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“Relevance of Education or Skills Development to Improve Youth Access to the Job Market”

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Executive Summary

Jordan has been selected as one of the few countries in the World as a spearhead of people's aspirations, thoughts and recommendations to inform the on-going global process of National Consultations to define the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

This report was commissioned to ascertain in a comprehensive way the assumption that the relevance of education to the workplace stands out as a major policy agenda for Jordan for the post-2015 agenda. UNESCO contracted *ChangeAgent for Arab Development and Education Reform (CADER)* to collate and consolidate inputs from various international and national reports. This report highlights the reform initiatives of Jordan as well as inputs from national stakeholders of the education sector in Jordan to inform the deliberations of an inclusive National Forum.

This Post-2015 consultation report provides an overview of the current and prospective focus on aspects related to the [relevance of education or skills development to improve youth access to the job market](#). It examines the following related aspects:

- the quality and relevance of foundational skills (literacy and numeracy) and the soundness of transferable skills (*e.g.: problem solving, effective communication and information, creativity skills, etc.*) acquired by youth during pre-vocational education;
- the appropriateness and sustainability of teacher training, teachers' motivation and professional development schemes across all sub-sectors including the relevance of innovative teaching and learning methods using Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) as a teaching/learning aid tool;
- the flexibility or adaptability of curricular and extra-curricular programmes to impart learners with the 21st century and knowledge economy skills which might encompass, but not exclusively:
 - i) core transversal life skills (entrepreneurship, global citizenship awareness and civic participation, healthy lifestyles, environmental literacy);
 - ii) learning and innovation skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration);
 - iii) information, media and technology skills (ICT/digital literacy, media and information literacy skills).
- the governance and financing challenges, opportunities and prospective scenarios for the education sector in Jordan (international and national trends, public and private partnership options).

The process of report collation and synthesis is grounded in country realities and aims to be inclusive by involving grassroots level stakeholders and the often marginalized voices as opposed to the restrictive top-down approach. Methods of report collation and deliberations included the following:

1. Desk reviews of recent evaluations of the progress of the Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), related national education policy reform frameworks (e.g. The Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) I and II); existing literature and documentation on the post-2015 Education Agenda (e.g. UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative, UNESCO Think Pieces, etc.) as well as a review and synthesis of the New Education Sector Reform Plan commissioned by the King Abdullah II as it relates to the theme of the National Forum.
2. Face-to-face or telephone interviews with a selection of key national stakeholders such as: Executive Officers from key ministries (especially the Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, etc.).
3. Soliciting the opinions of various stakeholders through three questionnaires. Stakeholders included ministers, former ministers, academics, community colleges and selected universities'/faculties' leaders, students, teachers and Ministry of Education (MoE) field directorate staff.

Jordan has made noticeable progress in the last 15 years in the different aspects of education related to achieving the MDGs of education and the EFA goals launched by UNESCO.

The **Second Goal: Achieve Universal Basic Education of the MDGs** is measured through three indicators: the net enrolment rate (NER) in primary education, the survival rates of completion of grade five and literacy rates among males and females. Basic school NERs indicate substantial increases since 1990 for boys and girls alike, demonstrating that Jordan has made considerable strides in providing universal basic education and ensuring completion of a full course of schooling. Despite the equal enrolment rates between males and females, disparity among the governorates remains. Additionally, the gross enrolment rate in primary education in Jordan is less than the gross enrolment rate in the MENA countries and the low- and moderate-income countries.

As for the proportion of pupils completing the basic education cycle, Jordan showed remarkable improvement in pupil retention rates, increasing from 92.2% during 1990/1991 to 99% during 2007/2008. This improvement is partially attributed to the automatic promotion policy in the first four grades. Jordan has made progress on these two indicators with regards to equal rates between males and females. As for the survival rates upon completion of grade 5, Jordan has reached a rate of 100% in 2011 as compared to 95% in 1995, thus outranking the MENA countries and the low- and moderate-income countries. Jordan also outranks these two groups in the rates of males and females that finish primary education and enter secondary education.

Regarding the literacy rates among 15-24 year-olds, of males and females, the Kingdom succeeded in decreasing the illiteracy rates among 15+ year-olds, as

it dropped from 68% in 1961 to 17% in 1990 and to 7.8% in 2008 (11.6% for females vs. 4.3% for males) and reached below 7% in 2011. Despite its remarkable decline, illiteracy is more prevalent among females than males, and more widespread in rural than in urban areas.

Despite these achievements, about 50,000 children did not enrol in schools or dropped out in 2009. In addition, about 35,000 children below 15 years of age are active participants in the workforce. It is apparent that Jordan has made progress on most of the quantitative indicators, but the next step for the Kingdom is to work towards achieving quality education that meets the requirements of knowledge economy in which growth is dependent on the quantity, quality, and accessibility of the information available, rather than the means of production.

On **EFA** goals, and regarding the **First Goal: Early Childhood Care and Education** Jordan considered early childhood education a critical reform component of the ERfKE project. Early childhood education became one of the cycles of general education, though not compulsory. In 2011, the enrolment rate in early childhood education reached (36%) among the age group 4 – 6 in comparison with (29%) in 1999. The **Second Goal: Universal Primary Education** clearly overlaps with the MDG on education which was discussed in detail.

With regards to the **Third Goal: Promoting Learning and Skills for Young People and Adults** the MoE reviewed the policies of vocational education and students will follow two tracks in secondary education: the secondary academic track and the secondary applied education track. The latter track was limited to four specializations rather than the nine earlier ones in order to improve the employment opportunities of the graduates.

Relating to the **Fourth Goal: Adult Literacy** the current adult illiteracy numbers show that illiteracy is still relatively high especially among females, and there has been little improvement in the last five years. Nevertheless, the EFAs regional report for 2011 classifies Jordan as “on track” to achieving the goal.

As for the **Fifth Goal: Gender Disparities** the national report about the mid-term evaluation states that Jordan achieved equality between genders in primary education, but as for secondary education, the country is on its way to achieve this. As we have seen in the third goal, there is clear disparity between males and females in vocational education. Thus, Jordan is classified as “on track” to achieving this goal.

As for the **Sixth Goal: Quality Education** the indicator of the achievement related to this goal is based on the results of the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in science and math as well as the repetition rate and the dropout rate in all grades, which indicate the internal efficiency of the education system. Countries’ participation in TIMSS and

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) provide indicators on the progress made. The results of students on the TIMSS for the year 2011 in science decreased in comparison to 2007 by 33 points and 26 points compared to 2003. As for the students' results in math, they also decreased in 2011 compared to 2007 by 21 points and by 18 points compared to 2003. The PISA results show a clear decrease in the averages for reading, math and science compared to international averages while showing a slight drop by 6 points in science between 2006 and 2009 and an improvement by 4 and 3 points in the same two years in reading and science respectively. Relating to the indicators of repetition and dropouts, the progress made is not at the required level. The repetition rate reached 0.7% in 1999 and dropped to 0.5% only in 2010. The percentage for the dropout indicator for the year 2010 could not be accessed in order to evaluate the progress made compared to 1999 percentages of 3.5% for males and females and 3.6% for females.

When it comes to education, Jordan has some challenges to overcome but at the same time enjoys some remarkable opportunities. In sum, the challenges Jordan faces relate to poverty, unemployment, relevance of education to workplace requirements, governance and financing. Additionally, environmental awareness, talented and gifted education and the education of the disabled persons pose other challenges which need to be addressed.

Yet, Jordan's education sector has several strengths, including the visionary political leadership of the country and its modern vision on education. King Abdullah II's vision for Jordan to become the hub for technology and e-commerce in the region was the motivation and incentive to launch the Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE). Queen Rania Abdullah's initiatives in education reform played a big role in advancing education reform and improving it. According to the World Bank report, Jordan has invested in its education system and human resource development.¹ The Kingdom's education system is ranked among the best systems in the region with regards to access, equity, efficiency and quality. Jordan is also distinguished for its human capital that is well-trained, qualified and productive. Unfortunately, the economic and financial situation in addition to the lack of employment opportunities push this human capital to immigrate.

Opportunity also lies in improving the vocational education in general since there is a need for qualified people. What needs to be done in this respect is also known, strategies are ready, and the private sector is ready to co-operate considering that external financing is also easy to access. Added to all this, the international community represented by the international organizations and donor countries are ready to support Jordan. It is important to make best use of this readiness and to direct the financing to high-priority projects. Besides, entering the knowledge society, where knowledge is the primary production

¹ The Road not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and Africa, World Bank, 2008.

resource is one of the highest priorities of Jordan. Additionally, the knowledge economy indicator for Jordan was the highest among all the other Arab countries. To capitalize on these opportunities, a comprehensive tri-axes strategy was developed to achieve this; a national strategy supported by His Majesty King Abdullah, a comprehensive program targeting all necessary aspects of a knowledge society and public-private partnership.

The biggest challenge that faces the education system in Jordan is the issue of quality. This was stated by almost all officials and policymakers who were interviewed for the purpose of this report. This calls for improving the quality of education a top national priority, since this is the hope for a better future as much as it is a challenge. Hence, the report puts forward three ways to improve the quality of education and make it more relevant to the workplace requirements: the quality and suitability of basic skills, the suitability and sustainability of teacher training, and the flexibility of curricula.

Vocational education and its relevance to the workplace represents the fastest way to youth employment. Although the programs of the Vocational Training Corporation were popular in the nineties, they experienced a drop lately. The rate of dropouts is high, vocational facilities are not well utilized because of poor quality and enrolment in the programs are low despite the expansion the government has made in providing facilities and administrative and technical staff. The decline in enrolment in vocational education comes at a time of increase in demand for technically and technologically qualified workforce. The number of students enrolled in vocational education in 2011 reached (10,000) in comparison to (13,500) students in 1999. The number of students enrolled in applied secondary education for 2011/2012 reached approximately (27,000) which equals 13% of the secondary education cycle enrolment. The target of development plans of vocational education in the nineties was to increase the percentage of enrolment in applied secondary education to 30%.

To address these imbalances related to applied secondary education, the prime minister formed a committee to review the process of general education, vocational training and higher education and scientific research in Jordan. In 2006, the committee issued 71 recommendations in 20 fields related to the Ministry of Education and the Vocational Training Corporation. The recommendations ranged from restructuring the vocational training, to adjusting the laws and addressing the low demand of females. A good proportion of these recommendations were not implemented, which explains the low demand on vocational training and the low relevance of vocational graduates' skills to the workplace requirements. Despite all the education reform efforts in the past years, the applied secondary education in particular and vocational training in general still suffer from huge problems related to quality, structure and relevance.

Setting a future comprehensive national vision for vocational education that takes into consideration all the economic and social factors is crucial to address the demand on qualified vocational and technical graduates, the growing field of technology and Jordanian youth unemployment.

The need for advanced 21st century skills is growing by the day due to factors such as the information revolution, information and communication technology, the shift from focus on teaching to the focus on learning, life-long learning beyond the borders of the classroom, education for employment, and the growing need for workplace and foundational skills. The 21st century skills that are crucial for progress include communication skills, social and cooperative skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, self-evaluation skills and self-reflection, lifelong learning skills, entrepreneurial skills, technological skills, information skills, creativity and intellectual curiosity. Education that does not cater to these needs will fail to produce youth who are capable of competing and succeeding in the workforce.

Concerning the three areas of interventions addressed in this report, a sample of Jordanians was surveyed to assess the relevance of these three aspects needed for preparing youth for the workplace in Jordan. They are general education, preparing and training teachers, and curricula. Four-hundred and thirty individuals were given the questionnaire that comprised three sections to examine their opinion regarding the most important elements of these aspects.

The scores of the surveyed sample related to the relevance of the three aspects were average in general and the same can be said about their relative importance. The medium scores were 3.35/5.00 for teacher preparation and training, 3.29/5.00 for general education, 3.23/5.00 for curricula. The relative values for each area were 67% for teacher preparation and training, 65.8% for general education and 64.6% for curricula, respectively. The respondents did not give higher value or importance for the three areas as they are in Jordan at present. There were significant differences among the four target groups surveyed. Policymakers and other interested groups gave the lowest scores to all three areas while employers and providers gave the highest scores.

There also were significant differences between the surveyed sample of males and females in the area of general education; females give higher scores to general education. As for the two other aspects (teacher preparation and curricula), the differences were insignificant.

Additionally, there were significant differences between the scores of individuals from the different regions of the country in all sections of the survey. The regions are ranked from the highest to the lowest, as follows: the South, the North, and the Middle.

Despite the low scores and rates given to all three areas, there are clear differences among them. The lowest score (2.88) was given to the ability of general education to take into consideration the needs and requirement of

disabled students to enter the workforce, while the highest score (3.79) was given to providing students with foundational language skills.

Key messages discussed:

Jordan showed a very good track record of achieving quantitative indicators related to the MDGs and EFAs; hence, the concerned parties should continue exerting effort and increase them to ensure achievement of all goals. Although the country has a long way to go to achieve quality education, with proper planning and sustained effort, the objective can be met. Jordan enjoys opportunities that can support the country to reach quality education and invest in its human resources.

To be able to achieve this, governance of the education sector should be improved. Merit-based selection of teachers, principals and other educational leaders as well as adopting measures of transparency, accountability and participation in decision making are also critical elements.

A major factor to reaching quality education is ensuring financing which, though a challenge, is accessible to Jordan through the support of donor countries and international organizations. Realignment of the national budget and achieving high internal efficiency are important factors that need to be addressed.

Quality education is one answer to overcoming the challenge of unemployment in Jordan by ensuring that the youth of Jordan are solidly equipped with the critical foundational skills and 21st century work skills.

Retention strategies of quality teachers who are the national human capital should be a major concern on Jordan's national agenda since teachers are key to achieving quality education.

Pre-service teachers' preparation and in-service training should improve and take into consideration lifelong learning and sustainability.

This report highlighting the major recommendations stemming from the review of literature, interviews and surveys, provided a set of structured key guiding questions seeking the inputs from participants in the national forum which was held on the 19th and 20th of February 2013. The participants were comprised of representatives of policymakers, executive technical officials, educational service providers including from the private sector, key beneficiaries, employers and concerned groups such as youth groups, youth social media activists, civil society organizations, NGOs, columnists and parents from various parts of the country.

During the first day, participants were divided into three groups and each group was assigned a facilitator. Each group was subsequently divided into smaller groups of 6-8 participants representing the different stakeholders. Each small

group was assigned a rapporteur and was asked to discuss the three main themes subsequently and come up with a set of priorities regarding each area of intervention. The groups came up with (9) priorities in the area of general education, (9) priorities in the area of teacher education and preparation and (8) priorities in the area of curriculum. These priorities were fixed to a previously prepared mind map. During the next day participants were asked to vote on the top (5) priorities they think are the most important. The results indicated the following (5) areas as being the top priorities:

1. Considering students' interests and talents as well as individual differences.
2. Activating accountability and incentives system.
3. Paying due attention to pre-service teacher preparation.
4. The necessity of ensuring the existence of open, flexible and qualified teachers.
5. Reconsidering Jordanian curricula so as to allow teachers to diversify teaching methods and connecting education to the real world.

The participants later on identified 10 educational achievements in Jordan they are proud of, 10 issues they are sorry about, 15 actions that should be taken to develop education for the future and 6 slogans that they felt fit to characterize the new Jordanian educational agenda. HRM Queen Rania Al Abdullah participated in the last session of the consultation.

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Twelve Educational Messages

(These may not be new messages, but have certainly become persistent)

1. Jordan has an outstanding track record of achieving quantitative indicators related to EFAs and MDGs of education, hence the concerned parties should continue exerting and increasing efforts in order to maintain the realized achievements and ensure the full achievement of all goals by 2015. Getting to the top is hard, yet staying there is even harder.
2. Jordan has a long way to go to achieve the qualitative goals of education, given especially that the international qualitative indicators have recently declined. Such a challenge, however, can be overcome and turned into an opportunity for progress by focusing on the qualitative standards in education, improving teacher preparation and training programmes, reforming the curricula and textbooks and reinforcing the school environment, to name but a few.
3. Though facing some obstacles, Jordan is capable of acquiring the necessary tools and mechanisms towards achieving the desired goal of quality education for all. Jordan has a strong visionary political leadership, the real desire to move forward is all around, the qualified human resources are, or can be readily made available. What needs to be done is known. Inasmuch as all these capabilities are put into action in line with systematic bases that are strategically linked with the human development goals, the hope will be materialized.
4. The pursuit of excellence and quality education for some is an easy task, yet achieving quality for all is a major challenge. It is therefore imperative to develop a comprehensive national strategy for education quality that is kept unchanged even with the reshuffle of ministers and officials and must be linked to a more comprehensive strategy for human resources development. Furthermore, the best human capital and competencies should be mobilized to achieve such strategy.
5. The development of governance in education is inevitable at all levels. Principles of competence, merit and eligibility must be the selection criteria for teachers, principals, directors of education directorates and educational leaders in the centre as well as in the districts. Participation in the decision-making process, transparency and accountability are the foundations that must govern the process. If such principles and foundations are observed and adopted, then education will be eventually governed by competent persons who are capable of reviving and boosting education.
6. Progress does not come for free. Funding the educational process must be increased to improve the quality of education, and that could be the biggest challenge of all. Achieving this can be difficult at a time when the country is facing the harshest financial and economic crisis, but it is not impossible.

Given the large transferable impact for any progress in education on the other sectors, realignment of spending priorities in the country, achieving high internal efficiency of the education system, making best use of resources and observing quality control are important factors that will ensure funding of education.

7. Unemployment (including actual and disguised unemployment), especially among youth, is a major challenge for Jordan. Quality education, whether general or vocational education, is one guaranteed answer to improve opportunities for youth employment. Pre-vocational education (grades 1 to 10) should ensure that all students are solidly equipped with adequate literacy and numeracy skills and high value transferable skills (i.e. creative and critical thinking and problem solving) in order to be able to meet employment requirements and survive in the rapidly changing and evolving business world.
8. Retention strategies of quality teachers who are the national treasure should be a major concern for Jordan. This can be achieved through the improvement of their salaries, working conditions and other benefits and privileges. Also, teachers themselves should exert further efforts to develop their skills and their own visions, and to co-operate and work with their colleagues to enhance education.
9. Pre-service teacher preparation and training must be improved and professional entry requirements must be enhanced. We need to promote licensing and accreditation requirements for the teaching profession. To increase the impact of teacher preparation and training programmes on the improvement of youth employment opportunities, it is imperative that these programmes should include basic components to achieve this goal, such as skills of critical and creative thinking, problem solving and life-long learning, as one who has nothing can give nothing.
10. In-service teacher training and professional development programmes must be linked to the career ladder and teachers' promotions, and should focus on the 21st century skills, knowledge economy skills, competitive values and productivity enhancement.
11. The curricula, textbooks and assessment must include modules on skills and requirements necessary for youth employment, and the focus should be on the practical and applied aspects of education when teaching and evaluating such curricula. Also, the co-curricular activities must focus on practicing and demonstrating these skills, rather than just dictating them. This may require re-examination of textbooks to make sure that the contained values do not go against the desired national trend, which is to strengthen manual and practical work and all professions at equal levels.
12. Early childhood education, especially in remote villages, rural and desert areas, is a guarantee of learning readiness which is one pillar of quality;

and a way to keep students in schools for as long as possible, not to mention that it reduces repetition and dropout rates. In addition to that, it is one of the factors to achieving equality and eliminating discrimination and inequality among different areas and segments of the society, and thus we need to promote having more kindergartens by the government.

