the process, as the shadow teachers were exclusively focused on children with disabilities and did not team-teach together with the general class teachers. However, the integrated approach can be considered a step towards inclusion.

- Distance learning programme and accommodations were set up during the COVID-19 pandemic on the HCD website to serve students with disabilities.
- HCD has developed a referral system in cooperation with the MoSD and the MoH for children with disabilities from birth to the age of eight. The initiative supports the children to access rights-based services and support from multiple ministries and government institutions and serves as a guide for parents towards accessing services – This is linked to the ID Card Project described below.
- The ID Card Project: When a person (regardless of age) with disabilities has received an ID Card (identifying her or him as a person with disabilities) they are entitled to obtain all services, health insurance, and support without asking, explaining, or providing any additional proof – This is an online-based system. This project has, to the knowledge of the assessment team, not been implemented yet. This will need greater consideration as there are still issues related to definitions and identification of disability, as well as potential data security issues.
- HCD is providing financial support for income-poor students with disabilities through the MoE, and the private or public school where the child is enrolled.
- MoE is in the process of developing a practical guide for teachers in inclusive schools (primary school). The initiative is supported by HCD, UNICEF, and Mercy Corps.
- MoE, MoH, MoSD and Nour Al Hussein Foundation are in the process of establishing five regional diagnostic centres, designed to support students with disabilities to join schools, reducing the current bureaucratic process of diagnostics and assessment.
- The Department of Educational Supervision and Training (MoE) established Intel programme in 2005, with sustainable technology programme that serves MoE staff, schools, and students. It is adapted to diverse needs and abilities, including for persons with disabilities. Many participants joined international competitions and have been awarded with national and international prizes and honours. There are proposals for 'Digital Center' serving students with and without disabilities, face-to-face or using online or virtual platforms.
- MoE implements eleven informal education programmes targeting children who are vulnerable to exclusion from and within education:
  1. Literacy Programmes
  2. Remedial Education Programmes
  3. Informal Education for Out of School Children (OSC)
  4. Adult Education & Literacy Programme
  5. Home Studies Programme
  6. Evening Studies Programme
  7. Summer School Programme

8. Cultural Programmes for children who have dropped out of school
9. Tutoring Programmes
10. Schools within correction and rehabilitation facilities
11. National framework for combating child labour

## Conclusion and recommendations

### Conclusion

When references are made to "inclusive education", many are mainly thinking about "disability inclusion", it is therefore important to create a common understanding on key terminologies among education officials, teachers, parents, development partners, and education activists.

Without a **common understanding of inclusive education**, the full potential of inclusion and diversity in education, as key to improving access to quality education for all, will not be realized. Inclusion and diversity in education is both an educational goal and methodology. It seeks to identify and dismantle barriers to education for all children so that they have access to, are present and participate in and achieve optimal academic and social outcomes from school (Slee, 2019).

The key terminologies that need to be agreed on, and understood are:

- **Inclusion and diversity in education:** addressing issues related to all children who are vulnerable to exclusion from and within education (replacing the term inclusive education).
- **Disability inclusion:** addressing issues related to children with disabilities.
- **Disability and impairment** should be used according to WHO and UNCRPD definitions.\*
- **Children (or persons) with individual learning needs that require additional support and resources:** describing children who experience temporary or permanent learning, social and emotional difficulties, or experience other barriers to learning, replacing the dated terms 'children with special needs', or 'children with special educational needs'.
- **Assessment:** should systematically replace the term 'diagnostics' as diagnostics indicates the use of purely a medical approach, while most assessments would be done by pedagogues, and if medical specialists are involved, they should work in team with teachers and others with a more pedagogical approach to determine the individual needs of a child.

In interviews and through questionnaires, most respondents expressed strong interest for **further capacity development** – from basic to advanced levels – on:

- innovation in education;
- inclusion and diversity in education;
- disability inclusion;
- child development;

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\* WHO International Classification of Functioning (ICF): <https://www.who.int/classifications/icf/icfbeginnersguide.pdf> and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – Article 2: <http://www.un-documents.net/crpwd.htm>

- support systems for children (or persons) with individual learning needs that require additional resources.

**Innovation and change cannot be 'project dependent' and time limited**; field directorates and schools must be able to make long-term plans for effective use of additional funding resources, while the Ministry of Education (MoE) and its development partners must look at the financial and social costs of not educating a relatively large percentage of children, both with and without disabilities (e.g. children who never enrolled in formal schools, or who attended school but had poor learning outcomes, or who dropped out to get married or to work).

Most respondents expressed a need for **innovation and reform of existing education structures** to ensure meaningful progress towards achievement of the goals and aspirations of the Jordanian government and people for: improved access to an education of good quality, an improved enrolment and completion rates of girls and boys with and without disabilities, and other individual learning needs that require additional resources.

It is important to **manage expectations** of all key stakeholders, and to **be realistic** about what can be achieved on inclusion and diversity in education in general, and on disability inclusion in particular, within the next few years.

