TAKING STOCK IN JORDAN: THE EVIDENCE LANDSCAPE AND GAPS IN JORDAN'S EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

This working paper outlines the aims, process, and outcomes of an evidence review, conducted over five months, from April to August 2022, to map the evidence landscape and identify key gaps across Jordan's education system, particularly those related to services provided to and affected by the influx of Syrian refugee students. The evidence review was part of a larger, multi-country research program known as Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC), funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The review was driven by five key questions derived from the ERICC Conceptual Framework on the current state of educational outcomes across local and policy levels. These outcomes are shaped by four drivers of learning – access, quality, continuity, and coherence – that affect outcomes across the system. The evidence review ultimately included 48 studies related to the Jordan education system, which were reviewed and coded based on ERICC's Conceptual Framework. The evidence review highlighted seven key evidence gaps, which aided researchers in collaboratively developing a national research agenda, with national stakeholders, to guide further studies in the area of education provision in conflict-affected settings. The seven identified gaps, in which more evidence is needed to inform policy and related interventions are: (1) literacy, referring to the widespread lack of reading fluency and comprehension in the Arabic language among students, (2) the gender achievement gap, (3) teachers, including quality and management, (4) inclusion, particularly of students with disabilities, (5) early childhood education (kindergartens), (6) data systems, and (7) refugee education.

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ACRONYMS

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COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
ERICC	Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
JOD	Jordanian Dinar
KG	Kindergarten
MoE	Ministry of Education
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
RAMP	Reading and Math Program
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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I. INTRODUCTION

In order to achieve equal access for all students to a quality education at all levels, the educational needs of crisis-affected populations must be understood and addressed in an effective, timely, and comprehensive way. In conflict-affected contexts, accurate and timely education data may be difficult to obtain, which presents a challenge for governments and other stakeholders working to provide education for the most vulnerable populations. Without accurate and timely education data, it can be difficult to identify vulnerable groups, assess and monitor their needs, and determine the impact of ongoing education policies and programs. Thus, the absence of reliable evidence in conflict-affected contexts can often lead to ineffective or misaligned policies and program interventions, inefficient use of funding, and inadequate strengthening of systems of decision-making and delivery. To avoid such scenarios, it is particularly important to map the current evidence landscape and identify where gaps in evidence exist. This is the goal of the evidence review of Jordan's education system and its response to the protracted Syrian refugee crisis that is the topic of this working paper.

A. The Education in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) program and Conceptual Framework

The evidence review was part of the first year of the Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) research program, which is a global research and learning partnership that strives to transform education policy and practice in conflict and protracted crises around the world. ERICC is led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and expert partners include: the Centre for Lebanese Studies, Common Heritage Foundation, Forcier Consulting, ODI, Osman Consulting, Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and Queen Rania Foundation. Countries in focus include Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar), Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan and Syria. The overarching aim of ERICC is to help improve holistic outcomes for children through building a global hub for rigorous, context-relevant, and actionable evidence base.

To achieve this, ERICC consortium partners aim to identify the most effective approaches for improving access, quality, and continuity of education. At the same time, ERICC partners collaboratively engage local, national, regional, and global stakeholders to bridge research, practice, and policy with accessible and actionable knowledge. Thus, stakeholders at all levels are actively engaged with research partners through the co-construction of research and collaborative partnerships, starting from the first year of the program. During this inception period, NYU-TIES provided research leadership and developed the original ERICC Conceptual Framework (Kim, H. Y. et al., 2022), which was used to guide the evidence review. The framework provides an examination of an education system that is affected by conflict or protracted crisis across both a macro/policy level and micro-meso/local practice level. Within the framework, which maps the relationships between and within the main stakeholders of each level, four drivers of learning are highlighted: Access, quality, continuity and coherence. These drivers shape learning and development within the education system. The ERICC framework provides a tool to map, organize and generate research evidence in education, in ways that highlight the paths by which education outcomes can be influenced at different levels of the system.

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Figure 1. ERICC Conceptual Framework
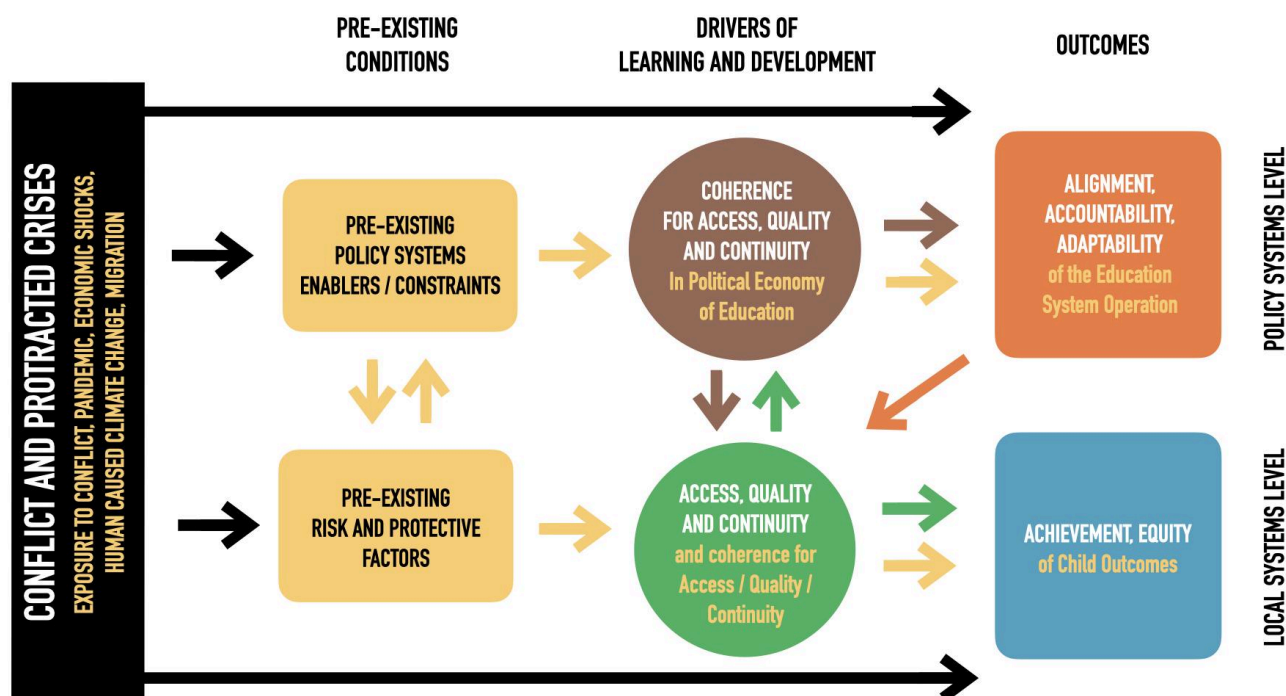
Consequently, the evidence review was guided by five key research questions that were derived from the ERICC Conceptual Framework. The first two questions, which related to the state of education outcomes in crises-affected areas of Jordan, were:

1. What is the state of **policies, budgets, and data systems** in the education sector responding to crises, in alignment, accountability, and adaptability?
2. What is the **state of children's outcomes** – in terms of academic, social and emotional, and physical and mental health and wellbeing – in level of achievement and equity?

The remaining three questions guiding the evidence review centered on contributing factors to these identified outcomes. These factors were categorized as one of four "drivers" of learning in crisis-affected contexts as highlighted in the ERICC Conceptual Framework. These drivers of learning were:

- **Access,** defined as the awareness of and the capacity to participate in educational opportunities.
- **Quality,** defined as the quality of the resources, relationships, norms, practices, and interactions.
- **Continuity,** defined as the sustained exposure to education that allows progression in both learning and schooling.
- **Coherence,** defined as the alignment and coherence in goals, processes, resource arrangements, and incentives for achieving access, quality, and continuity, within and across stakeholders and systems.

According to ERICC's Conceptual Framework, these drivers of learning affect the education system at two levels: (1) the micro-level, which includes schools, community, and household and (2) the macro level, which encompasses the political economy of the education sector. The final three questions guiding the evidence review related to these drivers of learning at different levels were:

3. What are **the conditions of access, quality, and continuity of education in** conflict and crisis-affected contexts?
4. What **factors** affect access, quality, and continuity of education in conflict-affected contexts?
5. What **interventions**, if any, have been shown to affect access, quality, and continuity of education and improve coherence in conflict-affected contexts?

By answering these five research questions, the research team at the Queen Rania Foundation aimed to provide a comprehensive look at the state of evidence in Jordan related to education provision and practice in refugee contexts and identify important gaps that need to be addressed.

B. Country context: Jordan

Situated in the heart of the Middle East, Jordan is a relatively small country with few natural resources. This reality has spurred the Jordanian government to focus on education as a hopeful means to develop the economy and provide for its populace, including the millions of refugees it has welcomed in the past 70 years. Today, more than a third of Jordan's 10 million residents are not Jordanian. The country is home to approximately 2.3 million UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)-registered Palestinian refugees, 1.5 million Syrians, and sizable groups of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refugees from Iraq, Yemen, and Sudan. Most refugees (83%) live in host communities in rural and urban areas while only 17% reside in Jordan's ten Palestinian camps or five Syrian camps. Notably, Syrian refugee students have been integrated into regular schools, as well as to camp schools and second-shift schools created to absorb the numbers of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

This means that, despite avoiding direct involvement in conflict, Jordan is in the state of a protracted crisis that affects the education of all its inhabitants. Double-shift schools, limited resources, and overcrowded classrooms have compromised the educational reforms and progress Jordan has worked toward in recent decades. Because Jordan has absorbed so many refugees, the national education system and refugee education are closely intertwined. With more than 80% of refugees integrated into communities and local schools and all refugee children taught only by Jordanian citizens, the national education system – with its strengths, limitations, and challenges – is the primary means through which refugees access educational services.

II. METHOD

The study, an evidence review, was conducted from April to August 2022 and aimed to fulfill two objectives. First, it aimed to summarize the available evidence related to education research, policies, and provision in Jordan. In doing so, the research team sought to reveal what is known about the impacts, outcomes, and delivery of educational projects across Jordan, with particular focus on those related to refugees as well as their host communities. The second aim was to identify what is still not known, or difficult to find relevant and accurate data on. Such dark spots, or evidence gaps, often represent critical information needed for evaluation and/or planning.