Introduction



"Jordan's youth are its greatest asset and hope for the future. We must tap our young people's intellectual, creative, and productive potential in order for Jordan to keep up with new developments in global scientific, economic, and social sectors."

His Majesty King Abdullah II (Jordan Human Development Report 2000)

The education system in Jordan is governed by Education Act No. (3) of the year 1994 and its amendments. The Act identifies the philosophical bases and the intellectual, national, regional, human, and social principles of education in Jordan and thus the emerging general objectives of education and the educational cycles. The Act is indeed an advanced and comprehensive document of the foundations of modern education and the scientific, educational, human and high ethical principles. The law calls to uphold the prestigious status of the mind, promotes science, action and ethics, calls for rejection of all forms of intolerance, and embraces openness into universal cultures, international understanding and active participation in world civilization.²

The law defines the general objectives of education in line with the global aspirations; work requirements; adjustment to a changing world through acquiring literacy and numeracy skills needed to communicate and work; adaptation to public life affairs; understanding the natural, geographic, demographic, social and cultural environment locally and globally; openness to human cultures; informed absorption of technology, acquiring interpersonal skills to handle, produce, develop and use these technologies to serve the community; information collection, storage and production; critical thinking; adoption of scientific, research and problem solving methods; comprehension of health and self-care rules, and the investment of creativity, innovation and the spirit of proactive work.³

These particular goals were selected as they reflect the spirit of the times, the desire for progress and openness, and to raise a generation that believes in the mind and in science and possesses modern tools to obtain, search for, create and use knowledge. Therefore, if there is a problem in the education system in Jordan, it lies in the interpretation of the education philosophy and the lofty goals that are contained in the curricula and textbooks, in a contemporary manner that suits the characteristics and needs of the students. The problem also lies in the ability and readiness of teachers to transfer the content of curricula and textbooks into effective educational practices that help students acquire the required knowledge, skills and values. Lastly, it is the ability to provide a supportive educational environment to achieve the desired goals

The concept of “relevant education” has been raised on the education scene for hundreds of years and still enjoys the same amount of attention. The relevance of education and its outcomes to the labour market is nothing but one manifestation of this concept, which is certainly not the only one. However, high rates of youth unemployment and the associated deep economic, social and humanitarian problems have strongly re-focused attention on the connection between education and work. The current paper will address how to make education relevant to the requirements of youth employment in Jordan, given that youth unemployment reached unprecedented levels at (12.2%) in

² Education Act No. 3 of 1994.

³ *Ibid.*

2012; (14.9%) among females. Among the age group 15-19, it was (35.3%); (31.2%) among females. As for the age group 20-24, it was (27.8%); (44.5%)⁴ among females.

Taking into consideration the economic, social and humanitarian risks associated with youth unemployment, raising this concept at this particular time becomes very important, and it should be a top priority for planners, and national and educational policy makers. The international community has been alerted to the importance of this issue, as intense efforts have been initiated to visualize the global post-2015 educational agenda to address youth employment. The end of the Millennium Development Programme and the UNESCO Education for All by the end of 2015 is a real occasion to concentrate the international effort to visualize the method by which all efforts are made to achieve a better relevance of education to the requirements of youth employment.

The Jordanian contribution in this regard will be elaborated and visualized, as is the case in many countries, to answer four key questions. Each question represents an area of broad scope for successful intervention. These areas are:

1. Quality and relevance of basic foundational skills (literacy and numeracy) and the soundness of transferable skills (e.g.: problem solving: effective communication and information, creativity skills, etc.) acquired by students during pre-vocational education to help young people's entry into the labour market.
2. The appropriateness and sustainability of teachers' training, teachers' motivations and professional development schemes across all sectors, including the relevance of innovative teaching and learning methods taking advantage of ICTs as a teaching/learning aid tool.
3. The flexibility and the adaptability of curricular and co-curricular programmes to impart learners with 21st century and knowledge economy skills, which might encompass, but are not limited to:
 - i. Core transversal life skills (entrepreneurship, global citizenship awareness and civic participation, healthy lifestyles, environmental literacy).
 - ii. Learning and innovation skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration)
 - iii. Information, media and technology skills (ICT skills)
4. The governance and financing challenges, opportunities and prospective scenarios for the education sector in Jordan (international and national trends, public and private partnerships options).

⁴ Annual Statistical Report, Department of Statistics, 2012 (has not been published yet.)

To answer these four questions, the progress achieved nationally on EFAs and MDGs was reviewed, and the challenges impeding the Jordanian education system and the opportunities available were identified. Also, a sample of Jordanians was surveyed on the reality and the characteristics of the first three areas through personal interviews and questionnaires. To achieve an active participatory approach, four groups of partners were invited to participate in a two-day intensive discussion. The participants comprised of policymakers, decision-makers, providers (of education and training programmes), employers and beneficiaries of these programmes, and other concerned partners such as civil society organisations, parents and social activists.

For the purpose of making the methodology of this study more comprehensive and to reach the widest possible participation by using a multifaceted approach, the following was done:

1. Interviews were conducted with a number of policymakers and decision-makers, including current and former (education) ministers and current and former leaders of national educational departments and institutions working on education or whose work traverses with education to diagnose the status of education and determine what needs to be done in the future.
2. One full episode of Knights of Change; a radio youth talk show broadcasted by Jordan Radio Station every Tuesday, hosted CADER General Manager to discuss the subject of the current study '*Making Education Relevant to the Workplace.*'
3. One full episode of Free Radio Hour; a talk show broadcasted by Al-Balad private radio station, was dedicated to discuss the subject of the study. Proposals and suggestions made by youth participants in the two episodes were taken into account when preparing this study.
4. The three topics of the study (general education, teacher training, and curricula) were posted on Facebook pages of different youth groups to reach the largest youth and community groups to seek their opinions and help the team to prepare this report.
5. A special questionnaire was distributed to the participants in the consultative meeting to get their feedback and evaluation of Jordan's implementation of the key actions that were proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as part of his Global Education First Initiative.

All those inputs were summed up to finalize this report to present Jordan's participation in this broad international effort. During this activity, key topics were taken into account such as the relevance of education to 21st century skills, emergence of information and communication technologies as powerful tools in education, gender equality, environmental awareness, and the participation of disabled persons and the civil society, etc.

The Education Context of Jordan



"Indeed, education is the critical thread tying together all our hopes for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)."

United Nations Secretary-General/ Education First Report

Despite limited natural resources, Jordan has a highly competitive system of human resources capable of providing the community with life-long learning expertise relevant to the current and future needs, but many of these human resources are abroad. Jordan occupies a leading position in human development standards compared to other developing countries, especially with regard to infant mortality rates, life expectancy among men and women, fertility rates, school enrolment rates, and health indicators such as public spending on health, rates of health insurance beneficiaries, and children's immunization rates. In education, Jordan is ranked first among Arab countries with intermediate probability in achieving EFAs, and the second internationally for the same category.⁵ Also, Jordan is ranked first among Arab countries in achieving the MDGs on education according to UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report (the highest score is 1).

Education for all Jordanians is enshrined in Article 6 of the Jordanian Constitution, and Article 19 states that the communities are entitled to establish and maintain their own schools. The constitution also proclaims that primary education is compulsory and free in public schools (Article 20). Interest in education started with the early foundation of the Kingdom, as the focus in 1950's was on the quantity rather than the quality of education. However, Law of Knowledge No. 20 of 1955 clearly established a link between education and citizenship, with the general objective to build up open-minded and intellectual citizens with sound beliefs and the awareness to fulfil their duties towards God and the homeland.

In the 1960's, attention was made to improving the quality of education and linking it to the needs of the community, by enacting the Education Act No. 16 of the year 1964, which defined for the first time the education philosophy in Jordan. At the time, numbers of students significantly increased, female education improved, obtaining an intermediate diploma was set as a requirement and teachers' training institutions were established. That era also witnessed a trend towards decentralization, formation of the Education Council and the expansion of compulsory education to nine years. However, improvements on the curricula were limited and failed to meet the development requirements. There were weak links between the curricula and the needs of the community, a weak association with individual differences, and a focus on theory more than application.

Comprehensive development plans appeared in the seventies, but these plans did not reflect much on education. In 1979, the first conference for education reform was held under the title *Education in a Changing Jordanian Society*. The conference provided a comprehensive diagnosis of the education problems and set the measures necessary to reform the Jordanian education system. The real change however began in the mid-1980's with the convention of the second conference for education reform in 1987, resulting in setting out the

⁵ UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2007.

education development plan, initiating efforts to design new curricula to cope up with the reform requirements, expanding compulsory education to 10 years, developing the basic infrastructure of education, and amending the curricula of faculties of education to align universities in line with these changes.

In the nineties, new and sophisticated curricula and textbooks were designed and much interest was paid to achieve quality education and raise the efficiency of the education system and its outputs. With the beginning of the new millennium, several changes took place such as the introduction of computer education to all education cycles, teaching English from the first grade, establishment of discovery schools and King Abdullah Schools for Excellence, and the launch of Madrasati (My School) Initiative to improve school environments.

In 2002, his Majesty King Abdullah II launched the Vision Forum for the Future of Education in Jordan and called to reconsider the education system as a crucial step for Jordan to achieve its vision to become a hub for ICT and to enable Jordan to participate in the global economy through the integration of information and communication technologies tools in education, the development of human capital and lifelong learning, as well as taking advantage of ICTs to improve the economy.

In July 2003, the Jordanian government launched the Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) to reflect the royal directives, which emphasizes that the development of a high quality workforce is one of the most important priorities in the new global economy, which focuses on making comprehensive plans based on knowledge. The programme aimed at:

1. Re-orienting education policies.
2. Reorganizing education programmes and practices.
3. Improving the physical learning environments.
4. Providing a better early childhood education.
5. Reforming the school education system to enable graduate students to cope with the requirements of the knowledge society.
6. Developing and integrating critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, labour market skills, and e-learning skills in the school curricula.

ERfKE I (2003-2009) included four main components; strategies and goals of education policy in Jordan, education programmes and teaching practices, physical learning environments and early childhood education. ERfKE II (2009-2014) included four other components; establishing a school development system as a single unit, monitoring and evaluating the progress of education institutions, reforming the teaching and learning processes and developing specialized education programmes (early childhood education, special needs education, and vocational education).

In the past few years, the Ministry of Education accomplished several achievements, including promoting administrative decentralization, adopting a budget-oriented outcomes approach, reforming the education management information system, training teachers in International Computer Driving License (ICDL), connecting schools to the Internet, developing the ERfKE plan which included changing programmes and practices in order to serve the needs of the knowledge economy, improving the learning environment, opening new kindergartens and strengthening vocational education through management and curricular reform and post-graduation employment.



A number of educational projects and initiatives were implemented in the past twelve years and had positive effects on school buildings, education equipment and physical environment as well as other education inputs. However, the impact of these projects and initiatives on the quality and outputs of education still needs further study and research. For more details about these projects and initiatives, see Annex (1).

Progress in 2013: Jordan's Status on the Achievement of MDGs and EFAs



"Nothing is better than education to eliminate discrimination and achieve equality."

Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq, CADER General Manager

Jordan has made noticeable progress in the last 15 years in the different aspects of education related to achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of education, which seeks to achieve basic education for all by 2015, and in the aspects of the six Education for All goals (EFAs) launched by UNESCO, and to which Jordan is committed. ERfKE comprises the potential to address many of the education issues in Jordan that were reported in these two aspiring programmes. Generally speaking, Jordan managed by amending legislations, policies and the many different programmes that resulted from ERfKE to achieve the quantitative indicators of the education MDGs and some of the EFA goals.

First: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The Second Goal: Achieve Universal Basic Education

*Keeping the Promise and Achieving Inspirations, Second National Millennium Development Goals Report*⁶ indicates that this goal is measured by three indicators: the net enrolment rate (NER) in primary education, the survival rates of completion of grade five and literacy rates among males and females.

1. Net enrolment rates in primary education (5-16 year-olds)

Jordan achieved substantial increases in basic school NERs for boys and girls since 1990, from 86.7% to 97.6%, demonstrating that Jordan has made considerable strides in providing universal basic schooling and ensuring completion of a full course of basic education. Hence, it can be argued that this goal is in the process of being fully achieved. Table (1) lists the basic school NERs for boys and girls from 1990 until 2009.

Table (1): Basic education NERs by gender⁷

Year	Male	Female	Total	Gender parity
1990/1991	86.5	86.9	86.7	1.05
1994/1995	91.12	92.34	91.43	1.01
1999/2000	95.8	96.5	96.2	1.01
2004/2005	97.5	97.7	97.6	1.00
2007/2008	97.5	97.7	97.6	1.00
2008/2009	97.5	97.7	97.6	1.00

Table (1) clearly indicates that NERs for boys and girls are almost equal, yet there is disparity among the governorates as the 2008/2009 school year data indicates. The highest NERs were achieved in Karak, Madaba, Tafileh and Ajloun governorates, and NERs in Amman and Zarqa were close to the

⁶ Keeping the Promise and Achieving Inspirations, Second National Millennium Development Goals Report, Jordan 2010/ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation United Nations in Jordan.

⁷ *Ibid.* Source: Ministry of Education, Annual Statistical Reports 1990-2009.

national average (97.5%). Irbid, Mafrag, Jerash, Ma'an and Aqaba fell below the national average. Additionally, the gross enrolment rate in primary education in Jordan is less than the gross enrolment rate in the MENA countries and the low and moderate-income countries.⁸

2. The survival rates of completion of grade five

Jordan showed remarkable improvement in pupil retention rates, increasing from 92.2% during 1990/1991 to 99% during 2007/2008, i.e. for every 100 pupils joining first grades, 99 successfully completed the fifth grade. This indicator takes into consideration repetition and dropout rates. Hence the indicator measures only the internal efficiency of the education system and does not indicate the system's ability to reach out to all children of school age. This improvement is partially attributed to the automatic promotion policy in the first four grades. Table (2) shows a slight advantage for females regarding this indicator.

Table (2): Survival rates to grade 5 of basic education⁹

Year	Male	Female	Total	Gender parity
1990/1991	91.0	93.4	92.2	1.0
1994/1995	92.1	95.5	93.8	1.0
1999/2000	95.8	96.2	96.0	1.0
2004/2005	98.8	99.2	99.0	1.0
2007/2008	98.8	99.2	99.0	1.0

Jordan has made progress on these two indicators with regards to equal rates between males and females. As for the survival rates upon completion of grade five, Jordan has reached a rate of 100% in 2011 as compared to 95% in 1995, thus outranking the MENA countries and the low- and moderate-income countries. Jordan also outranks these two groups in the rates of males and females that finish primary education and enter secondary education.¹⁰

3. Literacy rates among males and females of the age group (15-24)

Jordan has succeeded in lowering the illiteracy rate among 15+ year-olds, as it dropped from 68% in 1961 to 17% in 1990 and to 7.8% in 2008 (11.6% for females vs. 4.3% for males), falling less than 7% in 2011. Table (3) below indicates that the illiteracy rates of the age group 15-24 has dropped to 1%¹¹, which is considered the best rate in the Arab world. This has been achieved through the compulsory education policy, low dropout rates and access to illiteracy programmes and adult education. Despite this, illiteracy is now more

⁸ USAID Jordan Fiscal Reform Project II, 2011.

⁹ Keeping the Promise and Achieving Inspirations, Second National Millennium Development Goals Report, Jordan 2010/ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, United Nations in Jordan - Source: Ministry of Education, Annual Statistical Reports 1990-2009.

¹⁰ USAID Jordan Fiscal Reform Project II, 2011.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

prevalent among females than males, and more widespread in rural than in urban areas.¹²

Table (3): Literacy rates among the 15-24 year olds¹³

Year	Male	Female	Total
1990	98.20	96.50	97.40
1995	98.61	97.45	98.03
2000	99.02	98.41	98.72
2005	98.90	99.0	99.00
2008	99.10	99.0	99.10

Despite these achievements in the literacy indicators, we need to remember that there are about 50,000 children who did not enrol in schools or dropped out in 2009, according to the UNESCO statistical report, in addition to about 35,000 children below 15 years of age who are active participants in the work force.¹⁴ This has a negative impact on the capacity of the Ministry of Education and law enforcement authorities to fully enforce the Education Law No. (3) of 1994. Under this law, the ministry is obliged to accept children in public schools, but it cannot compel parents to return their dropout children to school. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour is unable to stop the employment of children who are enrolled in the compulsory education cycles.

It is apparent that Jordan has made tangible progress on most of the quantitative indicators of education, and in this respect, the Second National MDGs Report¹⁵ indicates that Jordan's education policies have ranked Jordan high on the regional and international education map. The report adds that **the next step for Jordan is to work towards achieving quality education for all that meets the requirements of the knowledge economy.** Perhaps achieving this goal is the biggest challenge for the education system in Jordan.

¹² Source: Department of Statistics – Surveys 2008 - 1990.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ National Centre for Human Rights Report 2010.

¹⁵ Keeping the Promise and Achieving Inspirations, Second National Millennium Development Goals Report, Jordan 2010/ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, United Nations in Jordan.

Second: Education for All Goals (EFAs)

The UNESCO Education for All initiative sets six inspiring goals that countries pledged to achieve by 2015, as follows:

1. Early Childhood Care and Education
2. Universal Primary Education
3. Promoting Learning and Skills for Young People and Adults
4. Adult Literacy
5. Gender Disparities
6. Quality Education

It is clear that these goals intersect with MDG 2: Achieve Universal Basic Education and to some extent with MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women.



It must be said that quality education, especially women's education, has a positive impact on the rest of MDGs, as education empowers individuals and prepares them for work, and thus helps in the eradication of poverty. **We can say there is nothing better than education to eliminate discrimination and inequality.** Also, education increases health and sex awareness in particular, and thus gives a better understanding of the risks associated with diseases and dangerous sexual practices that can lead to AIDS. In addition to that, an educated person is more likely to participate and more capable to play a role in ensuring environmental sustainability and participate actively in the efforts to maintain development.

As for women's education, it is one of the key factors to achieving equality and empowering women. It also improves maternal and reproductive health in particular, and thus reduces infant mortality rates. Although the long-term and broad effects of women's education cannot be measured accurately, it is crucial to the progress of individuals, communities and nations.