It is important to **equip, enable and empower, and not overload teachers and schools**, and to ensure that **human and financial resources follow** increased expectations and demands, to prevent key stakeholders 'giving up on inclusion.' It is also important that advocacy and awareness campaigns are planned and implemented in ways which ensure the clarity of messages, and consistent use of language and terminology, in order to prevent confusion and the raising of false expectations. Inclusion and diversity in education begins and ends with schools and school communities, regardless of the quality of policies, strategies, and plans, success can only be measured by the impact these have on individual children, teachers, and parents. When children remain excluded from and within education, the system has failed and requires strengthening and reform.

There was a common realization among needs-assessment participants of the needs for institutional reform, and personal capacity development, both of respondents from within the Ministry of Education and its national and international development partners. This openness to innovation and change bodes well for the ability of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to move further towards an education system that is inclusive of all, and relevant to the needs of future generations.

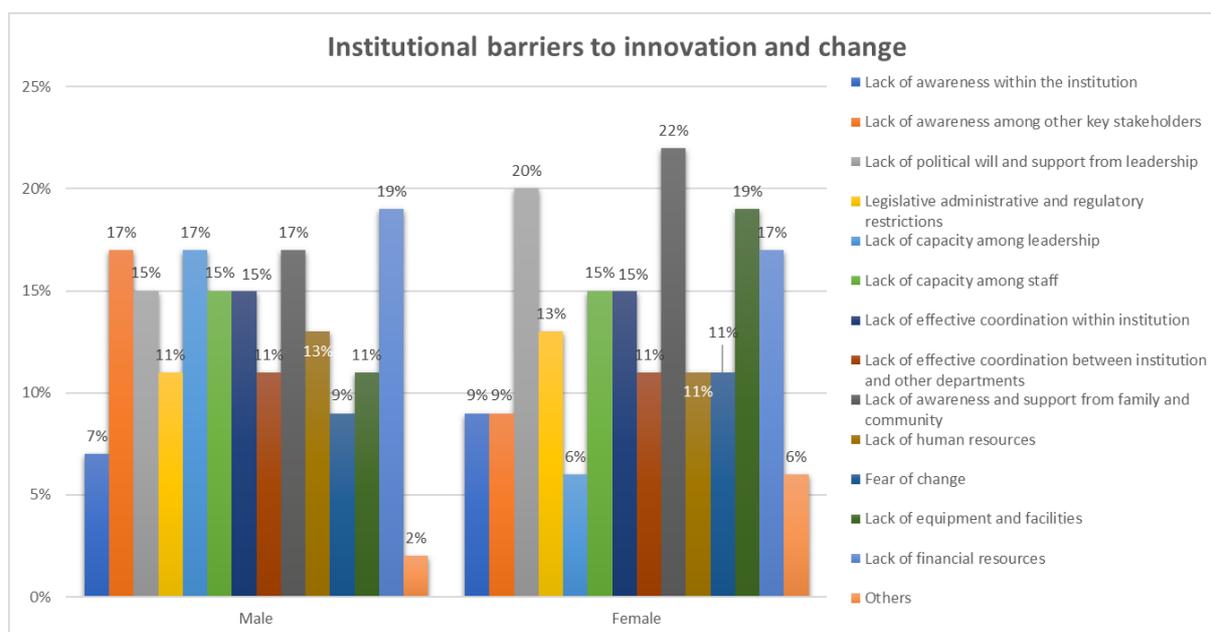


Figure no. 6: Institutional barriers to innovation and change identified by respondents

The main **barriers to inclusion and diversity in education** addressed earlier in the report, both found through interviews/questionnaires, as well as international research (Villegas, 2015), can be summarised as follows:

- **Leadership:** Lack of vision, support, a shared understanding, dialogue, resources, or capacity and skills development.
- **Attitudes:** Unwillingness to embrace a philosophy of inclusion and diversity in education, and to change existing practices.
- **Communication and Coordination:** A lack of good communication and coordination within and between government entities and other development partner organizations.
- **Teaching & Learning Processes:** Inadequate understanding of general education practices and how students with disabilities and other individual learning needs, can best participate in general education while providing additional support and resources within ordinary classrooms and resource rooms when and if needed.
- **Capacity Development:** Absence of adequately skilled teachers, headmasters and principals, and education officials, and limited investment in training and capacity building for education professionals to assist them in learning, implementing, and managing inclusion and diversity in education, in departments, schools and classrooms.
- **Resources:** funding shortages for materials, equipment, and technology, as well as barriers resulting from overcrowded facilities and inadequate time for planning and collaboration between staff members.

- **Teacher Education & Training:** a disconnect between university course content and programme focus on the skills and knowledge required to teach students with disabilities in general education classrooms successfully.
- **Infrastructure:** Underfunded school systems, with poorly built and maintained school buildings and infrastructure that limits accessibility.
- **Curriculum:** Rigid curriculum that does not allow for innovation, experimentation, or the use of different teaching-learning methods, or that do not recognize different styles of learning.
- **Organisation:** Rigid and hierarchical education systems that are negative towards innovation and change (especially when initiated from children, parents, teachers, and school communities), with decision made on central levels without much consideration to diverse contexts and needs in individual school communities, focusing more on compliance, than quality teaching and learning.
- **Standardized Assessments:** Emphasis on accountability measures like standardised assessments for all students coupled with policymakers not fully understanding or believing in inclusion and diversity in education.