For the study, the research team conducted a comprehensive search and review of current and relevant research on pre-primary, basic, and secondary education programming in Jordan, including both formal and non-formal settings. A three-stage search procedure was used to search, identify, and code studies for inclusion. The first stage involved online searches of the academic databases, including Google Scholar and Education Resources Information Center, as well as searches of reports published by local and international NGOs working in Jordan. The research team also searched for government reports and other commissioned

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publications. In the second stage, studies identified were screened for relevance using the inclusion criteria detailed below. In the third stage, studies meeting the inclusion criteria were coded in an Excel spreadsheet based on codes and subcodes derived from ERICC's Conceptual Framework.

A. Data

After initially identifying 55 studies, 7 were excluded as discussed above. As a result, this review looked at 48 resources, of which a third were literature reviews and/or qualitative studies (n=16). Nearly a quarter of studies (23%) were mixed-methods research reports (n=11) and a further 17% were policy research working papers (n=8). The remaining literature consisted of journal articles (n=6, of which four were peer reviewed and two non-peer reviewed), multi-authored book reporting research outcomes (n=2), national policy documents (n=2), impact evaluation reports (n=2), and a systematic review (n=1).

B. Procedure

As noted above, extensive online searches were conducted to identify potentially relevant literature. Searches were conducted on academic databases such as Google Scholar, Google, Education Resources Information Center, ProQuest, and JSTOR as well as on Jordan's government portals and national and international NGOs' websites. The search as well as screening focused on evidence from the preceding five years (2017–2022), although a handful of publications from as early as 2012 were included due to their particular relevance to the current programming. The focus on the most recent publications was particularly important due to the significant impact two years of COVID-related school closures had on the education system. However, as the Syrian refugee crisis commenced in 2011, the researchers were also vigilant in looking for all relevant studies within the past 12 years.

The search criteria for the publications to be included in the evidence review included:
1. **Topics**: Publications about Jordan that relate to and/or address ERICC research themes, which were: political settlements/political economy of Jordan; accountability; protection and inclusion; quality and learning; cost-effective delivery; and data, monitoring, evaluation and learning.
2. **Types of literature included**: Government-issued reports and related publications; reports and publications from UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO)-funded projects on education in Jordan; reports and publications from education research projects across Jordan funded by other development partners (including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), World Bank, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the German development agency GIZ, the UN); published articles in local journals as well as regional and international peer-reviewed journals on relevant topics in Jordan; unpublished research reports by institutions such as universities, and the National Center for Human Resources Development on relevant topics in Jordan.
3. **Time scale**: Publications not earlier than 2012 with priority given to publications from 2017–2022.

Following this criteria, a total of 55 related studies were initially identified. Each study was then reviewed more carefully for relevance and methodological rigor, paying particular attention to whether the content related to ERICC's research themes. A total of seven studies were eventually excluded for either being primarily theoretical, not of sufficient rigor due to very limited data collection, and/or being published before 2011 with little relevance to current programming. Once the studies passed to the next stage, each one was coded in an Excel spreadsheet according to categories and themes derived from the ERICC Conceptual Framework.

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The categorization of literature included consideration and coding of the following questions:

1. Basics about the study: when was it published, where, and what type of publication is it?
2. What type of research question does it answer (descriptive, analytic, causal) using what type(s) of methods?
3. Does the publication address holistic learning outcomes and/or education policy outcomes? If so, which ones (e.g. academic, social, and emotional outcomes for students or policies, budgets, and data systems)?
4. Does the publication address conditions of access, quality, and/or continuity of education? If so, what?
5. Does the publication describe pre-existing factors that enable or constrain access to, quality of, and continuity of education?
6. Is there evidence of the impact of (sub)national policies and/or educational programming on access to and quality and continuity of education?

Once all studies were cataloged and coded in the Excel spreadsheet, the research team proceeded to further analyze the compiled data based on the five overarching research questions.

C. Analytic strategy

To answer questions 1 and 2 regarding current outcomes for students at local levels as well as policy at a systems level, the research team carefully reviewed the coded table of studies and identified sources that contributed to measurement or description of such outcomes. The data from these studies were then triangulated and compared with each other and integrated into the discussion answering the question.

Meanwhile, to address questions 3, 4, and 5 which ask about the factors leading to the outcomes documented in the first two questions, the research team again carefully reviewed the 48 studies in the table and further coded them based on the four drivers of learning (described above). After coding and compiling data from across the studies based on these drivers, the questions were then addressed one by one with a more nuanced discussion of factors and contexts.

In the process of addressing question 5, the research team identified which studies were measuring the outcomes of interventions in order to understand what programs have evidence of promise (if any) and highlight the limited number of rigorous impact evaluations in Jordan. To do this, the research team isolated the studies that actually measured the effectiveness of a program or intervention and coded and ranked them according to the categories given in the following table.

Table 1. Categorization Table Legend

Interpreting the Evidence Strength	Interpreting Study Context	Description of Impact
🟢🟢🟢 = **Strong** [2 or more systematic reviews demonstrate impact: whether positive, negative, uncertain, or null]	**Stable**: Contexts not experiencing conflicts, disasters, or crisis **Fragile**: Contexts that are very poor or rendered	**+** = positive result **±** = mixed result **−** = Findings indicate a negative result

🟢🟢 =Moderate [At least 1 systematic review, at least 1 literature review with predominantly impact evaluation (IE)-based evidence, or 2 or more IEs demonstrate impact: whether positive, negative, uncertain, or null]

🟢 =Promising [At least 1 IE demonstrates impact: whether positive, negative, uncertain, or null]

🟡 =Limited [Only observational or qualitative evidence demonstrates impact including literature reviews of only observational or qualitative data]

vulnerable due to past crises. Will also include contexts that frequently experience a crisis

Humanitarian: Contexts facing conflicts, disasters, or crisis

Low-income country: Calculated by the World Bank to have a GNI per capita of US$1,025 or less

? = uncertain/inconclusive

Ø = null result

For each directional finding, the addition of an asterisk (*) shows there was at least one statistically significant result.
The lack of an asterisk means no significant results.

Example: **+*** Means positive, statistically significant results

III. RESULTS

A. At the policy systems level: What is the state of policies, budgets, and data systems in the education sector responding to crises, in alignment, accountability, and adaptability?

A.1. Policies

There are several key documents that guide the national strategy and overall work in the education sector in Jordan. These include: (1) the Human Resources Development Strategy, (2) the Education Strategic Plan (ESP), (3) the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education, and (4) the Jordan Response Plan (JRP). These strategic long-term plans address the current state of education provision and quality in the country and set a collective vision and targets for future progress. There is an absence of policies at the national level to specifically provide for the education of refugees as the priority has been and continues to be to integrate them into the existing system. Instead, the needs of refugees, felt explicitly through additional strains on the limited infrastructure and resources of the public school system, are addressed in the Ministry of Education (MoE)'s ESP for 2018–2025. The six domains covered in the ESP are: (1) early childhood development and education, (2) access and equity, (3) system strengthening, (4) quality, which includes curriculum, assessment, and remedial learning in the face of COVID setbacks, (5) human resources, which focuses heavily on teachers, and (6) vocational education.

The ESP is comprehensive in its approach to address systemic weaknesses, with explicit goals moving forward. However, while planning at the macro policy level has been strong, implementation has been challenging and alignment with budgetary constraints has not been achieved. The gap in implementation

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is due to many factors, not least because of COVID-19. The pandemic put a further strain on the education system as the crisis led to a significant shift of students from the private sector to public schools.[1] In addition, there has also been a large discrepancy between the vision of the ESP and the MoE's budgetary resources. Even in the Mid-Term Review of the ESP (2022), the MoE acknowledges a "financing gap" in which there is a financial shortfall of 300 million JODs between the projected costs of the strategy and the education budget.[2] The review notes that, even after accounting for the projected support of international donors, there remains a gap of 100 million JODs annually. Thus, drastic adjustments are needed to the ESP either in the funds allocated to it or reduction of targets.[3]

Still, there are several positive developments related to policy enactment and implementation in the areas of quality and access. Within the education sector, there is a high level of awareness and focus on the needs, capabilities, and training of teachers, especially at the school and field directorate level, to improve educational quality. The requirement that teachers have an undergraduate degree, passed in 1994, has led to this becoming a widespread reality, with nearly 90% of all public school teachers stating that they held at least a bachelor's degree,[4] up from less than 30% in 1997. This development, which highlights the successful implementation of the MoE rule in practice, has raised expectations and hopes for the implementation and uptake of the pre-service diploma programs for prospective teachers. This diploma, developed first by the Queen Rania Teachers Academy for upper primary and secondary teachers, is being institutionalized in the higher education sector. In addition, the MoE recognizes the need to attract higher ability graduates into the teaching profession to improve educational quality. Policy-makers in Jordan are aware that teaching is currently not an attractive profession for high-quality applicants. To address this, the MoE has adopted a holistic approach in an effort to reverse this trend and raise the prestige attached to the profession. Finally, there have also been improvements in access to schooling, particularly for refugees, through recent changes in registration policies. Schools now more widely accept children regardless of their documentation status though many families are not aware of the changes. Lack of identification documents, however, remains a barrier to some families wanting to enroll their children as up to 30% of Syrian children lack a birth certificate as of 2016.

Finally, another key document is the 2022 National Literacy Strategy (NLS), a 5-year national reform plan that aims to improve children's Arabic language literacy skills and promote reading as an enjoyable daily habit. The strategy targets Kindergarten 2 (KG2), which is the year before grade 1, to grade 6 across 4 pillars – school, family, community, and media and communication.

A.2. Budgets

Financial resources to implement the educational vision of Jordan are severely limited. According to a UNICEF brief on the MoE's budget,[5] in 2017, 77% of total education expenditure was spent on basic education (grades 1–10), 13.6% on secondary (grades 11–12), 3% on vocational education, and only 1% on 'Others', which includes KG2 provision along with special education, sports activities, and adult education. Approximately 89% of the MoE's total expenditure in 2017 was spent on personnel salaries, a percentage that is fairly consistent from year to year and accounts for the MoE's ability to plan its annual budget to a relatively high degree of accuracy. However, according to UNICEF's 2017 Global Budget Brief Guideline, having such a high rate of total expenditure on personnel costs (>80%) likely represents an inefficient use of resources as there is insufficient money left for capital expenditures and other non-salary spending to improve education

[1] MoE. (2022). Mid-Term Review of the Jordan Education Strategic Plan.
https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/documents/esp_mtr_-en_tqryrmntsf_lmd_llkht_lstrtyjy_1.pdf
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid, p. 93.
[4] Ghawi, G., & AlQbeilat, N. (2020). Jordan's Teachers in a Global Landscape: Ministry of Question - Queen Rania Foundation: Amman.
Available at: https://www.qrf.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/jordans_teachers_in_a_global_landscape.pdf
[5] UNICEF. (2019). Budget Brief 2019: Public Education Sector in Jordan. Amman, Jordan: UNICEF.
www.unicef.org/jordan/reports/budget-brief-2019-public-education-sector-jordan

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quality.