First Goal: Early Childhood Care and Education

Early childhood education is an essential factor in improving children's literacy and numeracy skills, which is needed in later stages of education. Early childhood education is considered crucial for children coming from underprivileged, marginalized or remote areas. Pre-school education in kindergartens helps to reduce dropout and repetition rates from primary school, and improves children's opportunities to finish basic education. Hence, early childhood education is regarded as an essential component of the development components associated with ERfKE project. Although pre-school education is not compulsory, the Ministry of Education is supervising the opening and

licensing of new kindergartens. A review of the enrolment rates in kindergartens will show that the enrolment rate at this stage is 36% for children of the age group 4-6 years in 2011, compared with 29% in 1999. The Ministry of Education is making enormous efforts to open new kindergartens in remote areas in particular, with nearly equal distribution between males and females. The student/teacher ratio is 21:1, which is a reasonable ratio.¹⁶

As stated in *the EFA Regional Report for Arab States in 2011*¹⁷ and *National Report on Mid-term Assessment in 2007*¹⁸, Jordan has made considerable strides by developing the National Early Childhood Development Strategy in 2000, from which the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2013) emerged, which calls for a holistic development of childhood focusing on five key components: securing a healthy and safe environment, strengthening capability of children; protecting children in difficult circumstances; expanding the role of the media and monitoring and evaluation. The main objectives of the plan are to increase pre-school enrolment rates of 4 year-olds from 28% to 50% and of 5 year-olds from 47% to 70% by 2013. The Regional Report¹⁹ indicates that Jordan is "on track" to achieve the first goal: Early childhood care and education.²⁰

Second Goal: Universal Primary Education

Jordan's progress on the second goal has been previously explained in the section on MDGs.. However, it is important to know that the UNESCO Regional Report puts Jordan "on track to achieve this goal"²¹, with respect to universal primary education (1-6), whereas the statistics of the Ministry of Education suggest Jordan "has already achieved the goal."

Third Goal: Promoting Learning and skills for Young People and Adults

No quantitative indicators have been set to determine achievement under this goal. However, the Ministry of Education implemented several programmes in collaboration with its sponsors, which aimed at providing life skills-based education, as stated in the *National Report on Mid-term Assessment*, including:²²

1. Basic Life Skills-Based Education Programme in 2005 with UNICEF
2. School to Career Programme (2009-2014) with USAID
3. Life Skills Through Sport Programme with USAID

¹⁶ Entrepreneurship Education in the Arab States, A Joint Project between UNESCO and StratREAL Foundation, U.K.

¹⁷ EFA Regional Report for Arab States, 2011, pages 6-7 and 16-17.

¹⁸ The National Report on Mid-term Assessment, 2007.

¹⁹ EFA Regional Report for Arab States, 2011.

²⁰ EFA Regional Report ranks countries in three categories: 1) Goal already achieved when basic education GER is higher than 50%, 2) On-track when NER is above 50%, 3) Off-track.

²¹ EFA Regional Report ranks countries in three categories: 1) Goal already achieved when basic education NER is higher than 95%, 2) On-track when NER is between 85% and 95%, and 3) Off-track.

²² The National Report on Mid-term Assessment, 2007.

4. Reducing Child Labour Programme in 2004
5. Dropout Culture Programme
6. Strengthening Youth Involvement in Public Life Programme
7. Activating the Role of Student Councils and Parent Teachers Association with UNICEF

Moreover, the MoE included life skills that intersect with many aspects of vocational education in the school curricula and developed its content for education cycles as follows:

- Cycle I (1 to 4 year-olds): The focus was on building learners' sense of professional responsibility through the themes of health, nutrition, various life skills, safety and traffic awareness, vocational activities such as agriculture, industry, trade, home-economics, health and safety.
- Cycle II (5 to 7 year-olds): The focus was on business services, nursing, metal working and knitting.
- Cycle III (8 to 10 year-olds): The focus was on providing students with the opportunity to explore their interests and abilities and to help them choose a future career, by focusing on themes like agriculture, industry, trade, home economics, health and safety. Hence, the verification of the achievement under this goal requires analysing the content of the textbooks to make sure it includes the required skills on one hand, and identifying the teaching methods used as well as the co-curricular activities on the other hand, to ensure that teachers effectively teach these skills and are reasonably trained on them.

Finally, the MoE reviewed the policies of secondary and vocational education to prepare students to follow two tracks in secondary education: the secondary academic track and the secondary applied track. The general framework for the secondary applied track, following the general guidelines of the Education Reform Plan²³ approved by the Council of Ministers in early 2013, was limited to four specializations rather than the nine earlier ones in order to improve the employment opportunities of graduates. The dilemma of vocational education in Jordan will be addressed later in the challenges and opportunities section.

Fourth Goal: Adult Literacy

*The National Report on Mid-term Assessment*²⁴ stated that Jordan developed a literacy programme for beginners to mainstream education so as to reduce the illiteracy rate between 5%-10% per year to reach 5% or less by 2015. The Educational System implemented non-formal education programmes, including the academic track, through which multiple programmes are provided such as the follow-up programme, the evening programme, the home-study programme, and the summer programme, as well as the vocational track through which the ministry offers vocational courses.

²³The National Report on Mid-term Assessment, 2007.

²⁴*Ibid.*

In this regard, Jordan implemented the following programmes:

- Community Learning Centres Project
- National Strategy for Promoting Non-formal Education Programmes in Jordan based on the diagnosis and evaluation of the current programmes and learners' needs.
- Non-Formal Education Management Information System (EMIS - NFE)
- Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) in 2006

The current adult illiteracy rates are used to determine the achievement under this goal. The available numbers show that this rate is still relatively high especially among females, and there has been little improvement in the last five years.²⁵ Hence the EFAs regional report for 2011 classifies Jordan "on track" to achieve it.²⁶ Given that progress in this area is built on the basis of reducing the adult illiteracy rate to half of what it was during the Dakar Conference in 2000 and the fact that Jordan did not provide information about adult illiteracy for that year, it was not possible to verify the progress for this standard.

Fifth Goal: Gender Disparities

The Ministry of Education is working on achieving gender equality by 2015 through providing equal learning opportunities for both males and females. Yet, Jordan has not been able to achieve full equality in all stages of education in spite of the amendments to numerous social and economic policies, incentives to reduce dropout rates among girls, scholarships, health and nutrition programmes, and empowerment and integration of women in the workforce. The *National Report on Mid-term Assessment* states that Jordan achieved gender equality in primary education, but as for secondary education, the country is on its way to achieving this.²⁷ The Ministry of Education developed tools for the analysis of gender sensitivity in textbooks for grades 1, 4, 8 and 10, in order to include topics into the curricula to ensure an equal portrayal of women. Also, there is a clear disparity between males and females in vocational education. Thus, Jordan is classified as "on track" to achieve this goal²⁸. On the other hand, the trends in TIMSS results in 2007 showed that Jordanian females outperformed males.²⁹

²⁵ Global Monitoring Report, 2012.

²⁶ EFA Regional Report ranks countries in three categories: 1) Goal already achieved if current adult illiteracy rate is half what it was before Dakar conference, 2) On-track when parity indicator will be within level by 2012, and 3) Off-track.

²⁷ The National Report on Mid-term Assessment, 2007.

²⁸ EFA Regional Report ranks countries in three categories: 1) Goal already achieved when gender parity is within the parity scope in GER in basic and secondary education 2) On-track when parity indicator will be within the scope by 2015, and 3) Off-track.

²⁹ EFA Regional Report 2011, page 29.

Sixth Goal: Quality Education

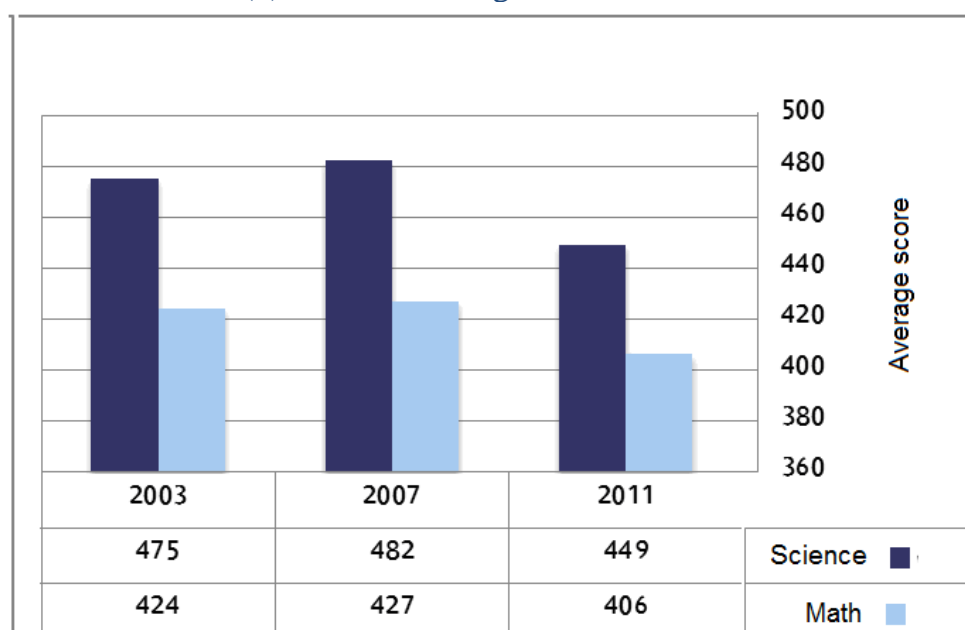
The main indicator on the achievement of this goal is based on the results of countries in the TIMSS in science and mathematics in 2007 and on two other sub indicators, the repetition rate and the dropout rate in all grades, as they both indicate the internal efficiency of the education system.

Measuring the progress made in achieving the sixth goal is not as easy as measuring the progress in achieving the other goals. The countries' participation in the TIMSS and PISA gives some indicators on the progress made. The TIMSS results are regarded as indicators on monitoring the improvement or the decline of students' performance in science and mathematics, given that the TIMSS measures science and mathematics skills in three areas: knowledge, application and induction. The following table shows the results of Jordanian students in the last three exams for the years 2003, 2007, and 2011.³⁰

Table (4): TIMSS results for 8th grade students

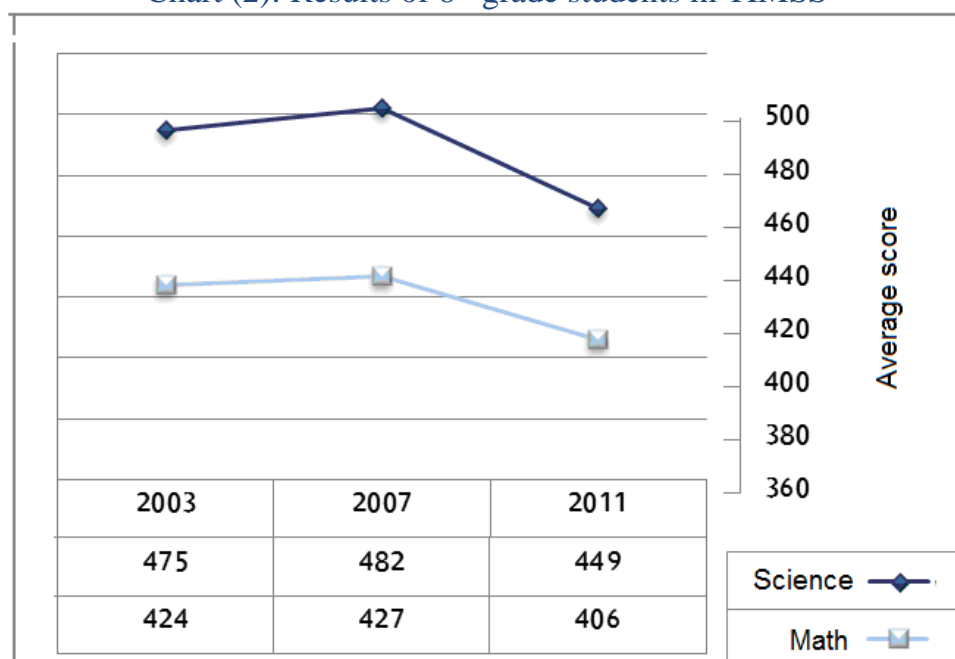
Year	Subject	International average	Female	Male	Total score	International rank	Regional rank
2011	Science	500	471	428	449	28/56	3/13
	Math	500	420	392	406	35/56	5/13
2007	Science	500	499	466	482	20/48	1/12
	Math	500	438	417	427	31/48	2/12
2003	Science	466	489	462	475	25/45	1/10
	Math	473	438	411	424	32/45	2/10

Chart (1): Results of 8th grade students in TIMSS



³⁰ TIMSS results are measured from 0 to 1000, with a medium score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100.

Chart (2): Results of 8th grade students in TIMSS



The results of students in the TIMSS for the year 2011 in science decreased from 2007 by 33 points and from 2003 by 26 points. As for the students' results in mathematics, they also decreased from 2007 to 2011 by 21 points and from 2003 to 2011 by 18 points.

The results of females in 2011 were higher than the results of males by 43 points. The results of students in mathematics decreased from 2007 to 2011 by 21 points and from 2003 to 2011 by 18 points. Also, the rank of Jordan in the two subjects among the Arab countries dropped, which indicates a decrease in the level of the students' skills.

The PISA focuses on measuring the extent of acquisition of basic skills in mathematics, science and literacy for 15 year-old students, and does not depend significantly on the mastery of the school curricula. It focuses on understanding the principles, mastering the skills and the ability to employ them. Table (5) shows the results of Jordanian students in PISA for the years 2006 and 2009.

Table (5): PISA results³¹

Year	Subject	Average	International average	International rank	Regional rank
2009	Reading	405	493		
	Mathematics	387	496	55/65	2/4
	Science	415	502		
2006	Reading	401	460		
	Mathematics	384	469	47/57	1/3
	Science	422	473		

³¹ Final score is out of 500, with a standard deviation of 100. Source: www.oecd.org/pisa

Chart (3): PISA results

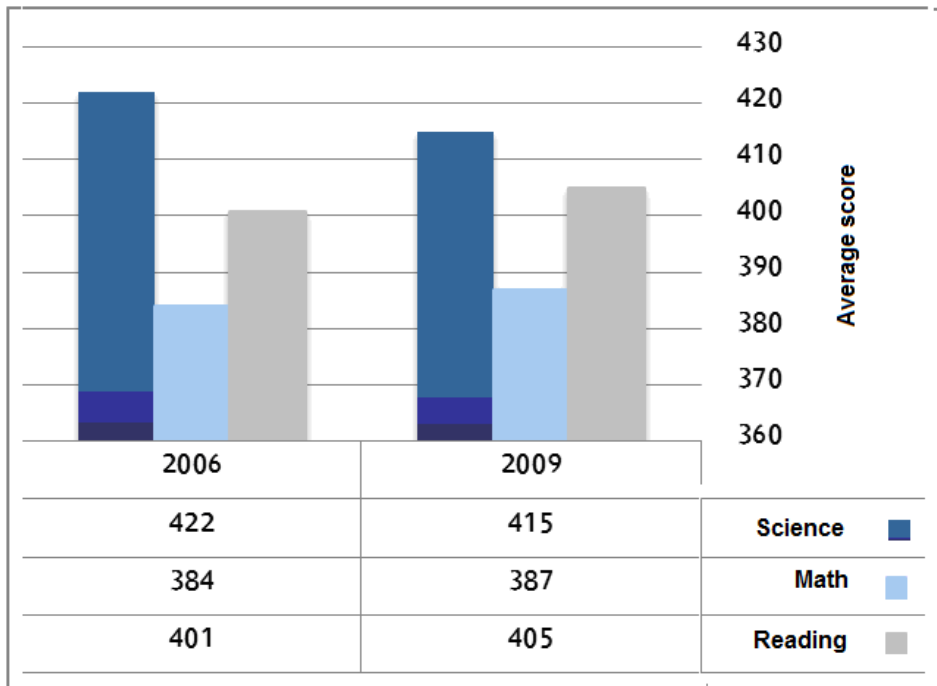
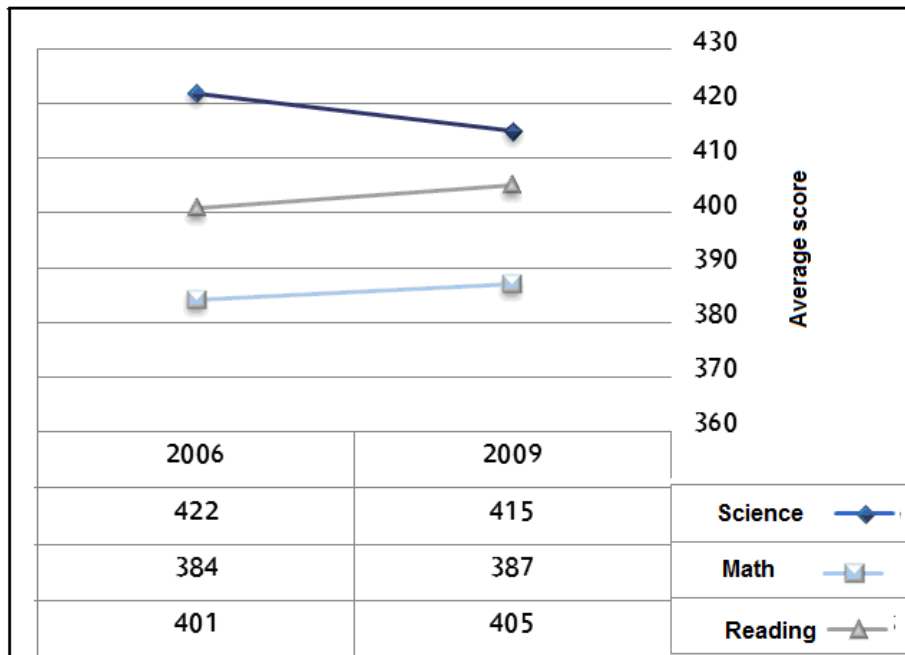


Chart (4): PISA results



The PISA results show a clear decrease in the averages for reading, mathematics and science compared to international averages while showing a slight drop by 6 points in science between 2009 and 2006 and an improvement by 4 and 3 points in the same two years in reading and mathematics, respectively. Also, the rank of Jordan among four Arab countries fell back to second in 2009 although it was first in 2006.

In light of this, Jordan was classified as "on track to achieve the goal" with respect to science, and off-track with respect to mathematics.³²

Relating to the indicators of repetition and dropouts, the progress made is not at the required level. The repetition rate reached 0.7% in 1999 and dropped to 0.5% only in 2010. The percentage for the dropout indicator for the year 2010 could not be accessed in order to evaluate the progress made compared to 1999 percentages of 3.5% for males and females and 3.6% for just females. Table (6) summarizes the classification of Jordan in relation to the achievement of EFA goals.