There is a need to manage the expectations of what a relatively limited institutional capacity needs assessment of the Ministry of Education can provide in terms of recommendations. It would be presumptuous to recommend comprehensive structural reforms without more in-depth analysis of the work conducted in the Ministry, and the relationships between departments within the Ministry, and between the Ministry and its development partners. Successful structural reforms may be initiated by a change agent from outside the Ministry of Education, but must be planned, detailed, implemented, and most importantly, owned by people with different backgrounds, ages, genders, competencies, and on different levels within the organization (Lunenburg, 2010).

## Recommendations

The following twenty recommendations are made based on more than sixty interviews with a wide range of respondents, and feedback gained through more than fifty questionnaires.

Although certain recommendations can be addressed separately from others, ultimately, the full set of recommendations are intended to be seen as offering a linked, holistic approach towards greater inclusion and diversity in education in Jordan, and not taken in isolation from one another. Education stakeholders themselves are encouraged to practically explore and define the links between recommendations, as well as the further, more specific processes of refinement, development, and implementation.

For the purposes of clarity and structure, the recommendations have been loosely grouped under categories, however these should not be seen as being mutually exclusive – inevitably, as with the categories of findings discussed previously in the report, there are overlaps and linkages between categories of recommendations.

All following recommendations include elements of awareness raising, changing attitudes, and developing a more comprehensive understanding of inclusion and diversity in education, as well as communication, coordination, and planning.

### *Attitudes and understanding of inclusion and diversity in education:*

1. Convene key education stakeholders to **define inclusion and diversity in education, and disability inclusion** in a Jordanian context, **identify groups of children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education** and agree on a **declaration on inclusion and diversity in education for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan** (aligned with national and international commitments).

### *Policies, strategies, and action plans:*

2. **Assign a group of specialists and legal experts** from MoE, HCD, and partner ministries to go through all relevant international commitments, national laws, policies, strategy documents, action plans, and regulations, to make suggestions for improving their alignment in support of inclusion and diversity in education (ref. IES). This group will complement the work that will be assigned to the council for inclusion recently introduced by the HCD. The process of regulatory alignment will provide Jordan with a better defined, stronger, and more holistic policy and regulatory scaffolding for further reforms of the education system and related social services. This is recommended also in recognition that, "No countries in the Arab States and North Africa have an education law that is inclusive of all learners." (UNESCO, 2020).

3. **Agree on an addendum to the 10-Year Strategy on Inclusive Education (2020-2030)** to include all groups of children who are vulnerable to exclusion from and within education.
4. **Ensure further alignment between the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2018-2022) and the IES**, by strengthening the collaboration between the different departments responsible for the individual goals, indicators, and activities under the six domains, simplifying the work, identifying crosscutting themes, reducing overlapping responsibilities between actors, and thus increasing efficiency and effectiveness of ESP interventions. This includes further work on EMIS, monitoring of inclusion and diversity, in view of evidence-based planning.

*Institutional structures, leadership, and management:*

5. **Increase capacity of the education system to enrol children**, with and without disabilities or other individual learning needs, who require additional resources, through public-private partnerships. As the Ministry of Education struggles to meet the need for additional learning spaces for a growing student population, the Ministry can reduce bureaucratic hurdles and sponsor the enrolment of children from income-poor backgrounds in private schools who commit to implement the recommendations in the **declaration on inclusion and diversity in education** (recommendation no. 1), which will help to reduce over-crowding in schools and pressure on the infrastructure and the school environment, and stop the decline in the quality of education reported by the Ministry of Education (2017).
6. **Establish an independent Innovation Unit** within the Ministry of Education supported by resource persons from HCD, QRTA, UN agencies and other multilateral and bilateral donors, and national and international civil society organizations (incl. disabled persons' organisations). The work of the Innovation Unit should be aligned with the Steering Committee on the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education and its Action Plans (SCIEAP) under the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education (IMCIE). The work of the Innovation Unit should later be expanded to initiate other innovations towards improved access to quality education.
7. **Establish a diverse and innovatively minded internal Task Force** (women and men with different competencies from different departments within the Ministry, including DCU and the Innovation Unit proposed above), paired with external resources from development partners.

**Step 1:**

The Task Force will **identify needs through a broad and consultative** process (incl. consultations with school and field directorate levels) **for organizational reform**

**within the Ministry of Education**, streamlining the organisational structure, reducing overlapping and conflicting authorities, enabling the Ministry to respond effectively to the goals and aspirations of the Jordanian government, civil society, and people, for improved access to quality education for all. Any reorganisation of ministry structures should reflect the principles of hybridity and fluidity, increasing the importance of flexibility and dynamism, and the decreasing importance of established rigid organisational boundaries, structures, and processes.

The team should be given a clear mandate, and report directly to H.E. the Minister and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education (IMCIE), or alternatively, to the Steering Committee on the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education and its Action Plans (SCIEAP). This team could be the embryo for the later establishment of an Innovation Unit (mentioned above) within the Ministry of Education.

## Step 2

The Task Force should **develop a detailed action plan with indicators** to ensure ownership of the innovation and reform process outlined in the recommendations above.