In this context of limited budgets and other resources, educational aid and improvement projects from international donors are particularly important to enhance quality within the sector. For example, international partners have largely stepped in to fill the gap with regard to construction of schools and classrooms, building a total of 2,541 classrooms from 2018 to 2020.[6]

These projects are coordinated by the Development and Coordination Unit (DCU) that sits inside the MoE. One problem with international projects is that many of these initiatives are not institutionalized nor sustainable once the donor involvement in the project ends.[7] This suggests that international initiatives may not have a long-term impact on schooling. Still, the MoE budget alone is not sufficient to fully implement its strategic vision, and so donor projects and funding remain critical. However, in the future, Jordan's dependence on donors could be reduced through improved public financial management.[8]

A.3. Data systems

The development of data systems for use in planning and policy-making has improved in the past decade due to the MoE's long-term commitment to strengthening evidence-based decision-making in the education sector. No studies were found that focused solely on the use of data systems in the Jordanian education sector. However, there exists informative capacity and needs assessments that highlight the gaps in data systems in the context of other issues such as inclusion.[9] It is important to note that the development and use of comprehensive data systems is still relatively new. The Government of Jordan officially adopted the Open Source Education Management Information System (EMIS) as its main data platform in 2016. As a core MoE planning tool, EMIS was designed, with technical support from UNESCO, to provide accurate, timely, and comprehensive data on students, teachers, staff, schools, field directorates, and infrastructure. EMIS is considered a key component of the System Strengthening Domain of the ESP which ultimately aims to improve the inclusion, equity, and quality of public education in Jordan. In June 2022, the MoE launched an expanded EMIS policy that aims to improve the use and management of EMIS in three ways:

1. "clearly delineating key roles and responsibilities…
2. outlining the necessary resources, governance mechanisms, and procedures, [and]
3. provid[ing] a framework that mandates the integration of different datasets and software across different MoE departments allowing the Ministry to consolidate its digital ecosystem for education".[10]

While the expanded policy does address some of the weaknesses in the use of the EMIS platform, EMIS still lacks the input of important metrics, particularly ones which underpin and inform inclusion.[11] In addition, more needs to be done to ensure the accuracy of EMIS data at school level as well as build the capacity of MoE staff in understanding and using the data.

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[6] Ibid, p. 85.

[7] DAI, Global Education, & Integrated International (2022). *Jordan Education Political Economy Analysis 2 Final Report.*

[8] UNICEF. (2019). Budget Brief 2019 (see above), pp. 23-4.

[9] E.g. USAID. (2019). *Strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning of the Jordanian Ministry of Education.* USAID Data and Evidence for Education Programs (DEEP); Education Sector Working Group (UNICEF). (2015). *Access to Education for Syrian Children and Youth in Jordan Host Communities: Joint Education Needs Assessment.*

[10] UN in Jordan. (2022). 'Ministry of Education Launches EMIS Policy', press release, 6 June. https://jordan.un.org/en/188018-ministry-education-launches-emis-policy

[11] UNESCO. (2021). *Institutional Capacity Needs Assessment on Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan.* Amman: UNESCO/IDP Norway with GIZ, p. 100. https://en.unesco.org/news/institutional-capacity-needs-assessment-inclusion-and-diversity-education-jordan-supported

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In addition to EMIS data, interviews with stakeholders have revealed the availability of the following types of data systems as well: international large-scale assessments, national large-scale assessments, other sample-level data collected by either governmental or non-governmental entities and other population-level data collected by governmental or non-governmental entities.

Among the key findings of the question of current outcomes at the policy level, the evidence review found that there are comprehensive strategy documents in place to guide the sector. However, effective implementation of the strategies is hindered by a significant financial gap and issues of operationalization of the strategy. Financial resources are extremely limited as most of the education budget goes to wages, and it is not clear how international donor projects and money align with MoE plans and activities. Furthermore, data systems need to be expanded to capture more disaggregated data and such data needs to be more widely shared and used within and across the levels of the education system. Finally, the MoE needs more capacity building to be able to analyze and integrate data and purposefully use evidence in decision-making, including planning for interventions, monitoring progress, and shaping budgets.

B. What is the state of children's outcomes – in terms of academic, social and emotional, and physical and mental health and wellbeing – in level of achievement and equity?

B.1. Primary and secondary education

In Jordan, basic compulsory education includes primary (grades 1–6) and secondary (grades 7–10), with upper secondary (grades 11–12) being optional. In total, there were 2.2 million registered students in the 2020–2021 academic year of which 89% were Jordanian, 7% Syrian, 2% Palestinian, and 2% another nationality.[12] Overall, learning outcomes across primary and secondary levels are relatively low. Since 2006, the majority of students have not been able to meet the minimum proficiency levels across the three domains of science, reading and mathematics, according to the country's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results.[13] Student performance in Jordan has also lagged well behind the average performance of students in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries,[14] despite minor improvements in students' mean PISA scores since 2012 – an accomplishment in the face of the Syrian refugee crisis. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is additional stress on already-crowded public schools due to a shift of around 224,000 students from the private sector into public education.[15] This is expected to negatively impact the academic performance of students in Jordan in the near future.

Recently, additional attention has been brought to the issue of students' low literacy performance as assessment data indicate approximately 52% of 10-year-olds in Jordan are unable to read and understand a short age-appropriate piece of text.[16] Post-COVID, this figure could be as much as 10% higher, based on World Bank modeling across the region.[17] According to PISA results from 2018, students in Jordan are behind

[12] Queen Rania Foundation. (2021). *EMIS Data Factsheet.* Amman: Queen Rania Foundation.

[13] Queen Rania Foundation. Ghawi, G. and Dahdah, S. (2020). *PISA 2018: Exploring Jordan's Performance.* Amman: Queen Rania Foundation. www.qrf.org/en/what-we-do/research-and-publications/pisa-2018-exploring-jordan%E2%80%99s-performance

[14] Ibid.

[15] MoE. (2022). *Mid-Term Review of the Jordan Education Strategic Plan.* https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/documents/esp_mtr_-en_tqryrmntsf_lmd_llkht_lstrtyjy_1.pdf

[16] World Bank. (2019). *Learning Poverty.* www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/learning-poverty; World Bank. (2019). *Jordan Learning Poverty Brief*, p. 2. https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/457891571223499927-0090022019/original/MNAMNC02JORLPBRIEF.pdf

[17] World Bank. (2020). *Learning poverty in the time of COVID-19: A crisis within a crisis.* https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/163871606851736436/pdf/Learning-Poverty-in-the-Time-of-COVID-19-A-Crisis-Within-a-Crisis.pdf

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the OECD average in reading by 1.5–2 grade levels.[18] Meanwhile at the primary level, a substantial proportion of grade 2 and 3 students scored zero in early reading assessments, according to the Reading and Math Program (RAMP) project data. The causes of this hidden literacy crisis are many, including the diglossic nature of Arabic,[19] lack of children's early exposure to a literacy-rich environment, limited literacy resources, the use of ineffective teaching methods, a problematic Arabic language curriculum, and the lack of interventions for struggling readers.[20] As a result, improving literacy rates among students has become a top priority of the MoE.

While most students (74%) attend free, MoE-run public schools, just over a quarter of students in Jordan (26%) attend non-public schools, which include both private schools and UNRWA schools. There is a significant difference in achievement between students in public and non-public schools. PISA results show that students in non-public schools outperformed their public school counterparts on science, reading and mathematics. The difference between public and non-public school students' performance is roughly equivalent to 0.8 grade level difference in reading and science, and 0.9 in mathematics (meaning non-public school students are almost a full grade level ahead in reading, science and math).[21]

There is also a significant gap in achievement between girls and boys, with the former outperforming the latter across all subjects. In fact, Jordan has one of the largest academic achievement gender gaps of all countries, with girls outperforming boys in reading, mathematics, and science on the PISA 2018.[22] In addition to having lower learning outcomes, boys are at a greater risk than girls of repeating grades and report feeling less included and more bullied at school[23]. However, recent evidence from RAMP's Early Grade Reading and Math assessment suggests that this trend may be changing. The assessment found that, by grade 3, the achievement of boys and girls in reading proficiency is comparable while boys appear to outperform girls in mathematics in both grade 2 (boys' rate of achievement being 18.6% vs. girls' 9.1%) and grade 3 (boys' rate of achievement being 34.8% vs. girls' 23%)[24].

The majority of public school classrooms in Jordan are mixed from grades 1 to 3, after which schools are segregated by gender; female-only and male-only. It is worth noting that some grade 4 classes are mixed and some all-female and all-male schools start from early grades (1–3). Male teachers in all-boys schools also report being less motivated, are more likely to say they intend to leave their current teaching position,[25] and resort more often to corporal punishment in the classroom.[26] This contributes to higher out-of-school rates for boys than girls. The pandemic also restricted boys' access to education more so than girls. During the COVID-19 online learning period in 2021, significantly lower shares of male students and male teachers

[18] Queen Rania Foundation. (2022). *Determinants of Student Achievement on PISA 2018: The Case of Jordan's Public School Students.* Amman: Queen Rania Foundation.
www.qrf.org/en/what-we-do/research-and-publications/determinants-student-achievement-pisa-2018-case-jordan's

[19] Taha, H., Tamim, R. & Griffiths, M. (2021). *The effect of Arabic language diglossia on teaching and learning.* Amman: Queen Rania Foundation.
https://www.qrf.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/report_on_the_effect_of_arabic_language_diglossia_on_teaching_and_learning.pdf

[20] Gregory, L., Thomure, H.T, Kazem, A., et al. (2021). *Advancing Arabic Language Teaching and Learning: A Path to Reducing Learning Poverty in the Middle East and North Africa.* World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/35917

[21] Queen Rania Foundation. Ghawi, G. and Dahdah, S. (2018). *PISA 2018: Exploring Jordan's Performance.* Amman: Queen Rania Foundation.
www.qrf.org/en/what-we-do/research-and-publications/pisa-2018-exploring-jordan%E2%80%99s-performance

[22] Queen Rania Foundation. (2022). *Determinants of Student Achievement on PISA 2018: The Case of Jordan's Public School Students.* Amman: Queen Rania Foundation.
www.qrf.org/en/what-we-do/research-and-publications/determinants-student-achievement-pisa-2018-case-jordan's

[23] Ibid.