Table (6): The classification results of Jordan on the achievement of EFA goals³³

Goal	Status		Off track
	Achieved	On track	
1. Early Childhood Care and Education		√	
2. Universal Primary Education		√	
3. Promoting Learning and Skills for Young People and Adults	-	-	-
4. Adult Literacy			√
5. Gender Disparities		√	
6. Quality Education			
- Science		√	
- Mathematics			√

³² Countries in this regard are divided to three categories: 1) Goal already achieved if TIMSS results are above international average score, 2) On track when results of half or more than half students are above international average score, 3) Off-track. Source: EFA Regional Report.

³³ Source: EFA Regional Report.

Challenges and Opportunities



"The principal goal of education in the schools should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done."

Jean Piaget

I. The Challenges

This report does not aim at addressing all of the challenges impeding the education system in Jordan. It mainly focuses on the key challenges related to the relevance of education in Jordan to the workplace, including poverty, unemployment, governance, quality education, teacher training, funding and vocational education.

Jordan is a developing country with a population of 6.4 million³⁴, of which 70% is youth and children. It has a small, resource-poor economy with little arable land (only 10% of the total area)³⁵. Although it has large amounts of phosphate and potash, it has no oil deposits, gas or water resources, which makes it one of the most dependent Arab economies on foreign aid and grants, which has reflected negatively on the economy and the living standards of citizens. Jordan was considerably affected by the global financial and economic crisis in recent years. The GDP growth slowed down to 2.3% in 2010, compared to 8.2% in 2007, and has not recovered or returned to pre-crisis levels. The current growth rates and increasing indebtedness are impeding job creation in the Jordanian labour market, which sees about 60,000 new entrants every year.³⁶ The key challenges are poverty, unemployment, population growth and limited resources.

1. The Challenge of Poverty

Poverty is one of the biggest challenges impeding not only education, but also socio-economic development as a whole, as the poor are more likely to withdraw their children from schools, rarely send their children to kindergarten, and are more likely to fail to complete basic and secondary education. International studies suggest that poverty is linked to low performance at school.



A recent study issued by the Department of Statistics found that poverty rates rose over the past few years and reached up to 14.4% in 2010, compared to 13.3% in 2008.³⁷ Despite all the efforts made in the last ten years to address this challenge, poverty rates have not decreased significantly.

³⁴ Department of Statistics: <http://www.dos.gov.jo>

³⁵ Jordan's Economic Prospects and Challenges by Dr. Donald R. Snodgrass, Weidemann Associates, 2010.

³⁶ World Economic Forum, Global Competitiveness Report 2012 - 2013, page 36.

³⁷ Department of Statistics: <http://www.dos.gov.jo>

2. The Challenge of Unemployment

Unemployment rates increased in the last five years to reach up to 12.2% according to the latest report issued by the Department of Statistics in November 2012³⁸ among the workforce over the age of 15 years. However, the unemployment rate is much higher among youth (see page 2 of the introduction) and among females.

The dependence of the labour market on foreign labour aggravates unemployment, as 25% of the labour force in Jordan is comprised of migrant or foreign workers.³⁹ This situation puts political and social pressures on the efforts to increase Jordanian productivity and economic diversification.⁴⁰ Statistics from the Ministry of Higher Education show that there were 71,502 university graduates in Jordan in 2011, and this number will rise to 90,000 graduates in 2015. Although many graduates have certificates that meet the requirements of the jobs they apply for, they lack work skills that help them secure a job, as well as vocational skills as a World Bank report stated in 2008.⁴¹ This situation would exacerbate the unemployment challenge in the short and medium term, which will clearly affect education as many unemployed parents will withdraw their children from school and push them into working or begging to support their families in need, especially since unemployment is directly linked with poverty. The social consequences of unemployment such as community violence, high rates of crime and delinquency also have a negative impact on both society and education.

3. The Challenge of Relevance of Education to the Workplace

There is little or no balance between the outputs of the education system and the needs of the Jordanian development plans for trained manpower. There is a weak link between education and vocational training on one hand, and the labour market and the local community on the other hand, as schools and training centres operate largely in isolation from the surrounding environments. Education and training curricula and teaching methods lack practical application and field training on work skills, and thinking and creativity skills, as they give more prominence to rote learning. The content is still information-based rather than knowledge-application based; that is, it concentrates on learning facts and information rather than developing entrepreneurship and problem solving skills.

The *Arab Human Capital Challenge* report states that there is a competence crisis and skills gap, and that education does not match with market requirements. "In the Arab World, we often hire expats for higher management with global experience - as there tends to be a shortage of nationals at this

³⁸ Interviews conducted by Dr. Touq with senior officials.

³⁹ www.dos.gov.jo

⁴⁰ Transforming Education: The Power of ICT Policies, UNESCO, 2011, page 96.

⁴¹ The Road not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and Africa, World Bank, 2008.

level," said a former Royal Jordanian CEO.⁴² The report also includes strong reservations among employers regarding the general quality of teachers and the education system, indicating that teachers' weak teaching capacities and attainment levels have led to the uneven quality of education among learners.

The report points out that there is an urgent need to bridge the skills gap, as the curricula is based on theoretical education rather than practical knowledge. The report also points to the negative perceptions associated with certain technical and vocational professions deemed socially inferior and unacceptable. This has resulted in many nationals tending to refrain from participating in related vocational and technical education and training. Instead, they choose to study disciplines that do not necessarily hold direct relevance or add value to the "growth sectors" of the economy.⁴³

In his "Knowledge Economy and Education Reform in the MENA Countries"⁴⁴ report, Kirchberger says that education and vocational training is centralised; decisions regarding the structure and content of the educational and training systems are made centrally, with very little, if any, real autonomy for schools.

According to *Jordan's National Competitiveness Report* in 2009, the key challenges in Jordan are⁴⁵:

- Improving links between the education system and market requirements.
- Exploring new markets to reduce the impact of the financial crisis on exports.
- Gearing development projects towards sectors that create more jobs.
- Fostering tax systems to promote economic growth.
- Addressing the negative effects of political instability in the region.

4. The Challenge of Governance

Governance is one of the challenges impeding education in Jordan, as it is related to the selection and appointment of directors of education directorates, educational leaders and school principals. It is also related to privileges, training opportunities, scholarships, rewards and promotions. A senior Jordanian official says that most of these issues are based on favouritism and nepotism, rather than merit, performance, accountability and transparency, leading unqualified persons to assume policymaking and decision-making posts.⁴⁶ Incentives for individuals and institutions are still weak as teachers and trainers are government bureaucrats who do not consider promotions as a great incentive because promotions are essentially related to seniority rather than

⁴² Arab Human Capital Challenge, page 15.

⁴³ *Ibid.* page 32.

⁴⁴ The Knowledge Economy and Education Reform in the MENA Countries: Selected Examples by Andre Kirchberger.

⁴⁵ Jordan's National Competitiveness Report 2008 - 2009: "Entering a New Era of Global Competitiveness."

⁴⁶ Interviews conducted by Dr. Touq with some senior Jordanian officials.

good performance. Although there are qualified teachers with great competencies, such competencies are not used as performance indicators to inspire teachers to be creative and exert effort due to the lack of real measurements of quality.

Also, participation in decision-making on the part of the Ministry of Education, the directorates of education, the schools, the parents and the community as a whole is at its lowest. This is in conflict with a key element of good governance, which is the involvement of individuals from different areas in the decision-making process as they are more knowledgeable and more aware of the needs of their areas. There are 42 directorates of education in Jordan, yet the key issues such as the curricula, textbooks and examinations are still highly centralised.

5. The Challenge of Financing⁴⁷

The Jordan Fiscal Reform Project II Report issued by USAID in early 2012 points out that Jordan's government expenditure on education for the year 2011 reached 13% of the public spending, whereas the percentage allocated for education out of the state budget was 12.7% for the same year, which is a low percentage compared to 18-20% allocated to education by the MENA countries. Approximately 3.8% of the gross national income (GNI) was spent on education, which is less than the international average of 4.6% and less than the percentage of 5% set by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Strikingly, 92% of the total education budget is spent on wages, salaries, allowances and bonuses, and the overall expenditure on the quality of education is insignificant. Despite the fact that growth in education expenditure grew 170% in the last ten years compared to 164% of the total budget, Jordan spent an amount equal to 13% of per capita income for each primary school student. This is significantly less than the OECD rate of 20% and represents a modest decline from Jordan's 13.7% level. Furthermore, in 2011 Jordan spent an amount equal to 17% of per capita income per secondary student (up from 15.8% in 1999), while OECD countries spent roughly 24% of their significantly higher GDP per capita.

Unfortunately, these expenditure increases in education and in secondary education per capita income in the last ten years did not have a positive impact on the quality of education in Jordan when measured by the three basic criteria that the current report has dealt with, being the international comparison tests index, the national assessment tests index and the state of knowledge index. The important question in this case is: Is it possible to increase spending on education as a percentage of GNI and as a percentage of the budget, taking into account Jordan's difficult financial and economic situation? Should the national budget be realigned to allocate a higher proportion to educational spending at

⁴⁷ Jordan Fiscal Reform Project II: Jordan Public Expenditure Report.

the expense of other vital sectors? Does the solution lie in increasing productivity and the internal and external efficiency of the education system?

6. Other challenges

Finally, addressing the challenges cannot be fully completed without reference to two key issues: environmental awareness and the education of the gifted and persons with disabilities.

Jordan has made significant progress in respect to environmental awareness and has developed a national strategy for environmental education, awareness and communication since 1999, which stipulates in one of its axes the importance of reforming the curricula content to promote a sense of responsibility and awareness to build links among education, environmental awareness and sustainable development.⁴⁸ Jordan however still faces many environmental challenges resulting mainly from its limited natural resources, the effects of the global financial crisis on the available resources, the political factors that led to the influx of refugees and the lack of environmental awareness in general.⁴⁹ The National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) Report documents several environmental violations, such as plant emissions, handicraft facilities, vehicle exhaust emissions, solid waste dumped at wrong places, water source pollution, hospital waste and other issues⁵⁰, and calls for raising community awareness on these risks and activating the role of schools and education institutions.

Public education focuses on the talented and the gifted education and the education of persons with disabilities, as the number of students enrolled in the Ministry of Education Gifted Education Programmes in the academic year 2009/2010 was 4,454, mostly in the 2,510 entrepreneurial centres, in addition to 694 students benefiting from the Academic Acceleration Programme. The number of full-time administrators and teachers working in these programmes reached 510, including 32 supervisors on the resources rooms.⁵¹ The Jubilee School, founded in 1985, is one of the leading facilities in this area.

The *Disability Status in Jordan: Employment and Unemployment Report*, which was funded by the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities in collaboration with the Department of Statistics, indicated that the percentage of persons with disabilities in Jordan is 2% of which 16.1% are employed, 1.7% are unemployed, and 82.2% are economically inactive⁵², posing a great economic challenge on the state. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2007 states that relevant stakeholders, each according to

⁴⁸ Draft Project for the Preparation of a National Strategy for Environmental Education, Awareness and Communication - UNDP 1999.

⁴⁹ Keeping the Promise and Achieving Inspirations, Second National Millennium Development Goals Report, Jordan 2010/ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, United Nations in Jordan, page 99-100.

⁵⁰ National Centre for Human Rights, 2010. "Human Rights Situation in Jordan."

⁵¹ Jarwan, 2009. "Assessment of the Gifted Education - ERFKE II Implementation Plan.

⁵² <http://hcd.gov.io>

their competence, must safeguard the rights and services of persons with disabilities enshrined in the provisions of the law in nine areas, including health, education and higher education, vocational training and work, social life and institutional care, environmental facilities and others⁵³, by employing, training and following up on the persons with disabilities to increase the employment percentage to 4%. Though the law calls for the integration of persons with disabilities into the community, one of the biggest challenges facing Jordan is the active planning to integrate those who have not benefited from the standardized curricula. To add to this, the infrastructure of most schools does not take into consideration the physical condition of the persons with disabilities. Other key challenges include poor technical expertise, poor financial resources and the absence of strategic frameworks.⁵⁴ Decision-makers must provide more job opportunities for persons with disabilities to integrate them into the community to reduce the economic, social and humanitarian challenges, as well as initiating more programmes in cooperation with the relevant bodies for the integration of the persons with disabilities in education.⁵⁵

⁵³ Persons with Disabilities Law, 2007.

⁵⁴ Children in Jordan: Situation Analysis 2006-2007- UNICEF page 42.

⁵⁵ Keeping the promise and Achieving Inspirations, Second National Millennium Development Goals Report, Jordan 2010/ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, United Nations in Jordan, page 39.

II. The Opportunities

The visionary political leadership of the country is one of the key opportunities for Jordan, as HRM King Abdullah II has a modern vision on education, is open to the world, well-informed on the latest global trends, and is keen to emulate those successful experiences in Jordan. His Majesty King Abdullah II's vision for Jordan to become a hub for information and communications technology and e-commerce in the region was the motivation and incentive to launch the Education Reform for Knowledge Economy Programme (ERfKE), to reform the educational system in Jordan to meet the local, regional and international needs and to create sustainable economic development through Jordan's educated learners and well-trained and qualified human capital who are capable to effectively participate in the knowledge economy locally, regionally and globally.

His Majesty also launched the Vision Forum for the Future of Education, which strongly supported taking advantage of information and communications technologies. Furthermore, His Majesty launched the Jordan Education Initiative during the World Economic Forum held at the Dead Sea in 2003, in order to reform the education system by taking advantage of ICTs in the education sector. In addition to that, several other initiatives were launched, such as e-Learning, Computerization of Schools, Curricula and Laboratories, Schoolbags and others.⁵⁶ In 2006, this commitment was renewed by His Majesty's issuance of the Jordan National Agenda. This directive has helped government efforts to promulgate a policy and investment environment that promotes and nurtures strong public and private sector partnerships.⁵⁷

Her Majesty Queen Rania Abdullah's initiatives in education reform are well-established examples and models of what can be achieved when national, regional and international efforts are combined together. Such initiatives include Queen Rania's Teachers Award and Principals Award, Training Academy, Madrasati (My School), Jordan Education Initiative and Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship.

According to a World Bank report, Jordan invested in its education system and human resource development with the focus on a technology-empowered society, and Jordan's education system ranked among the best systems in the region with regards to access, equity, efficiency and quality.⁵⁸ Also, Jordan has outstanding internal and national educational experiences that achieved remarkable results in the private sector. It is necessary to take advantage of them and achieve a form of twinning between leading schools and less fortunate schools as a sort of social responsibility. The private sector is characterized by its readiness and desire to cooperate and participate with the

⁵⁶ King Abdullah Official Website <http://www.kingabdullah.jo>

⁵⁷ Transforming Education: The Power of ICT Policies. page 94.

⁵⁸ The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa, World Bank, 2008.

public sector and has the ability to finance and support it, so as Jordan can demonstrate a successful model of public and private sector partnerships.

Jordan is distinguished for its human capital that is well-trained, qualified and productive if deployed in the right place and given the right opportunity, provided that governance should be based on merit and competence. It is known that Jordan exports competencies more than any other single Arab country, particularly to the Gulf states, and unfortunately the economic and financial situation in addition to employment opportunities push this human capital to immigrate. A former Minister of Education reported that about 1,000 to 1,500 of the finest Jordanian teachers immigrate annually to the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia in particular. Such teachers must be retained and immigrant teachers must be relocated in the south through better working conditions and salaries, as they are considered a real opportunity for education reform.

What needs to be done with respect to education reform is clear and international development models are available, providing real opportunities for Jordan and other countries. There is a national strategy and lessons learned that can be applied and implemented for Jordan's advancement. What is required is to transfer policies and plans into effective practices on the ground that bridge the gap between theory and practice. This may seem difficult at first glance but it is not impossible.

Opportunity also lies in improving vocational education in general since there is a need for qualified persons. What needs to be done in this respect is also clear, the strategies are known and the private sector is ready as external financing is also easy to access. To add to this, there are successful experiences in this field that can be easily understood and replicated.

Moreover, the international community represented by international organisations and donor countries are ready to support Jordan and it is important to make the best use of this readiness and to direct the financing to high priority projects that should be supervised and implemented. Lessons learned must be put to use and shared. All foreign aid in the form of grants and soft loans from various donor countries between the years 2007 to 2011 totaled 5.059 billion USD.⁵⁹

In addition, entering the knowledge society is one of the highest priorities of Jordan. The knowledge economy indicator for Jordan was the highest among all the other Arab countries.⁶⁰ To capitalize on these opportunities, a comprehensive tri-axes national strategy was developed with the support of His Majesty King Abdullah. This comprehensive programme targets all necessary aspects of a knowledge society and public-private partnership.⁶¹ Jordan has the highest enrolment rates in the Middle East; in addition, illiteracy rates are also

⁵⁹ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation Website <http://www.mop.gov.jo>

⁶⁰ Knowledge Economies in The MENA: Toward New Development Strategies, WB 2003 page 20.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, page 57.

relatively low. Universal primary education and gender equality at all levels of education including higher education has been achieved.⁶²

Transforming Education: the Power of ICT Policies Report⁶³ gives a summary of strengths and opportunities associated with the human capital as follows:

1. Strong leadership and vision
2. Clear national strategy
3. Multiple initiatives on various topics
4. Young and highly qualified population
5. Sufficient school enrolment
6. Availability of funds for education
7. Concentration of trainings on youth
8. Teacher trainings
9. Integration of ICT into existing programmes and curricula
10. Leveraging broadband infrastructure to provide access to knowledge resources to increase competitiveness.

All of these opportunities are available for Jordan and must be seized properly.

⁶² Global Competitiveness Report page100.

⁶³ Transforming Education: the Power of ICT Policies page 99.

Quality Education: Challenges and Hopes



"Students cannot be life-long learners and work effectively within a team if their teachers do not have the same qualities."

Michael Fullan

The quality of education is strongly associated with the human resources available to lead the educational process such as teachers, principals, supervisors and other experts. Teachers within this category are considered the most important element in improving education and its quality. Therefore, teacher preparation, teacher selection and appointment methods, in-service preparation and training programmes, and incentives and bonuses are all key factors impacting the effectiveness and quality of education. Hence it is said that an education system cannot outperform its teachers. Needless to say that there are also other important factors that influence the quality of education such as curricula, textbooks, teaching tools and materials, school buildings and supportive principals. However, all of these factors will fail to achieve the desired results if there are no qualified teachers who are productive and committed to self-development, work improvement and work ethics and standards.

In this context, the knowledge obtained by teachers is unquestionably significant. More importantly, teachers should have the skills to transfer this knowledge into learning experiences that enable students to attain the desired objectives on one hand. On the other hand, teachers should have positive values and attitudes towards themselves, their students, schools and colleagues to be able to work collaboratively at school within an integrated, comprehensive and dynamic school environment. Though some countries spend the same amount of money on education, they end up with completely different outcomes depending on the quality of teachers.