It should be supported technically by the Ministry's national and international development partners and aligned with the work of the Steering Committee on the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education and its Action Plans (SCIEAP) under the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education (IMCIE)

8. Establish grassroots-based "**communities of practice**" at school and field directorate levels – aligned with the school development teams and other structures under the School and Directorate Development Programme (SDDP) – to ensure a more decentralised approach to inclusion and diversity in education. This would also enable different school communities to contextualise inclusion and diversity efforts, in response to their local needs and circumstances. Such communities of practice should, likewise, work to promote, document, and reflect on inclusion and diversity innovations within school communities and to support scaling-up of such innovations (when appropriate).

The grassroots-based "**communities of practice**" should have strong student representation, and should inform field directorate and national level mechanisms, including the Task Force (ref. Recommendation No. 7), Innovation Unit (ref. Recommendation No. 6), and the Steering Committee, and be aligned with national policies and regulatory frameworks.

*Projects, activities, and studies*

9. Initiate the development of **school-based commitments towards inclusion and diversity in education**, based on the national declaration, increasing ownership of the process in line with the principles of decentralisation outlined in the School and Directorate Development Program (SDDP). Inclusion and diversity in education can be mandated by national level education authorities, however, it is essential that it is understood, owned, and driven by school and field directorate level stakeholders. The involvement of children and youth, teachers, parents, and school community members, is essential to increase enrolment, transition, and completion rates, and to ensure that all children complete a full cycle of compulsory education, in line with the principles of the participatory leadership, and student and community involvement outlined in the SDDP.

The school-based commitments reinforce the "community of practice" and together with field directorates they will guide and inform the steering committee and other national level mechanisms to ensure that implementation of inclusion and diversity in education is relevant and contextualised to address local needs and conditions.

10. Convene a broad range of stakeholders on national, field directorate, and school levels (including children and youth) to develop **practical guidelines for hybrid education** (Davis, 2020), combining traditional classroom experiences, experiential learning objectives, project-based learning, and digital course delivery (ref. Recommendation No. 18), emphasising using the best options for different learning objectives, and diverse groups of students.
11. Initiate **pilots**, linked to existing programmes, to implement comprehensive forms of inclusion and diversity in education with extensive support from school- and field-directorate-based resource teachers. In the pilots, different inclusion and diversity innovations in teaching, learning, assessment, school, and classroom management, and student, parent, and community involvement, should be tried out, documented, and researched, for the purposes of learning and upscaling. Participating teachers, and school managers and administrators, will join the "**community of practice**" (ref. Recommendation No. 8) and share experiences with other pilot schools, and other partner schools.

The Innovation Unit (ref. Recommendation No. 6) within the Ministry of Education, together with a team of specialists appointed by the Higher Council, QRTA, and other national and international development partners, should be tasked to **prepare, support, monitor, evaluate and research the pilot for a future scaling up** (the pilot could incorporate learning and promising practices from previous QRTA and UNICEF projects).

12. Conduct, collect and share **research** – ideally by the MoE and HCD in close collaboration with universities and development partners. Research can be shared on the open online database (ref. Recommendation No. 18). When additional research on disability inclusion and inclusion and diversity in education is conducted (needs-based), action research and other participatory research approaches should be prioritised, to support the development of a reflective professional culture, and that future innovations and reforms are evidence-based.

*Human resources, professional development, training, curriculum, material, and support:*

13. Improve the **alignment of teacher education and training with the curriculum** (and related desired teacher and learner competencies), and the work conducted by the Department of Educational Supervision and Training, the Innovation Unit (ref. Recommendation No. 6), the Task Force (ref. Recommendation No. 8), and the experiences from the Community of Practice (ref. Recommendation No. 9) to improve relevance and innovativeness of both pre- and in-service teacher education and training.

Ensure improved alignment between pre- and in-service teacher education through building teachers' competencies in foundational skills, enabling teachers to provide quality education for all learners, including in critical thinking, reflective practice, inclusive pedagogy and assessment, communication and collaboration, positive classroom and behaviour management, and development and adaptation of teaching/learning resources.

There is a need for comprehensive training in a number of areas, including: educational psychological evaluation; early intervention; inclusive pedagogy; curriculum development and adaptation, building on existing successful practices.

14. Establish a series of **short, formalized upgrading courses for teachers and education officials** on inclusion and diversity in education – face-to-face and through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) in collaboration with universities, colleges, and academies, ideally with credits towards a higher degree.
15. Ensure results and lessons learned from promising pilots, programmes, projects and activities on inclusion and diversity in education, are documented and used to **refine and further develop teacher education** to ensure that Jordan educates teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century children and youth (OECD, 2021).
16. **Establish alternative and more flexible assessment methods** to complement or replace the current Tawjihi exams, to allow more children and youth to complete a

full cycle of primary and secondary education, to support the move towards an "educational system that achieves distinction, mastery and quality by investing in human resources", promoted by His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein.

17. Establish **teams of specialized resource teachers in each field-directorate** to support the inclusion of children with individual learning needs that require comprehensive and specialised resources, ensuring that more children with disabilities and with other individual learning needs complete a full cycle of primary and secondary education, enrol in tertiary education institutions, and get access to employment.

The specialized resource teachers should join the "**community of practice**" (ref. Recommendation No. 8) as they are instrumental in implementing disability inclusion in schools.

18. Establish an **open, online database** – including a series of relevant Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) – which functions as a **library** (possibly under the Educational Training Centre and the proposed Innovation Unit) with resources on inclusion and diversity in education, where MoE, HCD, QRTA, UN agencies, bilateral donors, and national and international civil society organizations can share resources for mutual teaching and learning.