[24] RAMP. (2023). Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Initiative (RAMP) Final National Survey Report 2023. USAID, UKAID, MoE, and RTI.

[25] Queen Rania Foundation. (2017). *Jordan's Teachers: QRF National Teacher Survey.* Amman: Queen Rania Foundation.
www.qrf.org/en/what-we-do/research-and-publications/national-teacher-survey

[26] GAGE Consortium. (2022). *Lessons from Longitudinal Research with Adolescents.* London: GAGE consortium/ODI, p. 5.
www.gage.odi.org/publication/adolescent-lives-in-jordan-what-are-we-learning-from-longitudinal-evidence; also see Jones, N. *et al.* (2019). *Adolescent experiences of school violence in Jordan: Insights from GAGE Jordan qualitative researchers,* GAGE consortium/ODI.
www.gage.odi.org/multimedia/adolescent-experiences-of-school-violence-in-jordan-insights-from-gage-jordan-qualitative-researchers

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logged into the online learning platform Darsak compared to their female counterparts.[27] In response to this long-standing trend, the MoE has developed a Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education (2018–2025) as part of the ESP. The strategy ensures that the education system recognizes the distinct needs of male and female students, in terms of opportunities, experiences, and outcomes.

Regarding the differences between academic achievements of various groups, Syrian refugees are the most at risk of following behind. Syrians attend one of five types of schools:[28]

1. **regular schools** (3,289 schools or 87% of total MoE schools), where most students are Jordanian with less than 10% Syrian students
2. **host community schools** (262 schools or 7% of MoE schools), where the majority of students are Jordanian and between 10–50% Syrian
3. **second-shift Syrian schools** in host communities (197 schools or 5% of MoE schools), where the majority of students are Syrian
4. **camp schools** (46 schools or 1% of MoE schools), where all students are exclusively Syrian.

Drawing on quantitative evidence from the EMIS from 2016/2017 and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)/Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) results from 2017/2018, researchers found Syrian refugee students at camp schools had the lowest average scores across all school types on both the reading and math assessments.[29] In terms of reading scores, the lowest performance was observed at Syrian camp schools, where students scored 10 percentage points fewer than students at second-shift schools, and 20 to 22 percentage points fewer than students in regular and host community schools. This is likely related to the fact that students in refugee camps also reported lower levels of family support related to reading and were less likely to report reading at school or borrowing books from the library compared to students at host community schools or second-shift schools. In terms of math scores, the same trend held, with students at camp schools scoring 5 to 6 percentage points lower than other school types. Notably, researchers found girls in camp schools scored 18 percentage points lower than boys on the EGMA, defying the wider trend across Jordan of girls academically outperforming boys. Still, other evidence indicates that Syrian adolescent girls have similar educational outcomes as boys and, after taking into account differences in socioeconomic status, they have similar outcomes to Jordanian girls.[30] In addition to lower achievement among Syrian students compared to their Jordanian counterparts, research indicates that mental health problems are common among Syrian refugees in 2020, with depression reported to be affecting 61% of the population.[31] This affects both Syrian students themselves as well as their home and community environment.

In contrast, Palestinian refugees who attend UNRWA schools, including those with Jordanian citizenship, continue to consistently outperform students from MoE by a margin that is equivalent to more than one additional year of learning.[32] There are several reasons for this that will be discussed in other sections of this evidence review.

[27] Edvise ME, Plan International, Relief International et al. (2021). *E-Learning Experience during Covid-19 Needs Assessment.* Amman: Edvise ME. https://plan-international.org/uploads/sites/19/2022/06/e-learning_assessment_eng.pdf

[28] Delprato, M., Morrice, L. & Al-Nahi, S. (2020). *A Summary of Key Patterns in the Jordanian Education System by School Type, Gender and Region.* Working paper one. Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK. https://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/104559/1/Key%20Patterns%20in%20Jordanian%20Education%20System.pdf

[29] Ibid.

[30] Krafft, C., Ragui, A. & Pastoor, I. (2021). *How Do Gender Norms Shape Education and Domestic Work Outcomes? The Case of Syrian Refugee Adolescents in Jordan.* Working Paper. Washington, DC: World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-9820

[31] Miguel, E.A., Palmer, B., Rozo, V. et al. (2022). *The Syrian Refugee Life Study: First Glance.* Washington, DC: World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/37011

[32] World Bank. (2015). *Learning in the face of adversity: The UNRWA education program for Palestine refugees.* Washington, DC: World Bank Publications. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/972731468327904489/pdf/923910WP0Box380he0UNRWA0Story0PRINT.pdf

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Overall, the findings of the review indicate that children's outcomes, in achievement and equity, are low. First, overall academic achievement is low across subjects (as indicated by national and international assessments), and this is in part due to the persistent literacy crisis in which children fail to learn to read with comprehension by the end of primary schooling. Such low academic achievement, particularly in literacy, hinders students' morale and progress at the secondary level, leading many to drop out of school altogether. Although this is a consistent trend across students of both genders, boys are negatively impacted more than girls. In fact, Jordan has one of the largest academic achievement gender gaps of all countries, with girls outperforming boys in reading and mathematics on PISA tests since 2006 and across reading, math and science on the TIMSS Assessment in 2015 and 2018. Despite the fact that boys, on average, underperform across all subjects and drop out at higher rates compared to girls, there is an absence of interventions specifically designed to support them. Instead, the focus of gender-specific educational interventions funded by international donors have overwhelmingly targeted female students. Finally, the number of out-of-school children in Jordan has grown since 2007/2008, based on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. The reasons for this growth cannot be explained by the influx of refugee students alone but remain largely unexamined and unaddressed at the primary school level and among children with disabilities.

C. What are the conditions of access, quality, and continuity of education in conflict and crisis-affected contexts?

C.1. *At the micro-level: what are the conditions of children's access to and quality and continuity of education at schools, community, household?*

C.1.a. Access

Although the MoE has worked hard to achieve nearly universal access to primary education within the country, there are challenges to access that persist at the micro level of schools, community, and households. In Jordan, there remains a substantial portion of school age children not attending school, a number which has been rising since 2007–2008. Based on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the total number of out-of-school children (primary age to upper secondary) in Jordan has grown nearly three-fold from approximately 268,300 in 2008 to 707,500 in 2020. This trend pre-dates the Syrian refugee crisis, a point made most clearly in the numbers of primary-age children. For instance, in 2007, there were approximately 93,300 primary-age children not enrolled in school, a number that more than doubled, rising to approximately 192,300 by 2010. Whether the significant rise in these numbers is attributable to the arrival of refugees (Iraqi or Syrian) or has more domestically rooted causes is a question for further research. What is clear though is that the numbers of out-of-school children continue to rise despite school expansion and reform efforts. Based on a review of the evidence, the groups who most often struggle to access schooling are Syrian refugees, students with disabilities, and pre-school children.

Access to education for vulnerable populations, particularly for Syrian refugees, is much less compared to Jordanian students enrolled in formal education.[33] While there are currently an estimated 140,000 Syrian refugee students receiving education in Jordan (most of whom are integrated into urban public schools),[34] data indicates that just 60% of school-aged Syrian refugee children are enrolled in formal education.[35] Studies also indicate that Syrian refugee children experience delayed entry to school[36] and are more likely to

[33] Haßler, B., Assaf, T., & Khalayleh, A. (2021). *The distance education experience in Jordan: perspectives from stakeholders.*Unpublished report. Queen Rania Foundation: Amman. See https://docs.opendeved.net/lib/HSHH6TVV.

[34] Syrian students represent 25.1% of the student population in Amman, 25.1% in Mafraq, 22.2% in Irbid, and 17.4% in Zarqa.

[35] UN High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020). 'Jordan continues to support refugee education as students head back to school.' 3 September. www.unhcr.org/jo/13733-jordan-continues-to-support-refugee-education-as-students-head-back-to-school.html

[36] Economic Research Forum. Sieverding, M., Krafft, C., Berri, N. et al. (2018). *Education Interrupted: enrollment, attainment, and dropout of Syrian refugees in Jordan.* Working paper no. 1261.

experience bullying, violence, and to drop out compared to Jordanian students.[37] However, this is most likely at the secondary level. At ages 10 to 12, Syrians and Jordanians have similar school enrollment rates, but between ages 13 to 16, there is a significant drop in the enrollment of Syrian students, among both boys and girls but for different reasons.[38] Many Syrian girls' access to schooling is restricted by gender norms, poverty and the expenses of schooling, and families' needs, which often leads them to drop out of school to take on domestic responsibilities or marry. Those same factors affect Syrian boys, but in a different way. They often leave school to save its expense and take up employment to support their families.[39]

Unfortunately, poverty intersects with displacement, creating particular challenges and hardships for Syrian children, which affects their ability to engage in schooling. Teacher and principal interviews highlight the impact that strained and difficult home circumstances can have on students' ability to engage with school, participate in learning and social activities, and to build positive relationships with other students.[40] For children whose education has been disrupted and/or who are suffering from grief and trauma, additional support is needed to access school. The latter requires specific pedagogies and classroom management skills. Since the start of the crisis, some teachers have undertaken specialized psychological training, but many Jordanian teachers have not participated.[41] In focus groups, teachers working with Syrian students explained that students have to deal with very difficult circumstances, including the loss of parents and family members, leading to many psycho-social issues.[42] However, due to insufficient resources, second-shift schools reported a shortage of school counselors to address the psycho-social requirements of students, as the schools did not qualify for additional counselor provision.[43]

For students with physical and learning disabilities, access to school is also limited. In 2017, approximately 3% of school-aged children with physical disabilities were receiving a formal education.[44] According to the MoE's Mid-Term Evaluation of the ESP, limited progress has been made in this area, leaving the vast number of children with disabilities without access to schooling. There is also a lack of educational support for students with learning disabilities. With no institutional diagnostic process to assess students showing signs of particular learning challenges such as dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism, there is little awareness and no support or resources to help such students access the curriculum. Thus, the access to schooling for children with a wide range of disabilities is often restricted due to the lack of schools', teachers' and budgets' capacity to accommodate them. At the same time, families struggle to locate and access additional supports for their children to access schooling.[45]

https://erf.org.eg/publications/education-interrupted-enrollment-attainment-and-dropout-of-syrian-refugees-in-jordan