Perhaps it was this reason that led to considering teachers' preparation and training programmes and teachers' incentives as one of the main pillars of the future education agenda. Education is one key for the progress of individuals, the sustainable development of peoples and communities, competitiveness, security and prosperity of nations, as well as being the best way to bridge the gap among community groups, eliminate discrimination, achieve equality and thus, build civil and peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding among peoples and civilizations. All of this cannot be achieved without great teachers and quality education.

Generally speaking, poor education has devastating social, economic and human consequences in the long run. Ironically, many countries spend as much as 15 times more than they spend on education, while the slight increase in spending on education can improve health by raising the awareness of individuals on wellness skills, proper nutrition, and useful healthy habits, thereby reducing the long-term need for exorbitant expenditure on health. It is the same case with regard to expenditure on female education, which improves reproductive health and infant health, and thus leads to positive benefits in the long run. Education and the quality of education is one of the three most important factors that distinguish the best 15 countries from the worst 15 countries in the development levels and quality of life. The other two factors are the quality of governance and the empowerment of civil society.

Over the past 30 years there has been an increase in the number of research studies on education competencies, the identification of the effective education factors and the various methods of classification. Despite the fact that education research during the past twenty years has added little, these factors have been turned into new proven models through different experiences and have international unanimity. Generally, education competencies can be categorized as follows:

- Intellectual Competencies
- Pedagogical Competencies
- Communication and Interpersonal Competencies
- Ethical and Professional Competencies
- Cultural, Communal and Social Competencies

A key education principle is that **the essence of classroom education must trigger and ignite learners' desire to learn, acquire learning skills and promote the natural fluidity and flow of lifelong learning.** A teacher who can bring this kind of learning, which is qualitative in nature, is a teacher who can:

1. Understand the dual role of teaching and learning.
2. Use different and flexible ways of working.
3. Create an inspiring and motivating learning environment.
4. Use constructive and supportive assessment methods.
5. Seek coordinated management practices oriented toward student development.
6. Develop a personal vision and a commitment to self-growth and professional advancement.
7. Experiment and adapt to diverse classroom situations.
8. Use ICT efficiently.

The teacher being discussed can only acquire these skills or characteristics through a professional development approach based on a collective participation of all the human capital involved in the planning, implementation, revision and evaluation of their professional development programmes. The approach should include the school as a whole and turn it into a community of learning and practice. Thus, the research in professional development programmes must answer the following questions;

1. How can teachers be engaged and motivated in sustainable development programmes?
2. What are the best practices and models of in-service training, and performance improvement?
3. How can schools be turned into communities of practice, and what skills are needed to achieve this?

Although there are no definitive answers to these questions, but the answers, if any, must come from the real needs of teachers based on conscious

contemplation and real analysis. Previous experiences in this area indicate that there are some practices that helped reach useful answers to the previous questions. These practices include:

1. Building a common vision in schools.
2. Developing a school strategic plan based on vision.
3. Developing participatory leadership.
4. Identifying and prioritizing objectives.
5. Improving communication and interpersonal skills.
6. Involving parents and the community.



A study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on teacher training showed that networking among teachers, mentoring and collaborative work as practices of professional development had the greatest impact on teachers. The study also showed that what teachers in OECD countries wanted, was more successful models, collaborative work, mentoring and collegial support, and less workshops and trainings.⁶⁴ Paradoxically, most of the professional development programmes are based on workshops and trainings.

Addressing quality in education cannot be complete without reference to the results of Jordanian students in international comparison tests, particularly TIMSS and PISA, as well as Jordan's status in the Arab Knowledge Reports.

The TIMSS and PISA results have already been addressed in the discussion of quality education as one goal of the EFA initiative. The following section will discuss mainly the status of Jordan in the recent Arab Knowledge Report.

The Arab Knowledge Report 2010-2011: Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society⁶⁵ includes a summary of the results of a case study on Jordan about the readiness of youths to access the knowledge society. The study measured the acquisition of cognitive, affective and social skills by a sample of students who completed eleventh grade in Amman (age group 17-18). The following table shows the findings in details:

⁶⁴WISE Conference presentations, Qatar 2012.

⁶⁵ Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011: Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society.

Table (7): Study results: skills averages for the total sample (males and females) maximum score of values is 25⁶⁶

Cognitive skills	Information searching	10	-Widest gap and general weakness among youth -a common weakness among the different skills with a disparity among them
	Problem solving	6.56	
	Use of technology	12.1	
	Written communication	5.38	
Affective skills	Self-esteem	20.71	-Acceptable, with a gap in future planning skill
	Learning motivation	19.24	
	Future planning	5.03	
Social skills	Communication with others	17.58	-Top skills with a disparity among skills and among students in the same category
	Team work	15.36	
	Participation in public life	14.01	

With regard to the results of the four cognitive skills, the scores ranged from 5.38 to 12.1 out of the highest score of 25. The lowest scores were in written communication at only about 20% of the maximum score.

The results of affective skills were better, ranging from 5.03 to 20.71, with the future planning scoring the lowest at 5.03. Results of social skills were overall the best, as the results of the three social skills ranged from 14.01 to 17.58.

Based on the Readiness indicator adopted in the report, two thirds of the sample students occur at the beginning level of the scale, and none of them occur at the full readiness level of the scale in terms of the cognitive skills. It is noted that 24% of the sample students fall at the “not ready” level, which means that the vast majority of students (90%) do not possess the cognitive skills to access the knowledge economy.



The report also demonstrates that the students' scores on the aggregate values are much better than the scores on aggregate skills. Based on the report, Jordan has a true desire to move towards the knowledge society, which is evident in its achievements. It is able to move in this direction, especially as it has qualified human resources. However, the report shows that there are some material and legislative

⁶⁶ Source: Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011: Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society.

obstacles that prevent access to the knowledge society. Jordan is able to acquire the necessary mechanisms to achieve its goals if it adheres to the methodologies related to the human development goals. If we exclude the financial aspect, it can be said that all the requirements of preparing the next generation are generally available.

In 2003, the UNDP issued its Arab Human Development Report: Building a Knowledge Society, which points to the poor diffusion and production of knowledge in the Arab countries, despite the presence of significant human capital that, under more promising conditions, could offer a substantial base for an Arab knowledge renaissance. The Arab countries have low rates of educational attainment, particularly in languages, science and mathematics, as indicated by studies conducted and documented in the report. Three Arab countries, in addition to 38 other countries, took part in the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 1999. Jordan was ranked 32nd out of 41 in mathematics and 30th out of 41 in science.⁶⁷ Indicators of the number of patents in Arab countries, including Jordan, confirm the lack of research and development activity, which lags far behind that of developed countries and other countries of the developing world.⁶⁸

On the empowerment of women, the report states in the gender equality section for the year 2001 that the percentage of women's participation in higher education is 40%⁶⁹, which is relatively high compared to the percentage scored by other countries such as Eastern Europe and South Asia, which did not exceed 20% in terms of women's enrolment in higher education. As for female employment, the participation rate in Jordan does not exceed 14%, which is very low compared to women's participation rate in higher education. This demonstrates that Jordan has a good record in gender equality in education but not in employment due to customs and traditions that deny women's access to the labour market, according to the report.⁷⁰

Another factor associated with quality is the improvement of the student-teacher ratio, as it is universally recognized as a contributing factor in improving quality if other factors are found equal. According to the Fiscal Reform Project II, the student-teacher ratio in Jordan generally ranges from 1:16 to 1:18, which is higher than the 1:25 ratio scored by the MENA countries and the low and moderate-income countries.⁷¹ The decline in this ratio in Jordan is attributed to the large number of schools with very low numbers of students, whereas schools in major cities are noticeably overcrowded with 40 to 60 students per class in some cases. This prompted the Ministry of Education to address this clear imbalance in its new education plan reform⁷², as this phenomenon contributes significantly to the low efficiency of the education

⁶⁷ UNDP Arab Human Development Report – Building a Knowledge Society, 2003, page 55.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, page 70.

⁶⁹ The rate rose to 51% by 2010 according to the Department of Statistics.

⁷⁰ UNDP Arab Human Development Report – Building a Knowledge Society, 2003, page 19.

⁷¹ Jordan Fiscal Reform Project II: Jordan Public Expenditure Report.

⁷² Jordan Education Reform Plan, as published in Jordanian newspapers.

system on the one hand, and does not help improve the quality of education on the other. The general framework for the education reform and development plan endorsed by the Council of Ministers in January 2013 addresses the presence of major imbalances in the index, reporting that the student-teacher ratio is 1:5 in 9.2% of the Kingdom's schools, 1:5 to 1:10 in 35% of the schools, and increases to 1:25 in 9% of schools. The enhancement of the internal efficiency in schools and the expenditure efficiency in general would save money that can be spent on the qualitative factors of education.⁷³

The quality of education is one of the main factors, among others, that affects the competitiveness of any country. In this regard, the Global Competitiveness Index in the Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013 indicates that Jordan improved by seven positions to rank 64th out of 144 countries. The country was considerably affected by the global financial and economic crisis in recent years. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth slowed down to 2.3% in 2010 and has not returned to pre-crisis levels since (GDP growth was 8.2% in 2008). These growth rates are not sufficient to create the employment necessary to absorb about 60,000 new entrants into the Jordanian labour market every year.

The report indicates that Jordan falls under the efficiency-driven economies and still needs to go through the transitional phase to be able to move to innovation-driven economies. Jordan ranks 57 out of 144 on the innovation factor scale with a score of 4.6 out of 7. With respect to the basic requirements that constitute 40.0% of the assessment, Jordan ranks 66 out of 144 with a score of 4.5 out of 7. In health and primary education for instance, Jordan ranks 56 out of 144 with a score of 5.8 out of 7. With regard to efficiency enhancers that constitute 50.0% of the assessment, Jordan ranks 70 out of 144 with a score of 4.5 out of 7. Jordan scores 4.5 out of 7 in higher education and training, placing it in the 55th rank out of 144.⁷⁴

In addition to Jordan's results in TIMSS and PISA and the Arab Knowledge Report findings, this data leads to the conclusion that the challenge of quality education is one of the biggest challenges that face the education system in Jordan, as stated by almost all officials, policy makers and implementers who were interviewed for the purpose of this report. The MDG Second Report recommends that the next step for Jordan is to focus on quality education for all in line with the modern knowledge economy. This requires making quality education a top national priority, since it is the hope for a better future as much as it is a challenge.

If quality education is the hope for a better future and if relevance of education to the workplace is one of the main answers to resolving the dilemma of youth

⁷³ General Framework of Education Reform Plan, Jan 2013.

⁷⁴ The Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013.

unemployment, then what is the best approach to address this issue? The current report suggests three main aspects to such an approach:

1. **First aspect:** the quality/relevance of foundational skills (literacy and numeracy) and the soundness of transferable skills (*e.g.: problem solving, effective communication and information, creativity skills, etc.*) acquired by students during pre-vocational education;
2. **Second aspect:** the appropriateness and sustainability of teacher training, teacher motivation and professional development schemes across all sub-sectors including the relevance of innovative teaching and learning methods taking advantage of ICTs as a teaching/learning tool;
3. **Third aspect:** the flexibility or adaptability of curricular and extra-curricular programmes to impart learners with 21st century and knowledge economy skills which might encompass, but is not exclusive to:
 - i) core transversal life skills (entrepreneurship, global citizenship awareness and civic participation, healthy lifestyles, environmental literacy);
 - ii) learning and innovation skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration);
 - iii) information, media and technology skills (ICT/digital literacy, media and information literacy skills).

In order to put education in Jordan on the right track in achieving alignment of education to workplace requirements for youth, it is necessary to carry out a radical remedy to an issue of utmost importance, which is governance in education institutions. This starts from the Ministry of Education all the way to schools including financial governance in terms of monitoring the allocation of resources, the efficiency of their utilization and assessing their return on investment.

The last section of this report will mainly discuss the views of some Jordanians on these three aspects taken from four sectors: policymakers and implementers, service providers, employers and beneficiaries, and other relevant community groups.

Vocational Education and its Relevance to the Workplace: Fastest Way to Youth Employment



"In every piece of land there is gold and one should strive hard to find it."

Ernest Hemingway

The National Agenda indicates that the Jordanian economy has witnessed remarkably rapid growth during the past five years, but this growth is not sufficient enough to create the employment necessary to absorb the increasing numbers of entrants into the labour market every year. In addition to that, the vocational training sector produces non-committed workers with a low level of training. One of the problems facing the vocational training sector in Jordan is the absence of active participation of the private sector in all stages of vocational training, resulting in the expansion of the gap between the needs of the private sector and the skills acquired by the graduates. Job seekers in Jordan encounter difficulties in finding employment through the public hiring institutions, because of the dispersion and ineffectiveness of these institutions, generating frustration among many of the job seekers and pushing them to stop looking for work.⁷⁵

Although the programmes of the Vocational Training Corporation were popular in the nineties, they experienced a drop lately. The rate of dropouts is high in addition to the fact that the vocational facilities are not well-utilized because of poor enrolment in the programmes despite the expansion the government has made in providing facilities, equipment and administrative and technical staff.⁷⁶

Strangely, the decline in enrolment rates in vocational education comes at a time of an increase in demand on a technically and technologically qualified workforce. The number of students enrolled in vocational education in 2011 reached 10,000 in comparison to 13,500 students in 1999.⁷⁷ The number of students enrolled in applied secondary education for 2011/2012 reached approximately 27,000 which equals 13% of the secondary education cycle enrolment⁷⁸, while the target of the development plans of vocational education in the nineties was increasing the percentage of enrolment in applied secondary education to 30%.

To address these imbalances related to applied secondary education, the Prime Minister formed a committee to review the process of public education, vocational training and higher education and scientific research in Jordan. In 2006, the Committee issued 71 recommendations in 20 fields related to the Ministry of Education and the Vocational Training Corporation. The recommendations ranged from restructuring the vocational training, to adjusting the laws and addressing the low demand of females. A good proportion of these recommendations were not implemented, which explains the low demand on vocational training and the low relevance of vocational graduates' skills to workplace requirements. Despite all the education reform efforts in the past years, the applied secondary education in particular and

⁷⁵ The Executive Programme of the National Agenda 2007-2009.

⁷⁶ Public Education, Vocational Training, and Higher Education and Scientific Research Committee Report 2007, page 16.

⁷⁷ Vocational Training Corporation Annual Report 2011.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Education statistics (provided to CADER GM in an interview with the Minister.)

vocational training in general still suffer from huge problems related to quality, structure and relevance.

The Committee's report identified six basic problems related to vocational training: weak teachers, predominance of the theory over application, low efficiency of teachers, poor administrative and supervisory bodies, lack of equipment, poor communication with the private sector, and the failure of the Ministry of Education to implement the secondary applied education as stated in the Education Act.⁷⁹

One of the key challenges and problems that were poorly discussed in the report is the fact that more than one body assumes responsibility and supervises the vocational education management. This responsibility is divided among the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education (public and private community colleges), the Vocational Training Corporation and the armed forces. It is not known yet whether the Council of Employment and Vocational Education and Technical Training, which was formed in 2008, has contributed to resolving these dilemmas or has improved the quality and performance of vocational education and technical training.⁸⁰

Adding to this, most of those enrolled in the applied education track have low performance in general education, and most of those enrolled in the Vocational Training Corporation centres have low performance or are dropouts from secondary education. This in itself is a basic dilemma that the Committee's report and the Council failed to address.

Records of the Vocational Training Corporation and the MoE indicate that there is a gap in gender related to the concentration of female students on traditional disciplines and specializations such as home economics and nursing, with obvious weak enrolment in other disciplines, particularly hospitality and tourism. Social factors probably play a role in this area. The report of the General Framework for the Education Reform and Development plan points out the serious imbalance in students' trends towards some specializations in secondary applied education; i.e. 43% of the total number of secondary education students are enrolled in IT due to easy admission to Jordanian universities, particularly in the Faculty of Engineering after studying a small number of supplementary courses⁸¹, which is not in line with the basic objectives of the vocational education.

To sum up, putting a future and comprehensive vision for vocational education that takes into consideration all the economic and social factors from a national perspective is crucial to address the demand for qualified vocational and technical human capital and to open employment opportunities for Jordanian

⁷⁹ Public Education, Vocational Training, and Higher Education and Scientific Research Committee Report 2007.

⁸⁰ Jordan Fiscal Reform Project II: Jordan Public Expenditure Report.

⁸¹ Interview with Minister of Education and Higher Education.

youth to reduce unemployment rates and gradually replace foreign workers, technical workers in particular, with local ones.

The Skills Needed to Meet the Requirements of the 21st Century Knowledge Economy



"All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talents."

John Kennedy

The creation, transmission, education, and acquisition of information, knowledge, skills and values are a key lever of sustainable development of communities in the 21st century. Among the challenges facing the countries in the 21st century are the continuous advancement of knowledge societies, the impact of information and communication technology, the alignment of education output to the labour market, and the reform of education and training to enhance the ability of future generations to meet the requirements of the labour market. Thus, there is a need for a new paradigm as part of the social, civil and political education that enables the new generation to engage in the knowledge economy society and meet its demands.

The Education and Skills for Inclusive and Sustainable Development Beyond 2015 report⁸², which UNESCO issued in 2012, cites the justifications for a new education paradigm which can be summarized as follows:

1. **Knowledge revolution:** The current era is witnessing continued development of knowledge societies, tremendous growth in the volume of information that is also continuously changing in nature, and increasing influence of information and communication technology on the creation of knowledge, in terms of size, kind and forms of exchange. Additionally, information is becoming less dependent on text-based transmission and more reliant on audio, graphics and visual modes. The relative values of knowledge are starting to emerge in a global society heading more towards a knowledge economy. The knowledge revolution necessitates education systems to focus on how to learn and think instead of teaching knowledge itself, as well as empowering learners with skills to access knowledge and to deal with it in light of the communications revolution.
2. **ICT:** Information and communication technologies have reshaped our world and triggered a new mind-set to deal with the new reality. ICT has brought about a qualitative change in all walks of life; economy, politics, culture and social relations. In this context, Jordan has sought to develop its education system to cope up with the huge global technical and information advancement by training and empowering teachers and establishing and developing ICT infrastructure in all schools.
3. **A shift away from teaching to an increased focus on learning:** Traditional formal education systems have focused on the transfer of information and knowledge from the teacher to the learner, with the learning environment being centred on the teacher as the sole source of knowledge. The multiplication of new information and communication technologies, digital media, and the spread of multiple sources of information necessitate the transfer the traditional education paradigm into a student-centred learning environment, with the teachers' roles evolving as facilitators and enablers of learning.

⁸² Education and Skills for Inclusive and Sustainable Development Beyond 2015, UNESCO 2012.