19. **Redefine and expand the roles and purposes of resource rooms** (ref. Recommendation No. 17) to better support all children who experience barriers to learning, whether these are temporary, or permanent, related to disability, or other learning, or social and emotional needs. The role and purpose of resource rooms should be defined by Ministry of Education, however, contextualised in close coordination with the Innovation Unit and Field Directorates (e.g., teams of specialized teachers) to meet individual community and school needs.

### *Financing*

20. **Increase staffing** in the schools, which commit to implement the recommendations in the **declaration on inclusion and diversity in education**. Recruit resource teachers to support class teachers in inclusive schools and classrooms through **classroom-based team-teaching** and for the **resource rooms**.

*It must be clear that, this recommendation is **not** about recruiting 'special needs educators' to teach children with disabilities in regular classrooms, while the class teachers teach the other children, as that would be the physical integration of children with disabilities and not 'genuine inclusion'.*

It is important that the funding for increased staffing in schools and other interventions and 'action points' outlines above are not 'project dependent' but based on the actual needs in field directorates, schools and classrooms, and part of a process which is informed by the documented successes and challenges experienced in and detailed analysis of previous projects on inclusion.

Staffing levels should be based on a thorough analysis and re-structuring recommended above (ref. Recommendation No. 7).

### Follow up of the recommendations:

The institutional capacity needs assessment is, in a way, a 'snapshot' of a very fluid development phase within the education sector in Jordan. As such, it is expected that further recommendations, as well as refinements and more specific articulations of the current recommendations (and accompanying SMART testable indicators) will emerge throughout the capacity development process.

The recommendations are drafted to initiate discussions and reflections among key stakeholders within the system. A system dynamics approach could be used to structure emerging discussions and reflections around cause-and-effect relationships within and between key stakeholder groups to ensure that actions taken (action ideas), and interventions made are relevant and effective. System dynamics provides participatory tools and methods to engage groups of people within an organisations or a system, to examine problems associated with that system (Hovmand, 2014). Participants examine feedback loops, change over time, and investigate the causal mechanisms at play in the system. They gain ownership and leadership in the process and develop knowledge about underlying factors that impede overcoming identified barriers (Trani, et al, 2019), and select interventions or 'action ideas' to overcome impeding factors.

System dynamics could therefore be used throughout the capacity development process, supporting ongoing innovation and change within the system. As a result of the system strengthening process new 'action ideas' will emerge, contributing to greater organisational hybridity and fluidity (Laihonen and Huhtamäki, 2020) and ultimately to organisational structures that effectively facilitate and support inclusion and diversity in education.

The capacity development process could begin through a series of interactive workshops and forums, the first of which will be conducted with key stakeholders within the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) as part of the finalisation of the recommendations outlined in the institutional capacity needs assessment and could involve the formulation of SMART testable indicators to measure progress, results, and impact.

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## Annexes

- Annex No. 1 CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE pp 81-92
- Annex No. 2 INTERVIEW GUIDE for MOE STAFF (as sample) pp 93-98
- Annex No. 3 RESEARCH INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM pp 99-100

## Annex No. 1

## CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) have requested GIZ and UNESCO to support an institutional capacity needs assessment of key entities responsible for the implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education. The assessment is conducting by UNESCO, with technical support of IDP Norway, and will provide information for the development of a comprehensive institutional capacity development plan to be implemented from the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021 onwards. The capacity needs assessment will map individual and institutional needs, all in support of an effective implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education and the recently developed action plan.

**NAME:**

**DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH:**

**CATEGORY**, please tick the box(es) that best describes your place of work:

- Working in a ministry or department on national level
- Working in a ministry or department on sub-national level
- Working in a university or college
- Working in a kindergarten or pre-primary school as caretaker, teacher, head teacher or principle
- Working in a primary school as teacher, head teacher or principle
- Working in a secondary school as teacher, head teacher or principle
- Working in a UN agency or national and international organization
- Working in and / or member of a disabled persons organization
- Others

*Please explain:*

**CURRENT POSITION:**

**PREVIOUS POSITION(S):**



**EDUCATION AND TRAINING BACKGROUND:****Further and higher education (post-secondary school study programs):**

<i>From YYYY to YYYY</i>	<i>Name of university or college</i>	<i>Name of study program</i>	<i>Degree</i>

*Any further details you would like to add:*

**Trainings / Courses on disability inclusion:**

<i>YYYY</i>	<i>Name of course / training provider</i>	<i>Training details</i>	<i>Numbers of days</i>

*Any further details you would like to add:*

**Trainings on issues related to inclusion and diversity in education:**

Trainings / Courses on other issues related to inclusion and diversity in education (e.g., gender, out of school children, ethnic and language minorities):

<i>YYYY</i>	<i>Name of course / training provider</i>	<i>Training details</i>	<i>Numbers of days</i>

*Any further details you would like to add:*

**WORKING BACKGROUND:****PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE in EDUCATION:**

**Experience with inclusion and diversity in education (listed alphabetically) please tick all the boxes that apply to you:**

- Children affected by drugs and substance abuse

*Please provide details:*

- Children in conflict with the law (i.e., in the criminal justice system)