[37] Younes, M. and Morrice, L. (2019). *Summary of Challenges Relevant to Refugees' Education in Jordan.* Centre for International Education and Development, University of Sussex, Brighton UK.
https://sussex.figshare.com/articles/report/Summary_of_challenges_relevant_to_refugees_education_in_Jordan/23470961

[38] Krafft, C., Ragui, A. & Pastoor, I. (2021). *How Do Gender Norms Shape Education and Domestic Work Outcomes? The Case of Syrian Refugee Adolescents in Jordan.* Working Paper. Washington, DC: World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-9820

[39] Hanmer, L., Rubiano, E., Santamaria, J. et al. (2020). How does poverty differ among refugees? Taking a gender lens to the data on Syrian refugees in Jordan. *Middle East Development Journal.* https://doi.org/10.1080/17938120.2020.1753995; Magee, A. & Pherali, T. (2017). Freirean critical consciousness in a refugee context: a case study of Syrian refugees in Jordan. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education.* www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03057925.2017.1403312

[40] Morrice, L., Salem, H., Al-Nahi, S. et al. (2021). *Learning and social cohesion in schools in Jordan.* Centre for International Education, Brighton, UK. https://sussex.figshare.com/articles/report/Learning_and_social_cohesion_in_schools_in_Jordan/23487653

[41] MoE. (2022). *Mid-Term Review of the Jordan Education Strategic Plan.*
https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/documents/esp_mtr_-en_tqryrmntsf_lmd_llkht_lstrtyjy_1.pdf

[42] Ibid.

[43] Bengtsson, S., Fitzpatrick, R., Thibault, C. et al. (2022). *Teacher Management in Refugee Settings: Public Schools in Jordan.* UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning & Education Development Trust.
www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/teacher-management-refugee-settings-public-schools-jordan

[44] Institute of Development Studies. Thompson, S. (2018). *The current situation of persons with disabilities in Jordan.*
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5bb22804ed915d258ed26e2c/Persons_with_disabilities_in_Jordan.pdf

[45] Muhaidat, M., Alodat, A.M., & Almeqdad, Q. (2020). Inclusive Education Practices for Refugee Children with Disabilities in Jordanian Schools. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education.* 12(2), 147–153.

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Finally, a significant number of pre-school children are also missing out on early educational experiences that can better prepare them for success in their primary schooling. In Jordan, there is limited enrollment into formal early childhood education. This is largely because there is not yet universal access to KG1 (ages 4–5) or 2 (ages 5–6) and hence, children's attendance at this level is not mandatory despite its projected long-term individual and societal benefits.[46] The COVID-19 pandemic caused a further decrease by 5% (about 6,000 children) from 2019/20 to 2020/21[47] as many private providers of KG closed permanently and many parents pulled their children from KGs during and after lockdowns due to lack of money or due to a lack of perceived benefit. This caused a contraction of the private KG sector and a significant movement of children from the private to the public sector once mandated lockdowns ended.

This shift created a substantial strain on the public KG2 system, affecting the quality of KGs overall. During the pandemic, KG2 children's participation on Darsak, the government's online learning platform, was also low given KG2 children require parental support and cannot learn independently.[48] Despite efforts to improve KGs in Jordan, studies indicate that nearly a third of children aged 5–6 are not ready to learn by the time they enroll in first grade.[49]

This has negative consequences for students, making them unprepared for success in school, in terms of both cognitive and emotional outcomes. For children not enrolled in KG2 or whose time in KG2 is more limited due to second shift or rotational arrangement, their home environment is often not able to compensate. This is because there is a widespread lack of awareness among parents of the importance of the home learning environment. A National Parenting Study in 2021 showed that only 6% of parents read to their children aged 6 and below, and only 6% had told their children a story in the three days before the administration of the survey.[50] As a result, children are missing out on stimulating experiences that support their development.

C.1.b. Quality

The overall quality of education has been greatly affected for both Jordanians and Syrians as a result of the influx of Syrian refugees and the pressure this has exerted on the education system. With the integration of tens of thousands of Syrian students, Jordanian schools experienced a rise in overcrowding, leading the MoE to reconsider its plans to phase out the double-shift school system. This widened access to schooling but did not fully alleviate overcrowding in classrooms, which in turn impacted both teacher and student performance as well as the learning environment. Such overcrowding and the shorter school day of double-shift schools have put a strain on teaching resources and reduced teaching time.[51] It must also be noted, however, that overcrowding is exacerbated by the uneven geographical distribution of schools in Jordan, leading to urban schools being overused with generally high student-teacher ratios while rural schools are underused with lower student-teacher ratios. A 2013 USAID study reported that just 11% of the student population occupied 43% of the schools while the other 89% occupied 57% of schools.[52]

[46] Fink, G., McCoy, D.C., Hatamleh, H.I. et al. (2017). *Economic Implications of Investing in Early Childhood Care and Education in Jordan.* Amman: Queen Rania Foundation.
www.qrf.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/economic_implications_of_investing_in_ecce_in_jordan_en.pdf
[47] MoE. (2022). *Mid-Term Review of the Jordan Education Strategic Plan.*
https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/documents/esp_mtr_-en_tqryrmntsf_lmd_llkht_lstrtyjy_1.pdf
[48] Ibid.
[49] National Center for Resources Development (NCHRD). (2018). *The Early Development Instrument: Measuring Children's Readiness to Learn in Jordan.*
www.researchgate.net/publication/281282149_The_Early_Development_Instrument_Measuring_Children_Readiness_to_Learn_at_the_Jordanian_Schools
[50] World Education, INC, Queen Rania Foundation & MOE. (2021). Unpublished report on parenting in Jordan.
[51] MoE. (2019). *Jordan Education Strategic Plan 2018-2025.* https://moe.gov.jo/sites/default/files/esp_english_final.pdf
[52] Stave, S.E., Tiltnes, A.A., Khalil, Z. et al. (2017). *Improving learning environments in Jordanian public schools.*
www.urban-response.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/improving-learning-environments-in-jordanian-public-schools-compressed-12-0.pdf

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As a result, there is a widespread perception that the decline of education quality in public schools steepened following the Syrian crisis, which is supported by evidence. Data show a clear decline in students' scores in schools affected by the Syrian refugee crisis from 2012–2015 across both genders. However, overall, boys' scores declined more than girls', except in English. In addition, double-shift schooling has affected students' attitude towards learning as many have made several complaints regarding the school arrangements. Students report that they do not get enough sleep (as they have to be in school at 6:45am) and that school days are less fun and more intense as scheduling requires that extra-curricular activities be reduced and breaks between classes have been scrapped.[53]

Schools' learning environments have also been impacted as double-shift schooling has led to significantly greater 'wear and tear' on furniture, resources, and other school facilities such as laboratories, sports equipment, and playgrounds. The overall cleanliness of schools has also declined as a result of double-shift schooling.[54]

The quality of teaching in camp and second-shift schools is also jeopardized due to the particular hardships teachers of refugees face. While all public school teachers in Jordan are Jordanian citizens, the majority of teachers of Syrian refugees in the second shift of double-shift schools are "daily paid teachers". As such, they are recruited and managed by the Field Directorate (rather than the Civil Service Bureau and MoE), and they do not have a formal contract. Instead, daily paid teachers are paid only for the number of days they teach per month. As a result, daily paid teachers experience lower compensation, have extended working hours, do not have access to paid leave or other benefits, and face higher job insecurity due to their contractual arrangements. In addition, they are supposed to rotate each semester to give other daily paid teachers an opportunity to work. However, they are often retained in their post for longer periods to promote continuity and greater learning for refugee students.[55] Still, teachers of Syrian refugees are among the youngest and least experienced.[56]

Rarely mentioned in the evidence is the quality of schooling for children in rural areas. While the distance children need to travel to reach a school can cause access issues, the quality appears to be particularly low.

C.1.c. Continuity

There are a number of ways the continuity of schooling for many students has been, or continues to be, disrupted in Jordan. The most obvious mass disruption to schooling was the COVID-19 pandemic, which required schools to close for more than a year. While the MoE developed the Darsak platform to ensure the continuity of education through online and televised lessons, at the time of the crisis when face-to-face education was disrupted, not all students were able to access the platform due to lack of online connectivity. The COVID-19 pandemic caused exceptional challenges for Syrian refugees, particularly for the minority of whom reside in camps. Syrian refugee children, especially boys, were less likely to access online learning during the pandemic on a regular basis and are potentially less likely to return to schooling.[57] As mentioned previously, the continuity of Syrian students' education is also often disrupted by gender norms, economic circumstances, and family instability, which lead students to drop out of school to pursue work or marriage.

[53] Bataineh, M. (2019). The Syrian Crisis Impact on Quality of Education in Jordan: A Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment. *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science*.
https://ijlass.org/the-syrian-crisis-impact-on-quality-of-education-in-jordan-a-quantitative-and-qualitative-assessment
[54] Ibid.
[55] Bengtsson, S., Fitzpatrick, R., Thibault, C. et al. (2022). *Teacher Management in Refugee Settings: Public Schools in Jordan*. UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning & Education Development Trust.
www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/teacher-management-refugee-settings-public-schools-jordan
[56] Queen Rania Foundation. Ghawi, H. & Hattab, K. (2020). *Teachers of Refugees: Findings from Jordan's 2018 National Teacher Survey*.
www.qrf.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/teachers_of_refugees_findings_from_jordans_2018_national_teacher_survey.pdf
[57] Plan International. (2021). *E-Learning Experience During COVID-19 Needs Assessment*.

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C.2. At the macro level: What is the political economy of the education sector, in regards to the alignment and coherence to goals and operations across the main actors providing children with access to, and quality and continuity of education?

Drawing on insights from the literature as well as the political economy analysis,[58] the Jordanian educational sector can be described as considerably centralized and hierarchical. The MoE and its directorates are key drivers and stakeholders of reform, along with the National Center for Curriculum Development and the Queen Rania Teaching Academy. International organizations and donors, particularly the World Bank, USAID and UNESCO, along with the National Center for Human Resources Development, also have an influential role within this context. Meanwhile, schools, universities, and communities have a key part in implementing reform but are not influential in developing such policies. This creates a policy environment in which the macro-level stakeholders hold considerable power and influence, while more sub-level actors in the governorates and field directorates are less involved despite some recent efforts to engage them.