4. **Lifelong learning: Beyond a classroom-centred paradigm of education:** Due to the technological development and the knowledge revolution, learning is no longer taking place in the classroom only, but also at homes, local community, centres and elsewhere, which calls for new policies and practices to develop students' perceptions and skills in order for them to become expert practitioners rather than a passive recipients.
5. **Future learning: Blurring boundaries between learning, working and living:** High unemployment rates have become a major problem that all countries seek to solve, as they are a threat to social cohesion and lead to weak labour integration of youth, in addition to being a persistent challenge for education and skills development policies. This requires assisting youth in learning skills to enable them to easily access the labour market and to ensure successful transition between learning and work.
6. **Rising skills requirements and foundational skills:** While progress continues to be made in reducing illiteracy worldwide and in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, there are still an estimated 800 million illiterate youth and adults worldwide.⁸³ Today, a new notion of illiteracy known as functional literacy has emerged as a result of progress in science and technology and the development of the knowledge society, thus creating the need to possess skills associated with the use of technology as well as the research, analysis and utilization of information. As knowledge society institutions are seeking to attract knowledge producers and ICT experts and users, a significant competition to attract this calibre of knowledge workers and ICT experts. Due to this, institutional organization is no longer limited to time and place, as communication can be conducted through networks, virtual meetings and conferences.⁸⁴

A seventh factor that is equally important to the aforementioned six factors is the rapid change in business and professions. New professions are emerging faster than the ability of education institutions to prepare workers for them. Also, the requirements of existing professions are changing rapidly that a one-time training is no longer enough to continue in the profession successfully. This casts additional burdens on the education and training institutions to prepare learners for professions that do not exist, according to Prof. Larry Johnson, New Media Consortium CEO.⁸⁵

Based on the above, the basic skills that individuals need to adapt to the variables of the 21st century can be summarized as follows:

- **Communication skills:** The capacity for interpersonal communication and the ability to communicate effectively with others and with society utilizing

⁸³ Education and Skills for Inclusive and Sustainable Development Beyond 2015, UNESCO 2012.

⁸⁴ Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011: Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society.

⁸⁵ A presentation at International Conference on Teaching and Learning with Technology, Singapore, 27-30 Mar 2012.

verbal and non-verbal patterns, and all modern means and technologies to achieve outstanding communication.

- **Social and cooperative skills:** The ability to communicate successfully within working groups through understanding and mastering social and emotional intelligence, accepting differences, conflict management, negotiation, and adjusting to one's roles and responsibilities.
- **Thinking skills and critical thinking:** The ability to assess situations based on logical evidence, and to arrive at the right decisions based on assessing information, examining opinions and considering different views.
- **Problem-solving skills:** The ability to identify the problem, the possible alternative solutions, and test and choose the most appropriate one.
- **Self-evaluation skills and self-reflection:** Individuals' ability to assess their understanding of their educational needs, identify learning resources required, use different methods and tools of learning in a way that suits the learners' goals, in addition to reflecting on the learning experiences and using them for future planning.
- **Life-long learning skills:** The ability to sustain self-development in accordance with the surrounding working and social environment, to develop and achieve distinct standards of performance, as well as identifying personal goals and the expected goals of others.
- **Entrepreneurial skills:** The ability to acquire the skills that help to launch projects and acquire skills needed for project management and sustainability of projects.
- **Technological skills:** The ability to use various technological tools for self-development and interaction in a technology-based society.
- **Information skills:** The ability to access information from all reliable resources offered by the different technologies, and efficiently analyse and utilize such information in all areas of community activities; economy, civil society, politics and private life.
- **Creativity and intellectual curiosity:** The ability to deal with the knowledge available unconventionally, build relationships and logical links for the production of ideas, solutions or distinct acts. Today's knowledge society provides wider space to evoke positive imagination (creativity and innovation) and to exchange and disseminate it without limitations. Online search, for example, has become a key factor enabling and empowering

individuals. Social media websites have improved and increased and become a tool for communication for individuals and groups.⁸⁶

Needless to say that the performance required for success and employment in the knowledge society requires the individual to master basic skills including literacy and numeracy, a foreign language along with Arabic, adequate knowledge in mathematics and science, as well as meta-cognitive skills which mean teaching youth how to think and learn. Meta-cognitive skills refer to those relating to accessing, selecting and evaluating knowledge in a world filled with information. They also refer to working and learning effectively whether individually and independently or collaboratively in teams and groups. Moreover, they refer to the transfer, utilisation and production of knowledge, as well as dealing with confusing situations and unexpected problems, and undertaking multiple tasks.

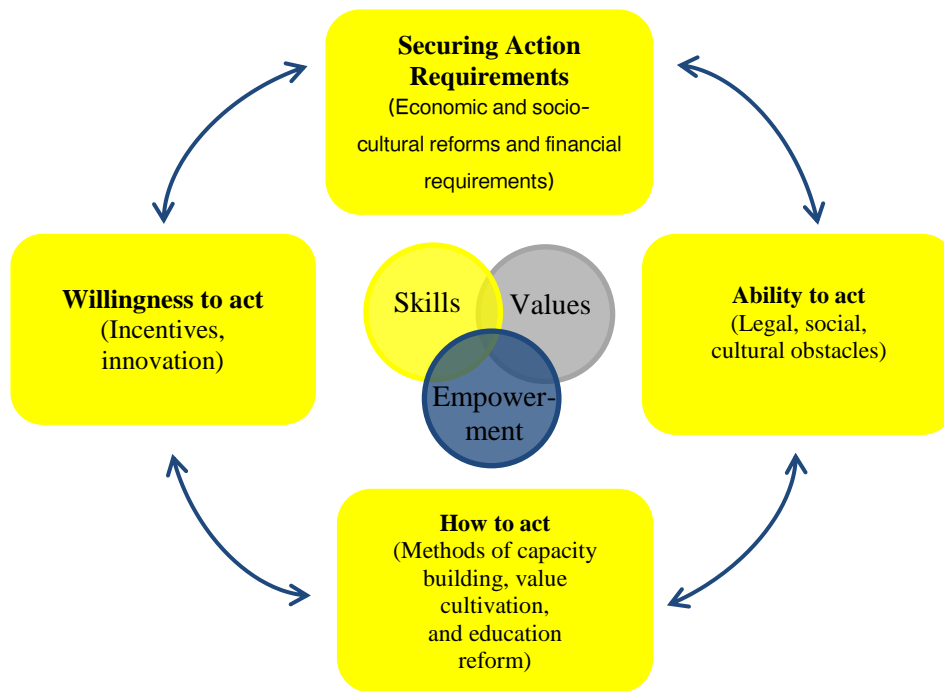
Furthermore, the growing competition in the labour market and rapid changes in economic conditions have created a need for individuals who are creative, innovative, flexible and willing to change their jobs several times throughout their careers. The skills of creativity, cultural development and innovation have become increasingly in demand in the knowledge society, and their continuous development, possession and mastering create a permanent challenge to the education and training systems in all developed modern societies.

Education that does not cater to these needs is a traditional education that will fail to produce youth who are capable of competing and succeeding in the workforce. The Arab Knowledge Report⁸⁷ therefore proposed a model of action to enable students and youth to meet 21st century and knowledge economy requirements for the resurgence and preparation of new generations. The model of action includes four axes:

1. Willingness to act, change, develop, support, and encourage change, and have the determination to achieve it.
2. The ability to act, which identifies the constraints and limitations that could inhibit the efforts of Arab societies and their ability to rehabilitate and prepare the young for the knowledge society, as well as those that could inhibit young people from moving to acquire the needed skills and values.
3. How to act, which covers the methods of building skills, how to instil values, and enable people to deal with available possibilities and opportunities.
4. Ensuring the availability of the prerequisites for direct and sustainable action, including identification of the nature, type, and specifications of the institutional, regulatory, legislative, administrative and material requirements for positive action towards building future generations and preparing them for the knowledge society.

⁸⁶ Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011: Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* page 121 and 122.

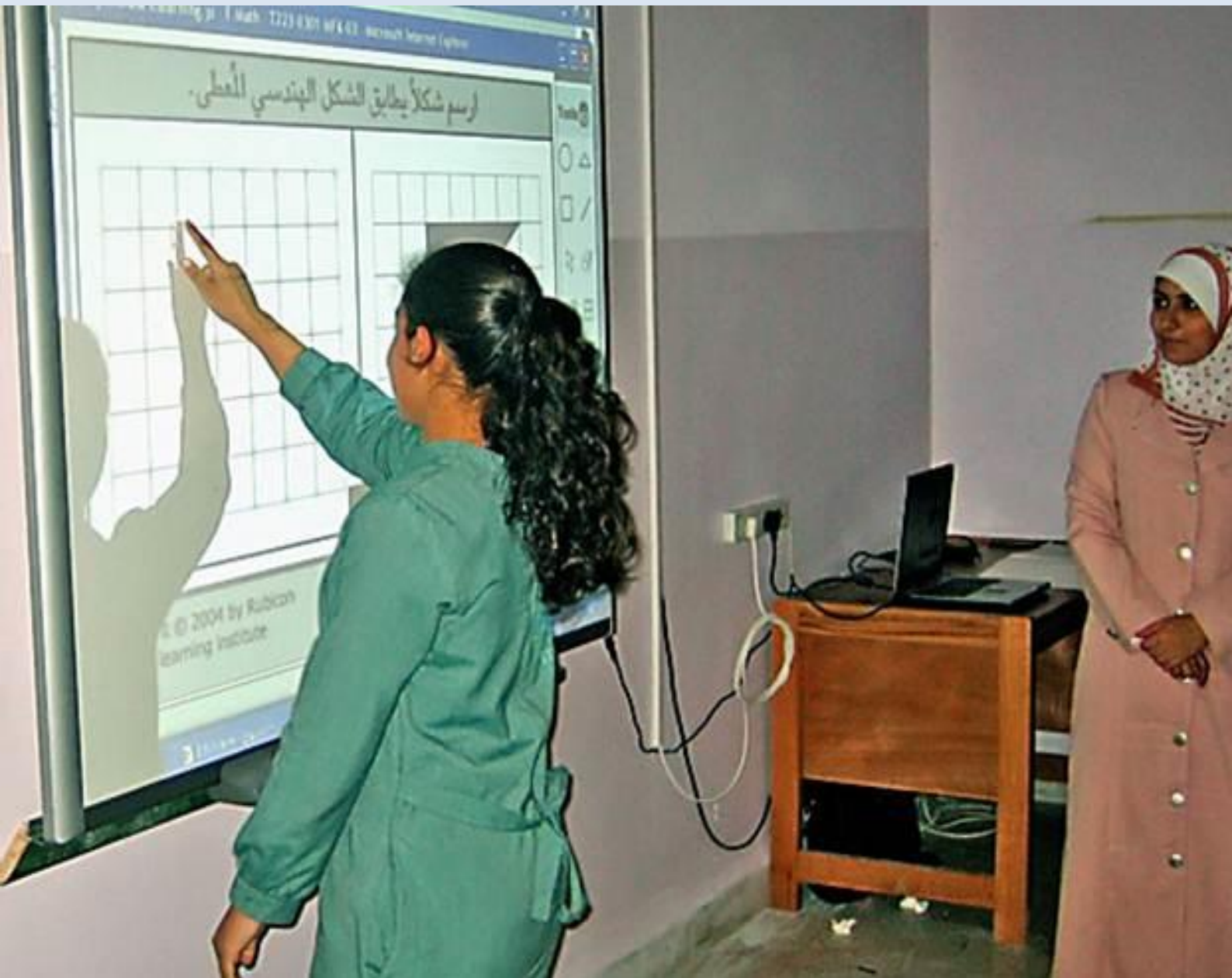


The vision for preparing future generations in Jordan and several Arab countries is based on the correlation between the triad of skills, values and enabling environments and the setting of a general frame to deal with the requirements of knowledge society. Determining the characteristics of future generations in terms of skills and values as well as the required empowerment is a key goal to prepare new generations. Among the most important skills and values listed in the Arab Knowledge Report are flexibility and a sense of responsibility, self-esteem, critical thinking, creativity, ability to assume responsibility, ability to be long-life learners, individual search to develop career path, and flexibility in dealing with various situations.⁸⁸

Most EFA and MDG reports emphasize the progress Jordan has made on quantitative indicators. Some reports reflect on quantitative indicators such as repetition rates, dropout rates and illiteracy rates. Also, some qualitative indicators can be deduced from international comparison tests such as TIMSS and PISA that have been discussed elsewhere in this report. A recent extensive field study was conducted on pilot basis in Jordan within the Arab Knowledge Report that aimed at exploring students' skills, values and the enabling environments surrounding them.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* page126.

Areas of Intervention



"The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

Alvin Toffler

This section of the report aims at exploring the views of a sample of Jordanians to assess the relevance of three aspects needed for preparing youth for the workplace in Jordan. These three areas are **general education, preparing and training teachers, and curricula**. Four-hundred and thirty (430) individuals were surveyed and given the questionnaires that were comprised of three sections to examine their opinion regarding the most important elements of these aspects. The respondents were asked to identify their positions on each of the question by selecting one of the alternatives that ranged from "I strongly agree"(5) to "I strongly disagree" (1). (Annex 2)

The participants in the study were selected to represent four groups: policymakers, providers (of education and training), beneficiaries or employers and interested groups of parents, community members, civil society institutions and youths. The average scores were calculated for each question and for each area separately. The breakdown of results was aggregated by category, gender, and region (North, Middle, and South), in addition to calculating the relative values of each question and the three areas. The tables (8), (9) and (10) show the medium scores and the relative importance given by respondents for each question to the three areas of intervention.

Table (8): Medium scores, standard deviations and relative values (%) of the participants' responses to General Education section

#	Statement	Medium score	Standard deviation	Relative value (%)
1	Helps students apply knowledge and utilize it in practical and professional life.	3.36	1.13	67.2
2	Provides students with skills of high transitional impact, such as thinking and problem solving.	3.28	1.11	65.6
3	Enhances students' effective communication skills.	3.46	1.08	69.2
4	Provides students with search for information skills.	3.36	1.06	67.2
5	Provides students with positive values and attitudes towards vocational and technical work and handicrafts.	3.14	1.15	62.8
6	Helps students choose the educational track according to their interests and abilities.	3.27	1.28	65.4
7	Provides students with skills to enable them to generate entrepreneurial ideas and turn them into successful business opportunities.	3.01	1.13	60.2
8	Enables students to utilize and use ICTs in various fields.	3.46	1.06	69.2
9	Provides students with a variety of learning resources that allow them to choose the appropriate learning resources.	3.15	1.15	63
10	Provides students with the foundational literacy skills needed to improve chances of youths to enter the workforce.	3.79	1.06	75.8
11	Provides students with basic numeracy the skills needed to improve chances of youth to enter workforce.	3.77	0.97	75.4
12	Provides students with reflection and self-evaluation skills.	2.97	1.13	59.4
13	Develop students' ability to deal with different	3.37	1.12	67.4

	cultures and religions and individual diversity.			
14	Helps students choose a career path according to their interests and abilities.	3.09	1.19	61.8
15	Takes into consideration the needs and requirements of disabled students to enter the workforce.	2.88	1.22	57.6
Total		3.29	0.75	65.8

Table (9): Medium scores, standard deviations and relative values (%) of the respondents' answers to Teacher Preparation and Training

#	Statement	Medium score	Standard deviation	Relative value (%)
1	Meets teachers' needs and enhances their personal and professional development and performance.	3.43	1.09	68.6
2	Provides teachers with effective communication skills with all school members.	3.45	1.02	69
3	Provides teachers with teamwork skills.	3.49	1.06	69.8
4	Provides realistic and appropriate solutions for teachers to be used in the classrooms.	3.31	1.07	66.2
5	Helps teachers to diversify teaching and assessment methods to suit students' needs.	3.55	0.98	71
6	Helps teachers to develop innovative teaching methods.	3.13	1.11	62.6
7	Helps teachers to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment for students.	3.36	1.13	67.2
8	Enables teachers to lead a student-centred learning process that engages and respects students.	3.37	1.06	67.4
9	Helps teachers to integrate ICT in education and self-directed learning.	3.40	1.12	68
10	Is offered in an interactive way which allows exchange of experience between adult learners.	3.29	1.10	65.8
11	Combines theoretical, practical and applied training.	3.26	1.14	65.2
12	Linked to the progress of teachers in the career rank (teacher assistant, head teacher, expert teacher, etc.)	3.39	1.17	67.8
13	Sufficiently linked to teachers' motivation system.	3.20	1.05	64
14	Provides teachers with reflection and self-evaluation skills.	3.22	1.10	64.4
15	Enhances teachers' ability to deal with different cultures and religions and diversity among students.	3.32	1.13	66.4
Total		3.35	0.75	67

Table (10): Medium scores, standard deviations and relative values (%) of the respondents' answers to Curricula

#	Statement	Medium score	Standard deviation	Relative value (%)
1	Flexible and enable teachers to adapt their teaching methods to meet students' needs.	3.03	1.19	60.6
2	Provide students with literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) that enable them to communicate effectively in their professional and personal lives.	3.66	1.02	73.2
3	Provide students with numeracy skills needed in their professional and daily lives.	3.62	1.01	72.4
4	Provide students with the 21 st century skills and the skills necessary to compete and succeed in a global knowledge society.	3.14	1.18	62.8
5	Provide students with the skills needed to utilize ICT tools to obtain, manage and utilize information.	3.31	1.14	66.2
6	Provide students with thinking and problem solving skills.	3.18	1.13	63.6
7	Provide students with teamwork skills.	3.34	1.13	66.8
8	Provide students with reflection and self-evaluation skills.	3.02	1.14	60.4
9	Help students to connect experiences learned in the classroom to the real world.	3.19	1.15	63.8
10	Provide a variety of learning resources.	3.23	1.14	64.6
11	Make students the centre of the teaching-learning process.	3.27	1.14	65.4
12	Help individualize education commensurate with students' characteristics of the students.	3.00	1.07	60
13	Ignite students' motivation toward learning and creativity.	2.99	1.23	59.8
14	Provide specialized academic knowledge coinciding with the rapid developments of the knowledge economy.	3.08	1.09	61.6
15	Help build citizenship and respect for the law.	3.46	1.12	69.2
16	Help raise sound environmental awareness among students.	3.40	1.04	68
17	Include knowledge, skills and trends that encourage students to start their own business.	3.03	1.19	60.6
Total		3.23	0.80	64.6

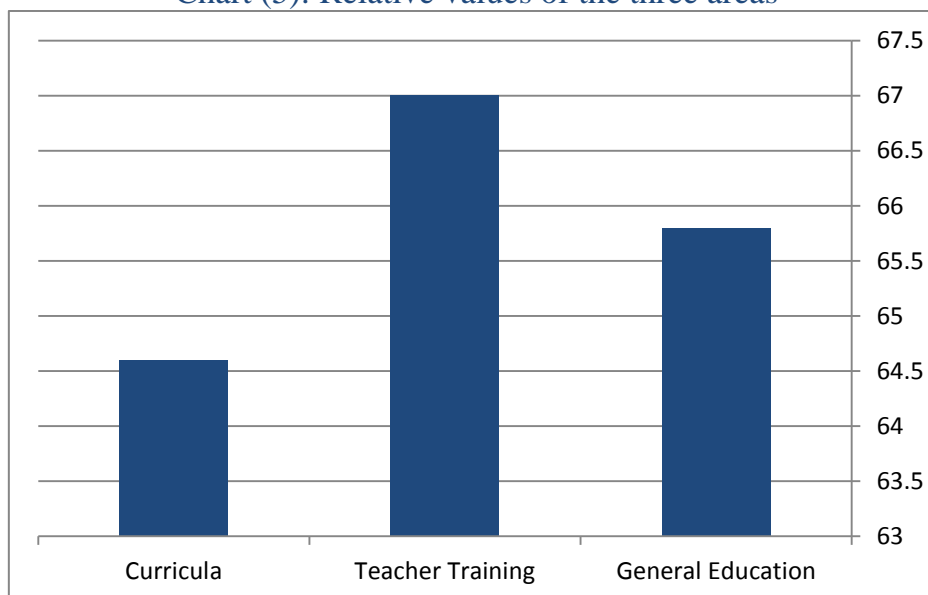
The relative values of the scores of the surveyed sample related to the relevance of the three aspects were average in general, as none of the values reached 70%. The relative values for each area are 65.8% for general education, 67% for teacher preparation and training and 64.6% for curricula respectively. The following table shows the relative values for the three areas.