*Please provide details:*

- Children experiencing gender inequality (e.g., girls, but also boys who do not fit gender norms within conservative contexts)

*Please provide details:*

- Children from ethnic minority groups

*Please provide details:*

- Children from income poor backgrounds

*Please provide details:*

- Children from language minorities

*Please provide details:*

- Children from religious minorities

*Please provide details:*

- Children suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse, incl. orphans

*Please provide details:*

- Children with disabilities *details can be provided in the next section of the questionnaire*

- Nomadic children

*Please provide details:*

- Out of school children (i.e., children who dropped out of school, or never enrolled in formal education)

*Please provide details:*

Refugee children

*Please provide details:*

Returnee children

*Please provide details:*

Street and working children

*Please provide details:*

Unregistered children (e.g., children who never registered at birth or may be registered in another country)

*Please provide details:*

Other children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education

*Please provide details:*

**Experience with disability inclusion (by disability) please tick all the boxes that apply to your experience:**

Children with Autism spectrum disorder

*Please provide details:*

Children with developmental impairments (e.g., Down's syndrome)

*Please provide details:*

Children with hearing impairment (e.g., children who have deafness, or are hard of hearing)

*Please provide details:*

Children with visual impairment (e.g., children who are blind, or have low vision)

*Please provide details:*

Children with physical impairments (e.g., affecting movement and mobility)

*Please provide details:*

Children with multiple impairments and/or severe impairments (e.g., sensory and mobility difficulties or sensory and learning difficulties)

*Please provide details:*

- Children with learning difficulties (e.g., ADD, ADHD, or reading and writing difficulties)

*Please provide details:*

- Children experiencing mental health issues in particular emotional disorders (temporary, or permanent such as important changes of moods, anxiety, depression)

*Please provide details:*

**Experience with disability inclusion ( practical / professional experience) please tick all the boxes that apply to your experience (and leave blank if you do not have the specific experience):**

- Identifying impairments

*Please provide details:*

- Assessing learning needs

*Please provide details:*

- Assessing physical accessibility needs

*Please provide details:*

- Assessing psycho-social support needs

*Please provide details:*

- Supporting children with disabilities and learning difficulties in special education facilities (i.e., in segregated schools, or classrooms)

*Please provide details:*

- Supporting children in inclusive education facilities (i.e., in access to and participation and achievement in learning in mainstream schools/classrooms)

*Please provide details:*

- Supporting other professionals (e.g., teachers, counsellors, or health workers) with disability inclusion

*Please provide details:*

- Supporting families with disability inclusion in education

*Please provide details:*

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**PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE in EDUCATION AND/OR HEALTH MANAGEMENT:**

<i>Please provide details:</i>
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**PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE in POLICY DEVELOPMENT:**

<i>Please provide details:</i>
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**LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY for LATER CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES** *please tick one box per language that best describes your proficiency level:*

**Arabic**

Native speaker     Professional proficiency     Limited working proficiency   

Basic proficiency     No knowledge

**English**

Native speaker     Professional proficiency     Limited working proficiency   

Basic proficiency     No knowledge

**Sign language**

Main language of communication     Professional proficiency     Limited working

proficiency     Basic proficiency     No knowledge

## QUALITATIVE SELF ASSESSMENT

The remaining part of the questionnaire will be anonymized, i.e., your name will not be shared with anyone outside the research team in accordance with international ethical standards for research – See attachment No. 1:

**PLEASE USE YOUR OWN WORDS TO DEFINE INCLUSION IN EDUCATION:**

*Please provide details:*

**HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE CAPACITIES OF YOUR SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OR ORGANIZATION TO IMPLEMENT DISABILITY INCLUSION?** *Please tick the box that you feel best describes the capacity level of your institution:*

- No evidence of relevant capacity
- Partially developed capacity
- Widespread, but not comprehensive, evidence of capacity
- Fully developed capacity

*Please provide details and give examples of disability inclusion capacities:*

**HOW OPEN DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OR ORGANIZATION IS TO ENGAGE STAFF IN DEVELOPING POLICIES OR PRACTICES TO PROMOTE DISABILITY INCLUSION?** *Please tick the box that you feel best describe the level of openness within your institution:*

- Not at all open
- Somewhat open to engaging staff
- Quite open, but not always able to actually make changes to policies and practices based on staff engagement
- Very open

*Please provide details:*

**HOW OPEN DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OR ORGANIZATION IS TO ENGAGE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS IN DEVELOPING POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO PROMOTE DISABILITY INCLUSION?** *External stakeholders include civil society organizations, the media, and members of the public. Please tick the box that you feel best describe the level of openness within your institution:*

- Not at all open
- Somewhat open to engaging external stakeholders

Quite open, but not always able to actually make changes to policies and practices based on external stakeholder engagement

Very open

*Please provide details:*

**HOW OPEN DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OR ORGANIZATION IS TO IMPLEMENT SYSTEMIC INNOVATION AND CHANGE?** *Please tick the box that you feel best describe the level of openness within your institution:*

Not at all open

Somewhat open to innovation and change

Quite open, but not always able to follow through with effort towards innovation and change

Very open

*Please provide details:*

**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE MAIN BARRIERS TO INNOVATION AND CHANGE WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION?** *Please tick all the boxes that apply:*

Lack of awareness within the institution

Lack of awareness among other key stakeholders (e.g., other institutions, media, or among the general public)

Lack of political will and support from the leadership?