Within the hierarchical education system, authority and directives flow one way, from top to bottom. This structure does not promote effective feedback loops from the field level to the central level to adjust policy prescriptions and resource allocations. Instead, while a diversity of stakeholders at the national level engage in discussions and committees to develop strategic visions and policies, those in the field are often marginalized and unprepared to implement reforms. This leads to the chronic problem of implementation gaps where visions and policies on paper are not actualized in practice, nor are they designed with a deep understanding of the compounding effects of current realities. Teachers, who already feel particularly frustrated by their low salaries and limited agency in their jobs, are still expected to implement policies that do not necessarily address their students' learning needs, their own development, or the challenges they face in schools. Such frustration can often lead teachers to resist reforms. It also contributes to a widespread mentality of compliance rather than empowerment. In addition, the MoE's monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) targets often described in the ESP 2018–2025 and other vision documents often measure quantitative outputs and do not always link or make clear how outcomes and goals will be ultimately achieved. The continuity of the MoE's work is also hindered by the constant turnover of top-level decision-makers, particularly the Minister of Education.

Education reforms are further frustrated by the lack of accountability mechanisms across all levels. The Civil Service Bureau is responsible for hiring teachers while the MoE retains authority to assign, evaluate, and discipline school staff. In addition, teachers, administrators, and MoE staff – as public servants – cannot be fired except in cases of gross misconduct. This, combined with the controversial issue of low wages, negatively impacts teacher performance and morale and hinders reform efforts. In addition, at both the macro and micro levels, there is also a misalignment of policies and implementation of teacher management and curriculum reform as well as the outstanding structural obstacles preventing a shift to less centralized control and more agency, autonomy, and accountability at the school level.

In sum, children's access to education as well as the quality and continuity of their education is compromised by a wide array of factors at the community and policy level. To start with, public KG2 (ages 5–6) is not yet universally accessible, especially for refugees, despite policy goals and implementation measures in place to universalize access and require attendance of KG2 for all children. In addition, the quality of both private and public KG2s varies widely across the country and evidence shows that children who attend are not necessarily school-ready (leading to questions about their overall quality.) In both primary and secondary schools in communities hosting Syrian refugees, the quality of education has deteriorated further with the expansion of the double-shift schooling system that reduces instructional time and allocated resources. Both the influx of refugee students and the COVID pandemic (which led a significant number of students to transfer from the private sector into public schools), has led to an increase

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[58] DAI, Global Education, & Integrated International. (2022). *Jordan Education Political Economy Analysis 2 Final Report.*

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of double-shift schools and general overcrowding of classrooms, particularly in urban areas. Finally, access to schooling for children with disabilities continues to be minimal and only about 5% of children with disabilities are able to access formal schooling, This is due to a lack of accommodating school infrastructure, adequate resources, and teachers trained to address their needs as well as common stigmas and/or concerns regarding the potential of children with disabilities to succeed in school settings.

In terms of system incoherences and misalignments, there are a few notable points the review identified. First, the goals envisioned in the MoE's ESP are often not sufficiently operationalized as noted in the finding to question 1 on the state of policies, budgets, and data systems in the education sector. The ESP lacks a number of appropriate indicators that are needed to effectively drive and monitor progress in practice, especially in regard to refugee education outcomes and students with disabilities. In addition, education reforms are hindered by the lack of accountability mechanisms across all levels. Relatedly, within Jordan's hierarchical and centralized education system, authority and directives flow one way, from top to bottom, and do not promote effective feedback loops from the field level to the central level to adjust policy prescriptions and resource allocations. However, the government is aware of this challenge and efforts are in progress to decentralize decision-making across levels and promote school-level management

D. What factors affect access, quality, and continuity of education in conflict-affected contexts?

D.1. At the micro-level: what are the school, community, household, and personal risk and protective factors?

At the micro level, there are several factors that affect the access to as well as the quality and continuity of education for Jordanian and Syrian refugees. **At the school level,** the low quality of education and teachers was found to be the most commonly cited frustration among both Jordanian and Syrian youth (aged 10 and above), which contributes to students' dropout rates.[59] Students often doubted teachers' competence to deliver quality education as many were unable to explain lessons in-depth, were unresponsiveness to students' questions, and relied on rote methods of instruction. This was linked with the students' perceptions of favoritism among teachers who gave most attention to top-performing students while ignoring less talented and less able students – a practice teachers' involved in the study freely acknowledged commonly occurs. Moreover, some teachers were described as "sitting idly in class, sleeping, spending time on their phones and, in some cases, simply leaving class altogether".[60] Finally, students also complained of high absenteeism and high turnover among teachers and noted their "limited set of disciplinary approaches: physical and emotional abuse".[61] Teachers acknowledge these practices as well, citing a lack of resources and training, overcrowding in classrooms, and nature of Tawjihi assessment (as requiring rote learning) as principal reasons for the behaviors.

Access and quality of education for students with physical and learning disabilities in Jordan is also severely limited due to the lack of inclusive education, despite the government signing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, adopting the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and following a comprehensive approach to promoting inclusive education with the release of the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education (2019–2029). Children with disabilities in Jordan are primarily educated in segregated settings, with students with physical disabilities attending a special school (if available) and those with learning disabilities most often removed from general education classes to be taught in self-contained

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[59] MSI. (Management Systems International) (2015). *Jordan National Youth Assessment.* Arlington, VA: USAID/Jordan Monitoring & Evaluation Support Project. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KBZD.pdf

[60] Ibid, p. 14.

[61] Ibid, p. 5.

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classrooms (grades 1–4).[62] In addition, Jordan often requires that children with disabilities obtain a medical certification of diagnosis as a pre-condition before being accepted and enrolled in school. For families who either cannot afford the costs associated with the assessment or are reluctant to identify their child as having a disability, this requirement can serve as a barrier to accessing school for their child.[63]

Relatedly, students reported both violence (both verbal and physical) and discrimination from teachers and other students as another common problem, though male students reported experiencing physical violence more than females.[64] Teachers and administrators do not provide protection, leaving students, especially boys, feeling particularly unsafe at school. While students often said they sought protection from older brothers or fathers, some parents and teachers condone the use of corporal punishment in schools as a means of control in overcrowded classrooms.[62][65] A 2019 study conducted by the National Council for Family Affairs and UNICEF/Jordan Office found that 13.9% of approximately 1,700 caregivers surveyed reporting believing that physical violence or corporal punishment is necessary in raising and educating children (14.1% of Jordanians, 14.3% of Syrians, and 8.2 % of other nationalities).[66] However, other studies suggest that acceptance of corporal punishment is more widespread.[67] In addition, adolescents with disabilities are "three to four times more likely to experience violence than their peers without disabilities and are often targeted for violence from their peers".[68]

The physical environment was the final school-level factor that often hindered the quality and continuity of youths' secondary schooling, often leading to students' disengagement from education. They described dilapidated schools with broken doors, desks, and toilets, classes without heat, and an unclean environment in general.[69] Furthermore, they complained of the lack of science labs and inaccessible or non-functioning computer labs. Finally, most schools are also not built for nor equipped to accommodate students with physical disabilities, which further hinders their access to mainstream schooling.[70]

D.2. At the macro level: what are policy enablers and constraints?

At the macro level, there are many policy enablers and constraints that shape education provision, particularly for Syrian refugees. In terms of policy enablers, international attention and aid to the situation has been one. For the past decade, the Syrian refugee crisis has drawn a host of international NGOs, countries, and multilateral organizations to Jordan to assist in providing aid and educational interventions for the displaced population. This, along with the government's expressed political will and the alignment between national and international policies, has created an enabling environment for reform.[71] Other policy enablers include the MoE's ESP plan that helps build consensus on the most needed reforms, policy changes, budgetary allocations, and programs to improve access, quality, and continuity of education.

[62] RTI. (2017). *Assessment on Education of Students with Disabilities in Jordan: Final Report.*
https://shared.rti.org/content/assessment-education-students-disabilities-jordan-final-report
[63] Ibid.
[64] MSI. (see above), p. 14.
[65] MSI. (see above), p. 15.
[66] The World Health Organization (WHO). (2014). Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014.
www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564793; UNICEF & MoE. (2021). *Diagnostic Study of National Efforts to Reduce and Respond to Violence in Ministry of Education Schools in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2020–2021.*
https://jordan.un.org/en/171239-diagnostic-study-national-efforts-reduce-and-respond-violence-ministry-education-schools
[67] Gender & Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE). (2022). *Lessons from Longitudinal Research with Adolescents.*
www.gage.odi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Adolescent-lives-in-Jordan-what-are-we-learning-from-longitudinal-evidence.pdf Also see World Bank. (2017). *Education Reform Support Program-for-Results.* Program Appraisal Document, p 5.
[68] Odeh, K.B. et al. (2021). "I Wish Someone Would Ask Me Questions": The Unheard Voices of Adolescents with Disabilities in Jordan'. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 33(5), pp. 1328–1348. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-021-00421-0
[69] Ibid, p. 17.
[70] RTI (see above), p. 34.
[71] Arnot, T. & Seeger, A. (2021). *UNESCO study of MoE Response to Syrian Refugee Crisis.*
www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/jordan-ministry-educations-response-syria-refugee-crisis-case-study

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In terms of policy constraints, there are several of note found in the literature. One well-known constraint is **school infrastructure**. Jordan needs to build more schools and to develop a maintenance system that is both responsive and preventative. The lack of school infrastructure is linked to the budgetary shortfalls and lack of open land available in urban areas. Another constraint at the macro level is that of **data gaps and evidence use**. While a large amount of data is collected on the school system and student achievement, there are areas highlighted in the literature where key data – needed to address challenges such as inclusion – are not yet collected. For example, there is a lack of reliable data collected by the MoE to track and analyze how many children enrolled in schools have disabilities and at what rate they drop out.[72] Relatedly, data to assess the extent to which children with disabilities are not currently enrolled in schools and why is also not collected. Meanwhile, the capacity for the MoE to use data in planning and policy-making remains limited. For example, while the Ma'an ("Together") program to reduce violence among students in schools instituted a monthly online survey, the MoE does not use the survey results to "review, amend or plan violence prevention and response programmes", which may be due to "poor understanding of the aim of this survey and of engagement from the MoE side to implement it".[73] Building the MoE's capacities to analyze and apply lessons learned from data is a key gap that needs strengthening across the system.