The three tables clearly show that the respondents gave the highest 10 ranks to the relative value as follows:

1	General education provides students with the foundational literacy skills needed to improve chances of youths to enter the workforce.	%75.8
2	General education provides students with basic numeracy skills needed to improve chances of youth to enter the workforce.	%75.4
3	Curricula provide students with literacy skills that enable them to communicate effectively in their professional and personal lives.	%73.2
4	Curricula provide students with numeracy skills needed in their professional and daily lives.	%72.4
5	Teacher trainings help teachers to diversify teaching and assessment methods to suit student needs.	%71.0
6	Teacher trainings provide teachers with teamwork skills.	%69.8
7	General education enables students to utilize and use ICTs in various fields.	%69.2
8	General education enhances students' effective communication skills.	%69.2
9	Teacher trainings provide teachers with effective communication skills with all school members.	%69.0
10	Teacher trainings meet teachers' needs and improve their personal and professional development and performance.	%68.6

Therefore, the four elements of General education and four elements of Teacher training programs and two elements of Curricula are still on the top ten in terms of relative value given by the respondents on the relevance of those areas for youth employment.

Chart (5): Relative values of the three areas



The following is an analysis of the results for each of the three areas based on the opinions of the four target groups.

1. General education

The questionnaire in this area aimed at identifying the opinions of the surveyed sample on the quality and relevance of foundational skills (literacy and numeracy) and the soundness of transferable skills (e.g.: problem-solving, creativity, effective communication and information skills) acquired by students during basic education. Table (11) features the breakdown of the medium scores by category.

Table (11): Breakdown of medium scores by category

Category	Area			Total
	General education	Teacher training	Curricula	
Policymakers	2.813	2.918	2.938	2.890
Providers	3.086	3.326	3.128	3.180
Employers	3.639	3.435	3.416	3.497
Other groups	2.806	3.172	2.941	2.973
Medium score	3.29	3.35	3.23	3.29

The table shows that the interested groups (parents, youth and civil society) gave the lowest scores to general education, followed by policymakers, whereas providers gave the highest scores. The medium score was 3.29/5.00. In table (8), the highest scores were given to the ability of general education to provide students with foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Whereas the lowest scores were given to the ability of general education to provide students with reflection and self-evaluation skills and the ability of general education to take into consideration the needs and requirements of the students with disabilities to enter the workforce, respectively.

2. Teacher preparation and training

The questionnaire in this area aimed at identifying the opinions of the surveyed sample on the appropriateness and sustainability of teachers' training, teachers' motivations and professional development schemes across all sectors, including the relevance of innovative teaching and learning methods taking advantage of ICT as a teaching/learning tool.

According to table (11), policymakers and other interested groups gave the lowest scores to teacher training and preparation programmes, while employers and providers gave the highest scores. The medium score was 3.35/5.00. In table (9), the highest scores were given to the ability of teacher training and preparation programmes to assist teachers to diversify teaching and assessment methods to suit students' needs and the ability of teacher training and preparation programmes to provide teachers with teamwork skills. The lowest scores were given to the ability of teacher training and preparation programmes to help teachers to develop innovative learning methods and the connection of these programmes to teachers' motivations schemes.

3. Curricula

The questionnaire in this area aimed at identifying the opinions of the surveyed sample on the flexibility and the adaptability of curricular and extra-curricular programmes to impart learners with 21st century and knowledge economy skills.

Policy makers and other interested groups gave the lowest scores to curricula, while employers and providers gave the highest scores. The medium score was 3.23/5.00. In table (10), the highest scores were given to the ability of the curricula to provide students with the basic language skills and numeracy skills respectively.

Table (12): Breakdown of medium scores by gender

Category	Area			Total
	General education	Teacher training	Curricula	
Males	3.20	3.39	3.23	3.27
Females	3.25	3.31	3.23	3.30

Table (13): Breakdown of medium scores by region

Category	Area			Total
	General education	Teacher training	Curricula	
North	3.28	3.45	3.29	3.34
Middle	3.06	3.09	2.98	3.04
South	3.66	3.59	3.54	3.60

To find out whether the factors of gender, region and category have any impact on the scores given by the target groups in the three areas, tables (12) and (13) show the medium scores for both males and females as well as individuals from North, Middle and South of the Kingdom. Table (12) shows that the medium scores of males and females in the three areas are very close, and that there was no statistical significance, except in the area of general education where the difference was in favour of females, meaning that females gave higher scores with a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Relating to the impact of region on the scores of the three areas of the survey, table (13) shows that there were significant differences among the scores of the individuals, as individuals from the south gave the highest scores. Statistically, (based on the one-way analysis of variance, F distribution), the differences had a significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.00$).

As for the impact of category on the scores of the three areas, table (11) shows there were differences in the medium scores of the four target groups. Examining these differences statistically (based on the one-way analysis of variance, F distribution), we find that the differences between the four groups had a significance level of ($\alpha \geq 0.00 - 0.01$). The highest scores were given by providers, as expected, followed by employers, which surprising as many have

complained about the quality of graduates. Meanwhile, policymakers gave the lowest scores, indicating how frustrated they are that their policies have not been implemented fully, followed by other interested groups (parents, civil society and youth).

The findings can be summed up as follows:

1. The scores of the surveyed sample related to the relevance of the three areas were average in general and the same can be said about their relative importance. The medium scores were 3.35/5.00 for teacher preparation and training, 3.29/5.00 for general education, and 3.23/5.00 for curricula. The relative values for each area were 67% for teacher preparation and training, 65.8% for general education and 64.6% for curricula.
2. There were significant differences among the four target groups surveyed. Policymakers and other interested groups gave the lowest scores to all three areas while employers and providers gave the highest scores.
3. There also were significant differences between the surveyed sample of males and females in the area of general education only and the difference was in favour of females meaning that females gave higher scores to general education. As for the two other areas (teacher preparation and curricula) the differences were insignificant.
4. There were significant differences between the scores of individuals from the different regions of the country in all areas of survey. The regions are ranked from the highest to the lowest, are as follows: the South, the North, and the Middle.
5. Despite the low scores and rates given to all three areas, there are clear differences among them. The lowest score (2.88) was given to the ability of general education to take into consideration the needs and requirement of disabled students to enter the workforce, while the highest score (3.79) was given to providing students with foundational language skills.

The three areas of intervention addressed in this report are with no doubt important, as it is not possible to improve the quality of education and increase its relevance to the requirements of youth employment without making radical changes in the concepts and practices governing general education on the one hand, and without reforming teacher preparation and training programmes as well as the curricula on the other hand.

The questionnaires that were used in this study included an open question to solicit the opinions of the target groups about some other aspects inhibiting the teaching-learning process that respondents think need to be developed or modified to improve the quality of education and its relevance to the labour market and youth employment. The sample surveyed gave over twenty proposals, with the following five areas repeatedly mentioned over 50 times:

1. Changing some curricula topics.
2. Providing modern ICT tools.
3. Providing adequate infrastructure.
4. Engaging students in planning for education.
5. Providing practical applications.

The Consultation Meeting: Working Mechanism and Conclusions



"If we stop working, we will fall behind and we will lose."

HRM Queen Rania Al Abdullah

To shed more light on the importance of the three areas of intervention to achieve better relevance of education in Jordan to the workplace, a consultation meeting was organised on 19th and 20th of February 2013, with approximately 60 participants selected from the four groups who previously participated in the survey. HRM Queen Rania Al Abdullah participated in the last session of the consultation to discuss the final conclusions. The meeting was opened with speeches by Dr. Anna Paolini, Head of the UNESCO Amman Office, and Ms. Costanza Farina, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Jordan (See Annex 5 for the meeting agenda).

In her speech (Annex 3), Dr. Paolini said that as the target date of 2015 approaches for achieving the MDGs, the international community is actively taking stock of headways or setbacks encountered by countries on their way to achieving these universal goals, in order to identify the post-2015 development agenda by involving grassroots level stakeholders with focus on youth. Jordan should be commended for being one of the top four high achievers among the Arab States in the Education For All (EFA) goals for promoting access to compulsory education, literacy and particularly gender equity and equality. She added that in line with the international MDGs and the Education for All (EFA) targets, Jordan has made steady progress in improving access to compulsory education, in raising completion rates of primary education and eliminating gender disparities in education. In 2010, the primary net enrolment rate was 91%. This clearly places Jordan above the regional average. Youth literacy (age 15 to 24) is close to 100%. Although access to early childhood education has surged over the past several years to reach 32% in 2010, a lot more effort is needed for its expansion. Most statistics clearly show that Jordan offers equal learning opportunities for males and females.

Despite such significant achievements, the quality of education remains uneven. Discrepancies persist between urban and rural areas. Jordan's results from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) indicates that there is still a lot to do for improving the students' performance in science and mathematics. In early grades, the USAID-led national test released in 2012 on Reading skills in Jordan revealed that by the end of grade 3, the majority of students had not yet acquired sufficient foundational skills to read fluently with comprehension in Arabic and that students lack fundamental and critical skills for learning to read and spell correctly in Arabic. As for mathematic skills, it was found that while the same young students are quite comfortable with some of the procedural mathematics skills, their conceptual understanding needs to be strengthened by well-trained teachers equipped with more innovative teaching practices. Dr. Paolini also pointed out the high unemployment rates and the clear differences between the requirements of labour market and the skills acquired by youth, in particular. In light of this, she listed six weaknesses in the Jordanian education system according to the studies in this area. The weaknesses are:

- i) lack of flexible or demand-driven curricula,

- ii) low attractiveness of vocational sector in favour of field of studies that are only a trajectory to universities and later on to public sector jobs,
- iii) low entrepreneurship and self-employability skills among graduates,
- iv) dysfunctional cooperation between employers and the business community leading to poor development of internship and apprenticeship schemes,
- v) ineffective mechanisms, low quality and low relevance of pre- and in-service training for teachers,
- vi) weak governance structures and imbalanced financing of the vocational education and training sub-sector, etc.

Ms. Costanza Farina, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Jordan, stressed in her speech (Annex 4) that the first priority is to meet the promise of the MDGs, and the second priority is to have a long-term vision for people and for the planet. She said that we need a set of clear, concise and easy to communicate development goals that are universal but recognize national differences. The core MDG issues will remain priorities, but the new agenda will encompass a broader set of interlinked challenges -- including sustainability essentials such as climate and energy, urbanization and agriculture, and issues such as governance and accountability. We also need a strong financial framework, with clear and effective monitoring mechanisms. The current global partnership for development needs to be rebalanced and redefined – taking into account emerging economies, South-South partnerships, private sector engagement and innovative financing.

Ms. Pauline Rose, Director of the 'Education for All' Global Monitoring Report Team delivered two detailed presentations on youth and skills and post-2015 education. In her first presentation, she analysed the current status in a set of points that can be summarized as follows:

- Progress towards Education for all is stagnating.
- Aid to education is slowing down.
- Slow progress has left a huge skills deficit among young people.
- Poor Urban and rural youth, especially women, urgently need support to acquire the necessary employment skills.

After that, Ms. Rose backed her findings with statistics to demonstrate the size of the problem at the international level, stressing that basic and secondary education should provide youth with the foundation skills, while secondary education should teach youth the transferable skills, whereas work-based training should teach learners transferrable, technical and professional skills through work experience.

- 1 out of every 8 young people is unemployed.
- 1 out of every 5 young people in the developing countries did not complete primary school.
- 1 out of every 4 young people earns less than \$1.25 a day.
- 1 out of every 6 of the world's population is aged between 15 - 24 years.
- 1 out of every 2 in the Arab countries is under the age of 25.

Pauline Rose

In her second presentation, Ms. Rose identified the lessons learned from EFA goals, stressing that the future EFA goals should follow the SMART model:

1. Specific
2. Measurable
3. Achievable
4. Relevant
5. Transferable

She also emphasized the need for consultation between the countries through modern technologies to ensure equal access to education, achieve quality of education and global citizenship, provide work-related skills, regulate governance, and secure the necessary funding.

Finally, CADER General Manager Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq gave a detailed presentation summarizing the findings of the study that was conducted by CADER as an introductory to the dialogue sessions.

During the first day participants were divided into three groups and each group was assigned a facilitator. Each group was subsequently divided into smaller rotating groups of 3-6 participants (the rapporteur was not changed) every half an hour to increase interaction among the participants. Then, each small group was asked to discuss the three main themes subsequently within one and a half hour, and come up with a set of priorities to improve relevance of each theme to the requirements of youth employment. The groups came up with a total of 26 priorities; (9) priorities in the area of general education, (9) priorities in the area of teacher education and preparation and (8) priorities in the area of curricula.



At the end of the first day's sessions, the rapporteurs presented these priorities in the plenary session of the consultation meeting. In the following morning, these priorities were arranged in a “mind map” prepared by CADER (Annex 6), and participants were asked to vote on the top (5) priorities that they think are the most important.

Tables 14, 15 and 16 show the priorities and the votes each priority had in the voting process, whereas table 17 shows the five top priorities.

Table (14): Priorities in General education

No. of votes	Key findings
0	Focusing on entrepreneurial education.
2	Abandoning the culture of shame.
8	Promoting the role of family in building the child character to enable him/her to become decision makers and problem solvers.
15	Updating the curricula in order to allow the teacher to use different teaching methods and connect education with real life.
14	Teaching “learning how to learn”.
18	Ensuring that teachers are qualified, flexible and open.
13	Giving students the opportunities to be creative, to think and to take risks.
3	Focusing on extracurricular activities.
11	Directing and instructing students to accept difficulties and challenges in labour market and take the chance to experiment

Table (15): Priorities in Teacher Training and Preparation

No. of votes	Key findings
4	Professionalisation of the teacher profession.
23	Activating accountability and appraisal system.
21	Ensuring adequate pre-service training of teachers.
3	Providing specific and specialized training.
6	Developing the quality of training programmes to cater for the market needs.
2	Connecting training to the needs of local and international markets.
3	Activating the role of the National Training Centre.
5	Reactivating the colleges of teacher training with a separate governance system.
5	Supporting the teacher financially, socially and morally.

Table (16): Priorities in Curricula

No. of votes	Key findings
23	Catering to different talents and students’ needs.
8	Connecting the curricula to life requirements and market needs.
8	Reducing information and redundancy in curricula.
5	Changing the false social concepts.
5	Engaging students, teachers and parents in curriculum development efforts taking into consideration the market needs.
0	Balancing between theory and practice in curricula.
3	Engaging the private sector in content development as part of their corporate social responsibility.
7	Making use of different knowledge resources, modern teaching methods, infrastructure, and ICT tools in content development.

Table (17): The five top priorities with the highest votes

Rank	No. of votes	Key findings	Area
1	23	Catering to different talents and students’ needs.	Curricula
2	23	Activating the accountability and appraisal systems.	Teacher training
3	21	Ensuring adequate pre-service training of teachers.	Teacher training
4	18	Ensuring that teachers are qualified, flexible and open.	General Education
5	15	Updating the curricula in order to allow the teacher to use different teaching methods and connect education with real life.	General Education

The following is concluded from these tables:

1. A large proportion of the priorities put forward by participants are close to a large extent to the requirements of 21st century education skills and knowledge economy skills.
2. Three of the five top priorities are related to teacher preparation and training and the quality of the required teacher, which is consistent with the outcome of this study that teachers are the key to any education reform, and without them the other components are useless. This is also consistent with the inputs made by the youth's participating in the radio talk shows.
3. Although the second priority identified by participants was unexpected, it is consistent with what this study has called for, which is the need to develop the governance of education institutions. It is also consistent with the speech of the Director of UNESCO office in Amman and with the diagnosis made by most of the interviewed officials.
4. The five priorities set out in table (17) could be the focus of a national action agenda for the development and reform of education so as to make education relevant to youth employment.



Although they are not part of the five top priorities, three issues or actions directly related to the relevance of education to the workplace, were selected by participants in the consultation meeting:

1. Teaching learners how to learn: (14) votes.
2. Providing students with space to be creative, to think and take risks: (13) votes.
3. Directing and instructing students to accept difficulties and challenges in labour market and allow experience: (11) votes.

These three actions are all in the general education area, which clearly indicates that basic education should be reformed. They come in line with many of the inputs made by the youth during the radio talk shows devoted to this purpose.

To shed more light on the opinions of the participants in the consultation meeting on the reality of education in Jordan and their aspirations for the future, the participants were again divided on the second day into four categories:

1. Policymakers, decision-makers and employers - one group.
2. Providers (university presidents, school principals and teachers) - one group.
3. Beneficiaries (students) - two groups.

4. Other interested groups (civil society, parents, journalists and others) - one group.

Thus, the number of groups was five. HRM Queen Rania Al Abdullah was among the beneficiaries group, with Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq, CADER General Manager, steering this debate.

Each of the five groups was asked to:

1. Identify two educational achievements in Jordan they are proud of (I am proud of ...).
2. Identify two educational issues in Jordan they are sorry about (I'm sorry about ...).
3. Identify three actions they think should be taken to develop education (I'm going to ...).
4. Select the educational slogan that they feel fit to characterise Jordanian educational agenda for 2030 (our slogan for 2030 is ...).

Table (18) shows the areas of pride in the educational achievements made in Jordan in recent years as seen by the participants. The table clearly demonstrates the participants' high level of awareness towards the importance of justice and equality of opportunities on one hand, and how realistic they are in evaluating issues.