Legislative, administrative, and regulatory restrictions

Lack of capacity among leadership

Lack of capacity among staff

Lack of effective coordination within your institution

Lack of effective coordination between your institution and other schools, departments, ministries, or organizations

Lack of awareness among, and support from parents, family and community members

Understaffing / Lack of human resources

Fear of change, both among staff and leadership

Lack of equipment and facilities

Lack of financial resources

- Other barriers to innovation and change

*Please provide further details:*

**PLEASE LIST THE THREE BARRIERS TO INNOVATION AND CHANGE WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION, THAT NEED MOST URGENT ATTENTION (from the list above):**

1:

2.

3.

**WHAT SUPPORT WOULD YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL NEED TO IMPLEMENT INCLUSION IN EDUCATION MORE EFFECTIVELY (please tick all boxes that are relevant)?**

- Short training courses

*Please provide details:*

- More guidance, mentoring and professional support

*Please provide details:*

- More institutional support (e.g., from the leadership of your institution, from policies and administrative regulation)

*Please provide details:*

- Improved resources and competencies on functional assessment of children to provide / facilitate for individual learning support

*Please provide details:*

- Formal upgrading to *(please note a formal academic upgrading this will not be included in the capacity development plan developed for the ongoing GIZ-UNESCO collaboration with MoE):*

- Bachelor's degree

- Master's degrees

- PhDs

**WHAT SUPPORT WOULD YOUR SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OR ORGANIZATION NEED TO IMPLEMENT INCLUSION MORE EFFECTIVELY** (please tick all boxes that are relevant)?

Short awareness programs

*Please provide details:*

Short training courses

*Please provide details:*

More guidance, mentoring and professional support

*Please provide details:*

Access to resources and competencies on functional assessment of children to provide / facilitate for individual support

*Please provide details:*

Formal upgrading to *(please note a formal academic upgrading this will not be included in the capacity development plan developed for the ongoing GIZ-UNESCO collaboration with MoE):*

Bachelor's degree

Master's degrees

PhDs

**INTER- AND INTRA-DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION on INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION:**

Which coordination bodies, if any, are you a member of?

*Please provide details:*

Which existing coordination bodies that you are not a member of would you like to

*Please provide details:*

participate in?

What can be done to make coordination in and between units, departments, ministries, and organizations more effective?

*Please provide details:*

**HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COORDINATION ON INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL, UNIT, DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OR ORGANIZATION?** *Please tick the box that you feel best describes the effectiveness of coordination within your institution:*

- Not effective at all
- Somewhat effective, but requires stronger leadership and more support
- Quite effective, but not always leading to meaningful progress and change
- Very effective

*Please provide details:*

## Annex no. 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE for **MOE STAFF**

The Jordanian Ministry of Education, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) has requested for GIZ and UNESCO to conduct an institutional capacity needs assessment of key entities responsible for the implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education. The assessment will provide information for the development of a comprehensive institutional capacity development plan to be implemented from the 2nd quarter of 2021 onwards. The capacity needs assessment will map individual and institutional needs, all in support of an effective implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education and the recently developed action plan.

***Please go through the Research Information and Consent Form and ask for their explicit consent (ideally in writing)***

**NAME:**

**DATE (AGE) AND PLACE OF BIRTH:**

**Gender:**

Female  Male

**LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY for LATER CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES** *please tick one box per language that best describes your proficiency level:*

**Arabic**

Native speaker  Professional proficiency  Limited working proficiency  Basic proficiency  No knowledge

**English**

Native speaker  Professional proficiency  Limited working proficiency  Basic proficiency  No knowledge

**Sign language**

Main language of communication  Professional proficiency  Limited working proficiency  Basic proficiency  No knowledge

What is your **CURRENT POSITION** (including Unit or Department)?

What were your **PREVIOUS POSITIONS**?

*Any further details you would like to add:*

The remaining part of the interview will be anonymized, i.e., your name will not be shared with anyone outside the five UNESCO researchers in accordance with international ethical standards for research *Please refer to the Research Information and Consent Form*

### Training and education

- What do you think the term 'inclusion and diversity in education' means?

- Have you had any trainings/courses which covered 'disability inclusion'?

If so:

- Please explain about what you learned.

- Have you been able to use your learning practically in your work? If so, please give examples.

- What issues/areas of disability inclusion would you have liked to learn, or learn more about?

- Have you had any trainings on other issues related to inclusion and diversity in education? (Note – if the respondent does not know what inclusion and diversity in education is, you can give example such as gender, refugees, out of school children)

If so:

- Please explain about what you learned.

- Have you been able to use your learning practically in your work? If so, please give examples.

- What issues/areas of inclusion and diversity of education in general, and disability inclusion in particular, would you have liked to learn, or learn more about?

### Professional experience

- Do you have any professional experience of providing support (e.g., to MOE colleagues, schools, others) related to inclusion and diversity in education?

If so: Please explain with examples.

*This will cover all the groups of children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education outlined in the questionnaire.*

- Do you have any professional experience of providing support (e.g., to MOE colleagues, schools, others) on disability inclusion?