Another constraint related to data is a lack of key targets and indicators for inclusion. More than one study highlighted the absence of educational targets in the ESP for standalone groups such as Syrian refugees and students with disabilities. For example, the ESP explicitly references refugees' education needs, but the MoE does not specify secondary-school enrollment targets or non-formal targets for Syrian refugee children.[74] The ESP also does not mention interventions for out-of-school, secondary-school-age refugee children. Instead, the ESP only specifies targets for increasing the total number of children enrolled in secondary education. Notably, the MoE does not "regularly collect and publish disaggregated data on secondary school enrollment and attendance, and on indicators of the quality of secondary education for refugee and Jordanian children".[75] In addition, there is a lack of data to inform evidence-based policies and planning for inclusion. While policies enshrine the right of every child to access a quality education and call for inclusive education, the only data collected in this area is the number of schools that are accessible to children with disabilities. There is a lack of indicators that track interventions, outputs, and outcomes at various levels (student, school, field directorate, and MoE levels) based on a broader definitions of inclusion (beyond access).[76] This gap is linked to the fact that the majority of MoE staff continue to "view inclusion from a physical disability integration perspective" and thus, "disconnects remain in perceptions, awareness and capacities at all levels of the MoE to adhere to these concepts."[77] Finally, disaggregated data on the rates of access and enrollment in KG of Syrian refugees is another example of data that is needed but not regularly collected by the MoE due to a lack of resources.[78]

There are a number of constraints affecting the MoE's ability to address challenges in the area of teacher quality. First, the MoE is not responsible for teacher recruitment. Currently, Jordan's Civil Service Bureau primarily controls the teacher recruitment procedures, which are in line with the procedures for hiring other

[72] RTI (see above), p. 4.

[73] UNICEF. (2021). *Diagnostic Study of National Efforts to Reduce and Respond to Violence in Ministry of Education Schools in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*.
https://jordan.un.org/en/171239-diagnostic-study-national-efforts-reduce-and-respond-violence-ministry-education-schools

[74] Human Rights Watch. (2020) "I Want to Continue to Study": Barriers to Secondary Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan p. 48. Available at:
https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/06/26/i-want-continue-study/barriers-secondary-education-syrian-refugee-children-jordan

[75] Ibid, p. 47.

[76] DAI, Global Education, & Integrated International (2022). *Jordan Education Political Economy Analysis 2 Final Report*, p. 85; also see RTI.

[77] Ibid, p. 85.

[78] DeStefano, J., Merseth, K. & Shukri, M. (2018). *KG Data for Decision-Making: Phase II National Survey of Families*. RTI International, pp. 4. https://ierc publicfiles.s3.amazonaws.com/public/resources/Jordan%20KG%20Data%20For%20Decision%20Making%20-%20Phase%20II%20Final.pdf

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government recruits.[79] Relatedly, teaching is not an attractive profession for high-achieving graduates, and so the MoE is constrained in its ability to raise the quality of its workforce and finds it especially difficult to attract sufficient numbers of qualified male teachers.[80] Furthermore, budgetary constraints restrict the MoE's ability to raise teacher pay to motivate teachers to enact reforms.

Overall, the review of the evidence highlighted a number of key points. First, the COVID-19 pandemic caused schools to close for at least 18 months and restricted access to schooling for many students despite efforts to provide access through online and televised platforms (Darsak, Learning Bridges). This impacted Syrian refugee students disproportionately who most often lacked access to online learning resources. The pandemic has also, at the secondary level, led to greater poverty among communities and hence an increase in the drop-out rate of both Jordanian and Syrian students. Other intertwined factors fueling dropout rates include the low quality of education, low-skilled teachers, financial need, early marriage, gender norms, and violence at schools. While there is wide consensus on the need to improve education quality in schools, the MoE is limited in its ability to enact policies to improve teacher quality – a key driver of education quality and access/inclusion. The MoE is limited in this capacity because the Civil Service Bureau hires new teachers and is responsible for their discipline and termination, leading permanent teachers to be largely immune from disciplinary action and termination except in cases of gross misconduct (though the MoE has the power to assign, and hence transfer if necessary, teachers to schools). This, combined with the position's relatively low wages, arguably leads to a lack of accountability as well as of motivation among teachers to develop professionally.

E. What interventions, if any, have been shown to affect access, quality, and continuity of education and improve coherence in conflict-affected contexts?

Across the evidence review, there are 14 studies that examine or assess interventions and programs aimed at improving the outcomes of students. None of the studies are randomized controlled trials or rigorous impact evaluations. This is a gap in the research evidence in Jordan. Instead, the majority of studies included in the intervention table are based on observational or qualitative evidence, and thus are limited in the validity of their conclusions and generalizability. The 14 studies in the table can be grouped into three categories: (1) those focused on interventions targeting refugee students (n=4), (2) those examining interventions related to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (n=4), and (3) other studies on initiatives addressing general or at-risk populations (n=6).

Table 2. **Intervention evidence categorization**

Intervention Name/ Type, Setting/ Brief findings	Strength of Confidence	Direction of impact
Questscope Non-Formal Education Program[81] *Remediation, non-formal/humanitarian*	Limited	±

[79] UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning & Education Development Trust. (2022). *Ensuring Effective Teacher Management in Refugee Settings, Public Schools in Jordan*.
www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/ensuring-effective-teacher-management-refugee-settings-public-schools-jordan-policy
[80] Bengtsson, S., Fitzpatrick, R., Thibault, C et al. (2022). Teacher Management in Refugee Settings: Public Schools in Jordan. UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning & Education Development Trust.
www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/teacher-management-refugee-settings-public-schools-jordan
[81] Arran Magee & Tejendra Pherali (2017): Freirean critical consciousness in a refugee context: a case study of Syrian refugees in Jordan, Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education.

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Although participatory pedagogies have been found to be promising for reaching out-of-school refugees in host communities, there is a risk of manipulation of such pedagogies due to the notion that empowerment education is incompatible with the goal of gaining certification.		
UNRWA Education Program[82] *Academic, formal/humanitarian* UNRWA schools, serving registered Palestinian refugees since 1950, continue to perform better than public schools by an equivalent of more than one school year.	Limited	+*
Emergency Education Response (EER) Program[83] *Academic, formal, non-formal, informal/humanitarian* The program in its early stages delivered a rapid response to the Syrian crisis, relevant to the education needs. However, as the crisis continued, the program had to adapt.	Limited	±
The Schools Network Program (SNP)[84] – a program to develop professional learning communities among teachers across schools in core subjects to promote effective and innovative practice to improve student outcomes *Academic, leadership/humanitarian* Positive changes were evident in the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of teachers and school leaders, as well as in the achievement outcomes of students participating in the program.	Moderate	+*
E-Learning Program[85] *Academic, formal, non-formal, informal/humanitarian* Findings varied across formal, informal, non-formal contexts in terms of access and quality.	Limited	±
Japan Social Development Fund Project[86] *Access, continuity, non-formal/humanitarian* 12,000 children benefited from the mentoring approach program, and 100,000 children benefited from the street education program.	Limited	+

[82] Abdul-Hamid, H., Patrinos, H., Reyes, J., Kelcey, J., & Varela, A. D. (2015). Learning in the face of adversity: The UNRWA education program for Palestine refugees. World Bank Publications.

[83] Culbertson, S., Ling, T., Henham, M.L., Corbett, J., Karam, R.T., Pankowska, P., Saunders, C.L., Bellasio, J. and Baruch, B. (2016). Evaluation of the emergency education response for Syrian refugee children and host communities in Jordan. Rand.

[84] Queen Rania Teacher Academy. (2020). School Networks for Instructional Improvement in Jordan: Impact and ways forward.

[85] Edvise ME. (2021). E-Learning Experience During COVID-19 Needs Assessment.

[86] World Bank. (2012). Jordan – Mainstreaming at risk youth: Building institutional capacity for restoring education and opportunity.

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RAMP[87] – program aimed at improving literacy and math of children in levels KG2–Grade 3 through training and supporting of teachers *Academic, formal/humanitarian* There was a delay in implementing some components of the program due to school closures because of COVID-19, however the program was able to adapt, and reach the target beneficiaries.	Limited	**+**
Education Reform Support Program-for-Results[88] *Academic, formal/humanitarian*	Limited	**ø**
The program has been assessed as technically sound and is strategically relevant.		
Darsak (Online/Televised Distance Learning Platform)[89] *Academic, formal/humanitarian* Overall, the perception of parents and students of Darsak – the online and televised learning platform created and managed by the MoE – was not very positive. There are challenges related to accessibility and quality.	Limited	**±**
RAMP[90] *Academic, formal/humanitarian* Aimed at improving literacy and math of children in levels KG2–Grade 3 by training and supporting teachers, the evaluation found limited impact of the program because of issues related to implementation, and scaling the program without full development of program components.	Promising	**±***
Learning Bridges[91] *Academic, formal/humanitarian* The UNICEF-funded blended learning program reached half a million children in year 1 of implementation and allowed them to continue their learning despite school closure due to COVID-19.	Limited	**+**

[87] FCDO. (2022). Improving The Quality Of Education For Syrian And Jordanian Early Grade Primary School Children.

[88] World Bank. (2017). Education Reform Support Program-for-Results. Program Appraisal Document.

[89] Haßler, Assaf, Khalayleh. (2021). The distance education experience in Jordan: perspectives from stakeholders. Open Development & Education.

[90] Management Systems International. (2019). Ramp Impact Evaluation Final Report. USAID.

[91] UNICEF Jordan. (2022). Learning Bridges: Impact Study.

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Darsak (Online/Televised Distance Learning Platform)[92] *Academic, formal/humanitarian* Overall, the national online and televised learning platform created and utilized during COVID found that the reach was high and quality of content was good.	Limited	+
School Feeding Program[93] *Access, formal/humanitarian* Overall score of the program, which ensures qualifying children have school meals, is 'emerging' with some areas highlighted as 'could be strengthened'.	Limited	±
Interventions addressing barriers to education[94] *Formal,non-formal/humanitarian*	Limited	?
9 of the 12 interventions reviewed require further assessment to determine impact.		