If so: Please explain with examples.

- Do you have any professional experience of providing support (e.g., to MOE colleagues, schools, others) related to inclusion and diversity in education?

If so: Please explain with examples.

*This will cover all the groups of children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education outlined in the questionnaire*

- Does your MOE department internally implement disability inclusion and/or inclusion and diversity in education more generally?

If so: Please explain with examples.

- What issues/areas related to disability inclusion and inclusion and diversity in education more generally would you like more training in?

- What kind of training would be helpful?

- Who/which organization could provide this training?

- Aside from training, what types of support could be helpful for you in implementing disability inclusion and inclusion and diversity in education more generally?

## Institutional and wider capacity

- How open do you feel your institution/department is to supporting implementing systemic innovation and change? Please give examples, if possible.

- What do you feel are the main barriers to innovation and change within your institution/department? Please give specific examples.

- What kind of support, would your institution/department need to implement inclusion more effectively?

- How would assess the level of communication and coordination in your institution/department? (e.g., is there a lot of good communication and coordination, or is this difficult or lacking). Please give examples – positive and/or negative.

- What do you think needs to be done to improve communication and coordination in your institution/department?

- How would assess the level of communication and coordination between your department and other departments in the Ministry of Education? (e.g., is there a lot of good communication and coordination, or is this difficult or lacking). Please give examples – positive and/or negative.

- What do you think needs to be done to improve communication and coordination between your department and other departments in the Ministry of Education?

- How would assess the level of communication and coordination between your institution/department and other government ministries? (e.g. is there a lot of good communication and coordination, or is this difficult or lacking). Please give examples – positive and/or negative.

- **What do you think needs to be done to improve communication and coordination between your institution/department and other government ministries?**

- **How would assess the level of communication and coordination between your institution/department and other development partners outside the government (e.g., NGOs/the UN, schools, etc)? (e.g., is there a lot of good communication and coordination, or is this difficult or lacking). Please give examples – positive and/or negative.**

- **What do you think needs to be done to improve communication and coordination between your institution/department and other development partners?**

- **What coordination bodies (if any) do you participate in?**

- **If you do participate in coordination bodies, please describe the experience – positive and negative.**

- **What steps, other than what you have already discussed, need to be taken to increase capacities in inclusion and diversity in education (including disability inclusion) in the education sector generally?**

## Annex No. 3

# RESEARCH INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

### **Would you like to participate in the quality needs assessment on Inclusion and Diversity in Education?**

The purpose is to look at individual capacity needs on "inclusion and diversity in education" and on "disability inclusion", and the institutional capacity needs of the Ministry of Education, department, school, university, college, or organization where you work.

### **Goal**

The Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) have requested for GIZ and UNESCO to conduct an institutional capacity needs assessment of key entities responsible for the implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education. The assessment will provide information for the development of a comprehensive institutional capacity development plan to be implemented from the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021 onwards. The capacity needs assessment will map individual and institutional needs, all in support of an effective implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education and the recently developed action plan.

### **Who is responsible for the research?**

UNESCO is conducting the assessment with technical support from IDP Norway within the framework of the GIZ-UNESCO collaboration on inclusion and diversity in education as part of GIZ's PROMISE Programme and its partnership with the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

### **Why are you asked to participate?**

You and some 250 other individuals within relevant ministries on national and sub-national levels, schools, universities and colleges, UN agencies, national and international organizations, and disabled persons organizations have been selected to participate in the assessment. You all represent key stakeholders and partners in the implementation of the 10 Years Strategy for Inclusive Education.

### **What does it mean for you to participate?**

Information through questionnaires and individual online or face-to-face interviews will be collected. The questionnaires will be anonymized, and data will be stored electronically. The interviews will be logged and shown to you so that you can decide if the notes give a proper description of the answers you provided during the interview. UNESCO-IDP Norway research team will have access to the interview notes and questionnaires.

In addition to some questions about your person, such as name, date and place of birth, education background, workplace, and language proficiencies (for the purpose or tailor-making later capacity development programmes), we will ask you what capacity development needs you and your institution have, and which courses you would like to attend.

### **Participation is voluntary**

Participation in the capacity needs assessment is voluntary. It will not have any negative consequences for you if you do not wish to participate. You can withdraw your consent at any time during the interview, and you can withdraw the written consent for an interview by emailing the research team at [watterdalterje@gmail.com](mailto:watterdalterje@gmail.com) (Terje Magnussønn Watterdal) and with copy to [ianstuartk@yahoo.com](mailto:ianstuartk@yahoo.com) (Ian Stuart Kaplan). The mailing in of the questionnaire is seen as consent, and it is not possible to withdraw your consent after you have mailed in the questionnaire to the UNESCO-IDP Norway research team.

### **Your privacy – How we store and use information about you?**

UNESCO and IDP Norway will only use the information about you for the purposes stated in this letter. We treat all information confidentially. The data units used by idpnorway for processing and storing data are protected with password. Your name and contact information will be replaced with a code stored separately from other data.

If you accept to participate in the study, you will not be able to be recognized in any of the publications or reports that will be published as a result of the capacity needs assessment. **Please add your full name, signature, place, and date here to give your consent to be part of the interview, while the mailing in of the questionnaire is seen as your consent:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_