In the first category (refugee interventions), there are four studies that examine interventions specifically targeting refugee children in Jordan. Of these, four focus on interventions for Syrian students and one examines the practices of UNRWA schools, which serve Palestinian refugees. The interventions for Syrians examined included: (1) the Emergency Education Response in the early years of the crises (2012–2013) in camps and host communities,[95] (2) a non-formal youth empowerment program run by Questscope,[96] and (3) the general education and non-formal interventions Syrian students receive.[97] These were all descriptive in nature, relying on either qualitative interview and focus groups or the literature to identify trends. The results were most often mixed, with limited generalizability.

The fourth study within this category explores what factors make UNRWA schools particularly effective. UNRWA schools have a reputation of providing relatively high-quality education to Palestinian refugees, often leading them to academically outperform their non-refugee peers within public schools in Jordan, the West Bank, and Gaza by a margin equivalent to more than one additional year of learning.[98] In the 2019/20 school year, UNRWA in Jordan provided education for approximately 120,000 Palestinian refugees in grades 1–10 at 169 schools, most (88%) of which operated on a double-shift basis.[99] Thus, despite teaching students from a generally lower socio-economic background and using the same national curriculum, UNRWA

[92] Edvise ME. (2021). Rapid Assessment of Jordan's Distance Learning.

[93] World Bank. (2016). SABER School Feeding Country Report: Jordan.

[94] University of Sussex.(2019). The Education of Syrian refugees in Jordan: Summary of demand side constraints and intervention.

[95] Culbertson, S., Ling, T., Henham, M.L., et al. (2016). *Evaluation of the emergency education response for Syrian refugee children and host communities in Jordan.* www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1203.html

[96] Magee, P. & Pherali, T. (2017). Freirean critical consciousness in a refugee context: a case study of Syrian refugees in Jordan. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education.* www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03057925.2017.1403312

[97] University of Sussex. (2019). *The Education of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Summary of demand-side constraints and interventions.*

[98] Abdul-Hamid, H., Patrinos, H., Reyes, J. et al (2015). *Learning in the face of adversity: The UNRWA education program for Palestine refugees.* World Bank Publications.
https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/972731468327904489/pdf/923910WP0Box380he0UNRWA0Story0PRINT.pdf

[99] UNRWA. (2022). *Education in Jordan.* www.unrwa.org/activity/education-jordan

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schools are able to support students in achieving better outcomes. The study found several factors that enabled UNRWA schools to achieve this, including:

1. Fostering higher morale among teachers and providing more comprehensive training, support, and supervision than in MoE schools
2. Mandating more ongoing professional development and orientation for teachers than in MoE schools
3. Having well-qualified and experienced school principals supporting teachers
4. Recruiting high-quality teachers who are themselves Palestinian refugees, who are committed to community development and family engagement, and who are committed to being positive role models
5. Scheduling more instructional time for math and science during the school day
6. Dedicating more class time to solving problems
7. Assigning greater amounts of homework than their peers in public schools
8. Enriching the curriculum with programs, activities, and remedial activities that are not implemented in public schools
9. Having higher levels of parental support for student achievement and higher levels of parental involvement in school activities

These findings can help highlight what changes are perhaps necessary in the public school systems to promote better student achievement regardless of nationality.

In the second category (COVID interventions), there are four studies that examine the quality and impact of distance learning interventions (Darsak[100] and Learning Bridges[101]) implemented during the COVID pandemic to provide general education to students in Jordan. Across these studies, it was found that the distance learning platforms were challenged in terms of accessibility and quality. There was a need for greater support for teachers and families to make the transition to online learning, and feedback indicated that a majority of students were unhappy with remote learning. Access was hindered by limited internet access as well as the majority of students accessing online education via mobile devices, of which most households only had one. Again, these studies were not robust evaluations, but rather studies conducted to capture lessons learned from the design and implementation of remote learning platforms. **In the third category (other interventions)**, there are six studies that provide assessment of other programs for the general population or at-risk youth. Within these studies, **two are notable for a more rigorous approach to impact evaluation**, though in both cases the sample sizes were too small to draw wider conclusions. First, a study conducted by the Queen Rania Teacher Academy used an experimental design approach to examine the impact of the Schools Network Program.[102] The study found generally positive changes in the beliefs, attitudes and practices of teachers and principals after the experience of being paired with a partner school for collaboration and support. Second, a study conducted by Management Systems International used a longitudinal quasi-experimental design to assess the impact of RAMP, a USAID-funded teacher training and support program to improve literacy and math in the early grades (KG2-Grade 3).[103] MSI found mostly limited impact of the program on learning outcomes, likely due to issues related to implementation e.g. scaling the program rapidly or scaling up with not-yet-finalized program components.

The other four studies in the category were not as rigorous but still provided lessons learned and contextual information in a variety of fields. One study assessed the impact (in terms of outputs) of the Japan Social

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[100] (1) Edvise ME., Plan International, Relief International et al. (2021). *E-Learning Experience During COVID-19 Needs Assessment*. https://plan-international.org/uploads/sites/19/2022/06/e-learning__assessment__eng.pdf; (2) Edvise ME. (2021). *Rapid Assessment of Jordan's Distance Learning*; (3) Haßler, B., Assaf, T., & Khalayleh, A. (2021). *The distance education experience in Jordan: perspectives from stakeholders*.Unpublished report. Queen Rania Foundation: Amman. See https://docs.opendeved.net/lib/HSHH6TVV.

[101] UNICEF Jordan. (2022). *Learning Bridges: Impact Study*. www.unicef.org/jordan/reports/learning-bridges-impact-study

[102] Queen Rania Teacher Academy. (2020). *School Networks for Instructional Improvement in Jordan. Impact and ways forward.*

[103] MSI (see above).

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Development Fund project, which implements a mentoring program and street education program for more than 100,000 at-risk youth.[104] Meanwhile, the World Bank's appraisal report of the Program-for-Results program (in which funding is linked with MoE plans) examines four areas: (1) expanded access and improved quality of early childhood education; (2) improved teaching and learning conditions; (3) a reformed student assessment and certification system; (4) strengthened education system management. While the program is still in the process of being implemented – and hence, does not yet provide insight into the effectiveness of its interventions – the document describes the current challenges that hinder further improvements in access and quality of education. Finally, two other program evaluations assessed the implementation progress of the RAMP[105] and School Feeding Program[106] and had mixed results that were limited in their generalizability.

IV. CONCLUSION

The evidence review undertaken in 2022 and detailed in this working paper has provided a much needed layout of the evidence landscape of the education system in post-pandemic Jordan. The small country, with limited resources, has made laudable strides in ensuring access to school for most of its young population, including refugees. However, this has come at a great cost to the quality and continuity of education for many. While notable gaps in access remain at the pre-primary level and there is limited access among children with disabilities, those who drop out, and economically disadvantaged students (including refugees), the quality and continuity of students' education are the key challenges facing education policy-makers.

Across these areas, seven overlapping themes emerged from the evidence gathered. These related to gaps in both the research literature and in effective provision. The seven themes were identified by the frequencies in which they were identified in the literature as contributing factors to the status quo as well as targets of needed research and reform. These seven themes are: (1) literacy, referring to the widespread lack of reading fluency and comprehension in the Arabic language among students, (2) the gender achievement gap, (3) teachers, including quality and management, (4) inclusion, (5) early childhood education (KG2), (6) data systems, and (7) refugee education. These seven thematic areas were discussed and debated with national stakeholders following the evidence review, during which time the themes were both confirmed as pressing priorities as well as refined to align with current policy-makers' and donors' priorities.

Within these areas, there are gaps and research needed at both the micro and macro levels as comprehensive strategies at the policy level fail to materialize in practice for a variety of reasons. Chief among them are the gaps in data tracking and use to inform decision-making across a slew of indicators related to gender, inclusion, KG2, and refugees. Due to this gap, studies often lack nuanced insight into general problems at the disaggregated level of marginalized populations. Decision-making within the education system – including policies and plans related to the national curriculum and materials, teacher training, and policy-making – needs to be better informed by evidence. Yet, decision-makers often do not have the capacity to interpret available data and incorporate evidence into their policies and practices. In addition, teacher and education quality suffer from the overly centralized nature of the education system in which principals, teachers, students, and communities have little voice or agency to improve conditions. Even the MoE lacks full control over teacher recruitment and dismissal. However, on the positive side, there is

[104] World Bank. (2012). *Jordan: Mainstreaming at Risk Youth. Building Institutional Capacity for Restoring Education and Opportunity.* https://documents.shihang.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/484131467986347086/algérie-Évaluation-dun-troisième-projet-routier

[105] FCDO. (2022). *Annual Review. Improving The Quality Of Education For Syrian And Jordanian Early Grade Primary School Children.*

[106] World Bank. (2016). *SABER School Feeding Country Report: Jordan.* http://wbgfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/CountryReports/SHN/SABER_SHSF_Jordan_2016_CR.pdf

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considerable political support for reform, and the alignment of national and international policies has created an enabling environment for change.

On a final note, it should be kept in mind that the results of the evidence review were also shaped by a handful of limitations. First, the research identified, although relatively recent, may not be reflective of the full impact of the pandemic with its extended school closures. Research published from 2020 to 2022 was, by and large, either conducted in schools before the pandemic or conducted in some modified and limited form during the pandemic. Both these facts highlight the challenge of understanding any educational context just after a national health emergency in which educational status quo were upended. In addition, the evidence review was limited by the fact the Queen Rania Foundation was unable to access a large portion of peer-reviewed literature that is in academic journals, which are behind paywalls. The final limitation was resources. The amount of time and human resources available for searching, reviewing, and coding the literature was limited and this may have curtailed the collection of more hard-to-find literature.

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ABOUT ERICC

The Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) Research Programme Consortium is a global research and learning partnership that strives to transform education policy and practice in conflict and protracted crisis around the world — ultimately to help improve holistic outcomes for children — through building a global hub for rigorous, context-relevant and actionable evidence base.

ERICC seeks to identify the most effective approaches for improving access, quality, and continuity of education to support sustainable and coherent education systems and holistic learning and development of children in conflict and crisis. ERICC aims to bridge research, practice, and policy with accessible and actionable knowledge — at local, national, regional and global levels — through co- construction of research and collaborative partnerships.

ERICC is led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and expert partners include Centre for Lebanese Studies, Common Heritage Foundation, Forcier Consulting, ODI, Osman Consulting, Oxford Policy Management and Queen Rania Foundation. During ERICC's inception period, NYU-TIES provided research leadership, developed the original ERICC Conceptual Framework and contributed to early research agenda development. ERICC is supported by UK Aid.

Countries in focus include Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar), Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan and Syria.