Table (18): The areas of pride in the educational achievements identified by participants

Category	Achievements
Policy-makers, decision-makers and employers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The spread and equality of education in Jordan, including programmes for persons with special needs and inmates of rehabilitation centres. 2. Having a national awareness regarding the importance of all types of education reform and development and linking it to national needs.
Providers (university presidents, school principals and teachers, etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changing students' trends, ideas, interests and behaviours. 2. Transferring the impact of quality training programmes to classrooms and its reflection on students and local community.
Beneficiaries (students)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The existence of an educational system that allows students to obtain knowledge and opportunities from community based institutions. 2. The existence of gender parity.
Beneficiaries (students)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Girls' education and participation in decision-making. 2. Advanced educational level, despite the few material resources.
Other interested parties (civil society, parents, journalists and others) - one group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The integration of students with disabilities in public schools. 2. Pre-service teacher preparation and training programmes.

Table (19) shows the educational issues or phenomena in Jordan that the participants were sorry for. It is clear how accurate and realistic the participants' assessment and diagnosis of the shortcomings of the Jordanian education system is, hence such an assessment can be part of an action agenda for the future.

Table (19): The educational issues in Jordan that the participants were sorry for

Category	Shortcomings
Policy-makers, decision-makers and employers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decline in the qualitative indicators of education in Jordan and the widening gap between supply and demand. 2. Poor educational, creative, entrepreneurial and innovative skills of school and university graduates due to poor teacher training and preparation programmes.
Providers (university presidents, school principals and teachers, etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inability to communicate with students on some occasions due to teacher's heavy burdens. 2. Inability to influence the educational policies and safeguard teacher's status.
Beneficiaries (students)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The absence of an open-minded educational staff and its inability to accept students' potentials; and the negative stereotypes of vocational training. 2. There is no room to study what we want.
Beneficiaries (students)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pandering to the views of the local community without thinking about personal desire when choosing specialties. 2. Focusing on grades more than the educational material and its depth.
Other interested parties (civil society, parents, journalists and others) - one group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teaching profession does not have enough respect and appreciation. 2. The educational environment is not suitable and repellent (violence, public facilities, activities, creativity, technology...).

Table (20) lists the actions or measures that the participants thought should be taken to develop the Jordanian educational agenda so as to enhance relevance of education to the workforce and youth employment. Once again we can say that most of the proposed measures listed in the table can be part of a national action agenda for education and can benefit policymakers and decision makers.



Table (20): The measures needed to improve relevance of education to the workforce and youth employment

Category	Measures
Policy-makers, decision-makers and employers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making education career based on purely professional rules, principles and standards. 2. Including entrepreneurship and innovation as an integral part in the curricula in schools, universities and various educational and training facilities. 3. Rebalancing between education tracks so as to take into consideration the technical education and vocational training.
Providers (university presidents, school principals and teachers, etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transferring all needed experiences to students. 2. Eliminating the culture of shame and developing positive values and attitudes among students. 3. Refining the student's personality, self-pride, attachment to homeland, and life skills to cope with rapid changes.
Beneficiaries (students)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fulfilling the goals of education computerization. 2. Networking with institutions that support the youth and their initiatives and providing a legal framework to their educational initiative. 3. Launching initiatives that adopt youth ideas and outcomes in education.
Beneficiaries (students)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educating students in the upper grades of basic education and preparing them to choose the correct academic path. 2. Designing simulation programmes to illustrate the practical side of the professions. 3. Self-develop to enhance my opportunity in the labour market.
Other interested parties (civil society, parents, journalists and others) - one group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introducing modern development programmes to the education system and to integrate teachers in them. 2. Raising awareness among decision-makers regarding the importance of activating and enforcing laws. 3. Working with the local community to help poor students to complete their education.

The table illustrates the comprehensive perspective of the participants in this consultation meeting with regards to the work agenda, as it dealt with knowledge, skills and values, in addition to identifying the responsibilities of the educational institutions, teachers, local community and the society as a whole.

Table (21) lists the educational slogans that the participants deemed fit to characterize the national efforts to reform the Jordanian educational agenda in 2030. The slogans are suitable to be used internationally, regionally and nationally.

Table (21): Educational slogans proposed by participants

Category	Measures
Policy-makers, decision-makers and employers	"Competitive economy achieved through quality education for all, a qualified teacher and a creative entrepreneurial student."
Providers (university presidents, school principals and teachers, etc.)	"A teacher with motivation, who builds a nation."
Beneficiaries (students)	"Education for our world for the year of 2030".
Beneficiaries (students)	"I dream... I learn... and I work in my country." "Continuing education equals continuation of life."
Other interested parties (civil society, parents, journalists and others) - one group.	"The student is not a vessel to be filled, but a lamp to be illuminated."

HRM Queen Rania Al Abdullah concluded the consultation meeting by giving a speech in which she praised the depth and the practicality of the ideas put forward by the participants. HRM hailed in particular, the youth participants, illustrating that the target goals must be adaptable rather than static to adjust to the rapid changes and youth aspirations. She urged all partners to make more effort saying, "If we stop working, we will fall behind and we will lose."



In conclusion, it can be said that the priorities, the areas of pride in the educational achievements, the assessment of the shortcomings of the education system as well as the actions proposed to reform education which were identified by the participants in the consultation meeting came as a result of a participatory and an interactive approach. These results can be used to form an integrated national agenda to develop and modernize the Jordanian education system, in general, and to achieve better alignment with the requirements of the labour market and youth employment, in particular. The importance of these priorities and proposals stems from the fact that they came as a result of in-depth dialogue with the participation of all partners such as policy-makers, decision-makers, implementers, employers, beneficiaries and other concerned parties including civil society organisations and parents, rather than a result of consultations behind closed doors that have long characterized the efforts to develop strategies and plans. Thus, these priorities and proposals are an agenda by the people and not by the elite.

The UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative

At the end of the meeting, it was found appropriate to get to know the participants' opinions on the status and the achievement of Education First initiative in Jordan.

The UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, launched his Global Education First initiative in 2012 to rally international attention to education and make further efforts to achieve the MDGs and EFA goals. The initiative identified the dialectical relationship between education and development, as education empowers individuals to secure a job and at the same time promotes equality between males and females. Education improves health, increases the capacity of the state's economic competitiveness and encourages environmental sustainability. In addition to that, education increases the awareness of individuals of their human rights, which ultimately reduces human rights violations and fosters dignity, justice and equality.

The Initiative focuses on three priorities:

1. Putting every child in school.
2. Improving the quality of education.
3. Fostering global citizenship.

To achieve these three priorities, the Initiative identified 10 key actions and their achievement indicators. Proceeding from the desire to examine Jordan's status on achieving these key actions, CADER listed the key actions in a questionnaire, which was distributed to a number of participants in the consultation meeting. The participants were asked to voice their opinions on the status of each key action based on a scale of five grades ranging from "greatly achieved" to "I do not know." Percentages, medium scores and relative values of each of the ten key actions were calculated and listed in Table (22) below.

Table (22): Key actions and their medium scores and relative values

Action	Medium score	Relative value
Enrol all children in school	4.62	92.41
Sustain education in humanitarian crises, especially conflict	4.21	84.14
Ensure all children are literate and numerate	4.03	80.69
Train more teachers	3.83	76.55
Equip classrooms with books and learning materials	3.97	79.31
Prepare students for life	3.45	68.97
Improve child nutrition	3.76	75.17
Instil lifelong learning	3.32	66.43
Foster global citizenship	3.34	66.90
Close the financing gap	3.45	68.97

If we consider that achieving more than 90% of the key action is high, 80%-90% is good, 70%-80% is medium and what comes beyond is fair, then we can see from this table that Jordan has reached a high degree of achieving

education for all children, according to the participants' opinions, which is consistent with the international reports. The respondents gave a good score to Jordan's achieving both "Sustain education in humanitarian crises, especially conflict" and "Ensure all children are literate and numerate" actions, which is consistent with the reality on the ground, as Jordan continued to provide education for Iraqi and Syrian children in Jordan. Regarding the score of the second part on "Ensuring all children are literate and numerate", it is also consistent with the results of this study cited in the tables (8) and (10). "Train more teachers" and "Equip classrooms with books and learning materials" received a medium score by the participants. The rest of the actions received a fair score, indicating that Jordan needs to put more effort in this area. What concerns us in this report is the two vital key actions associated with the preparation of youth to enter the labour market; prepare students for life and instil lifelong learning. Further efforts should be made in this regard.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Implemented or pending education reform projects in Jordan over the past 15 years

I. Integrating ICT in education projects

- **International Computer Driving License (ICDL)**

In 2001, the Ministry of Education adopted ICDL as part of its serious and sincere commitment toward teachers' computer literacy in Jordan. Dr. Khaled Toukan, Minister of Education at the time, adopted ICDL as a crucial criterion to promote MoE teachers and staff. The training programme consists of 7 modules: IT basic concepts, computer and file management, word processor, spread sheets, databases, presentations, information and communications.

- **Strategic Leadership of Information and Communication (SLICT)**

SLITC training programme is implemented by Jordan's Ministry of Education in partnership with the British Council in order to develop teachers and administrators professionally, with the focus on providing them with computer and other educational skills to increase their awareness and help them take advantage of ICT as teaching and classroom management tools.

- **Eduwave e-Learning System**

The Ministry of Education in cooperation with (ITG) and (IBM) designed the Eduwave e-learning system that provides a variety of solutions to support teaching and learning and allow the different parties of the teaching and learning process to communicate and collaborate with each other. It is an educational system to manage educational curricula and schools as well as an integrated e-learning source that combines informative, financial and administrative capabilities to manage schools along with the Department of Curriculum and Classrooms. Through this system, teachers can have access to the curricula and monitor student performance and attendance, in addition to providing parents with the possibility to keep track of their children's performance, content of the curricula and information related to school.

- **Intel in Education**

Intel in Education helps teachers to incorporate technology tools to build and strengthen student learning. The key task of the programme is to improve the education outcomes, the economic opportunities and the global understanding among young people through the use of technology and the Internet. Teachers learn how to integrate technology in the classroom to achieve better results and empower students with the skills for successful engagement in the knowledge economy.

- **World Links Programme**

Launched in Jordan in June 2003, the programme aims at preparing robust students, teachers and educational institutions to access the era of knowledge

by providing sustainable solutions for schools, in order to utilize information and communication tools and educational resources to improve learning and prepare a generation who is able to compete in the knowledge economy.

- **Computerised Curricula Project**

In collaboration with the committees formed by Department of Curriculum at the Ministry of Education to supervise the computerised curricula, Queen Rania Al Abdullah Centre for Educational Technology uploaded the curricula on the e-learning system, disseminated the authorized electronic content to the target groups in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Curriculum, and designed the databases for all the computerised curricula. The textbooks that were uploaded are: Arabic for 1-12 grades, English for 7-12 grades, Science for 1-12 grades, Computer for 1-10 grades, Information Management for grade11, and Civic Education for 6-9 grades. These textbooks were also uploaded on the servers of the Ministry of Education so that students could access them.

II. HRM Queen Rania's Initiatives

- **Jordan Education Initiative (JEI)**

In 2003 HRM Queen Rania Al Abdullah launched Jordan Education Initiative as part of a comprehensive plan for the development of the main tasks of the Ministry of Education at all levels. JEI aims at:

- Realising and developing the national vision for the education system in Jordan to become the first pillar in the development process.
- Modernising education in Jordan through private-public partnerships.
- Supporting the Jordanian government's commitment to adopt the initiative as a practical model that can be replicated in schools across the Kingdom, in particular, and in other countries in the region in general.

Among the projects undertaken by JEI are:

- 1. Discovery Schools:** JEI implemented the Discovery Schools project in 100 schools in Amman to offer school models in terms of technological infrastructure. JEI provided these schools with computers, interactive whiteboard, Internet networks and modern ICT tools that can contribute to improving the teaching-learning process in schools. MoE also implemented computerised education programmes. JEI continues to offer programmes that support these schools such as: Towards a New School Attitude.
- 2. Towards a New School Trends Programme:** JEI in collaboration with Microsoft Partners in Learning and CADER implemented “Towards a New School” Programme in discovery schools in Jordan in two phases: formal training and field follow-up. The programme focused on empowering participants with new ways and attitudes towards working and learning in schools, and was launched by building up school teams that possess appropriate knowledge and skills to lead change in the participating schools

through projects that aimed at having a united school vision. The programme aimed at:

- Turning the school to a single working unit to improve teaching and learning through a unified vision that emanates from the vision of the Ministry of Education.
- Enabling school development teams to develop plans for school development; transfer the plans into action and evaluate them in the light of the results.
- Improving the teaching and learning process in schools and the way schools are run so as to fully utilise all of its human and material resources.
- Improving the teaching and learning process by making use of the unlimited potential offered by ICT and activating the use of modern teaching methods at the school.
- Building a school team that leads the school to learn what is needed, and providing what is needed in order to find solutions to the problems faced by schools, and thus turning the school into a renewed self-reliant school.

- **Madrasati (My School) Initiative**

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah commenced Madrasati Initiative as a partnership between the public and private sectors in April 2008, in an attempt to increase the quality of the infrastructure in public schools in Jordan, thus offering an improved learning environment for students and increasing learning opportunities in more than 500 schools by ensuring that each school has:

- Basic infrastructure with an acceptable level of safety and hygiene.
- Attractive school environment including colourful classrooms, playgrounds and a variety of games.
- Educational tools and instruments, such as computer labs, library and reading programmes.

- **Queen Rania Teachers' Award for Excellence**

On the 5th March of 2006, HRM Queen Rania Al Abdullah launched "Queen Rania Teachers' Award for Excellence," which has succeeded in creating a rich environment for the exchange of ideas and experiences among educators and building communication channels among the different parties of the educational process by forming a national information base that documents educational excellence. The Award works closely with the winners by introducing them and circulating their experiences in a way that achieves the objectives of the Award and spreads its message to a wider range covering all teachers, as well as developing their expertise and filling the gaps in cooperation with different parties.

- **Queen Rania Principals' Award for Excellence**

Believing in the important role of school principals as leaders and administrators in guiding and encouraging teachers and giving them the necessary support to participate and improve, Queen Rania Principals' Award for excellence was launched to enhance the role of school principals in

providing motivation and being the driving force towards the progress of education as a whole to have a positive impact on the educational environment.

- **Queen Rania Teacher Academy**

Queen Rania Teacher Academy, in collaboration with the Teacher's College at Columbia University, train teachers on the latest and the most modern teaching methods and tools. The Academy experts, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, develop the training curriculum to suit the educational needs and the technological and professional requirements. The Academy also supports networks to exchange experiences among teachers and principals, as well as preparing a special programme for new teachers to enhance their scientific and practical skills.

III. Education Support Programme (ESP)

The Education Support Programme was a USAID-led project in partnership with the Ministry of Education. It aimed at supporting the efforts and endeavours of the Ministry of Education to develop and remodel education in Jordan. It started in 2003 and ended in 2009, with the goal of improving everything related to teaching and educating the children and youth in two areas:

- **Area 1: Improving early childhood education**

- Improve the physical environment in the public schools.
- Improve and develop early childhood education materials.
- Modernise and reform early childhood curricula.
- Foster the participation of parents and community in raising and educating children.

- **Area 2: Youth vocational and technological training**

- Enhance MIS curricula for 11-12 grades.
- Incorporate ICT tools in teaching and learning.
- Train teachers on MIS.
- Implement School to Career programmes

IV. Education Reform Support Programme (ERSP)

The Ministry of Education supervises the implementation of Education Reform support Programme with the support of USAID. The programme supports the second phase ERfKE and will contribute to building the capacity of thousands of MoE educators over five years starting from 2009 until 2014. The programme aims at supporting the efforts of MoE to reform education and graduate generations that possess competitive skills required in the knowledge economy by achieving the following objectives:

- Build a comprehensive system of professional development for teachers, principals and supervisors.

- Provide high-quality early childhood education.
- Provide students with the skills necessary to be participants and productive in the workforce in the knowledge society.
- Provide necessary support to schools and districts to take decisions in a participatory manner based on the data.

The programme consists of four area components: professional development, early childhood, youth, technology and careers and school based management improved through decision-making.

V. Support Jordanian Education (SJE)/Canadian Agency for International Development

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) offered a grant of 20 million Canadian dollars to support the first phase of (ERfKE). The first phase focused on modernizing kindergarten and the primary and secondary education cycle to keep pace with the knowledge economy requirements. CIDA supports projects and programmes focusing on youth issues, community colleges and social development. The programmes covered by the grant to support education in Jordan are:

- **School and Directorate Development Programme (a MoE programme supported by CIDA)**

The Ministry of Education launched its initiative to establish a School and Directorate Programme (SDDP) to initiate a well-functioning and school-based development process, enable schools to determine their own identity in terms of philosophy, objectives, structure and means of action and identify major elements for the advancement of education, and thus turning the school into a key unit for change in the education system. The programmes aim at:

- Gradually moving towards decentralisation.
- Distributing tasks on the school boards.
- Forming a school development team of a principal, an assistant and three key teachers of scientific and human subjects and of teachers of grades 1-3.
- Dividing schools in the education directorates into 5-10 clusters, with one school in the cluster being the group leader contributing to the training and monitoring and evaluation. Schools present their education expertise to the rest of the group. The group will have a board headed by a school principal.
- Adopting a peer training approach through which school principals, assistants and coordinators train their counterparts from other schools.

VI. Capacity Development of Learning Resource Centres

The programme was introduced with the support of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and was implemented in 2006 until 2009, aiming at:

- Providing appropriate learning opportunities for students in areas that are classified below the poverty line in Jordan.
- Developing the capacity of science teachers to incorporate ICT tools and laboratory activities in education.
- Improving educational resources, especially of the basic education.

VII. Learning Environment: Technical Support Programme (LETS)

The programme aims at improving the quality of education by catering to the different aspects and elements surrounding the teaching-learning environment. It appeals to every member of the school community and engages parents and the community in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the different interventions aiming ultimately to have a safe, caring, healthy and participative environment in 320 public schools across Jordan. The programme consists of three main components: the assessment of the learning environment, the improvement of the environmental quality assurance and the design of an accreditation system. The first component will provide data and information on the situation of the learning environment in public schools in general and the targeted schools in particular. The second component will improve the learning environment in schools through the design of communication programmes to raise awareness and promote positive behaviour, and thus provide schools with technical support to enable them to carry out small projects to improve the learning environment in partnership with the local community. The third component will design quality assurance and accreditation systems to measure progress towards improving the learning environment, and will select an external accreditation body to evaluate the school to obtain accreditation and thus develop motivations programme for accredited schools.

VIII. Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund was established by the Ministry of Education in 2004 to improve the learning environment by promoting innovation initiatives, connecting education to the real world and enhancing the efficiency of the education system by addressing the individual differences among learners. More than 48 schools submitted their projects in 2008 and managed to win US\$150,000 grants to implement these projects.

Annex 2: Questionnaires

Greetings,

UNESCO Office in Amman is conducting a study on "Making Education Relevant to the Requirements of Youth Employment in Jordan" in order to inform the on-going global process of defining the Development Agenda after 2015. ChangeAgent for Arab Development and Education Reform (CADER) was commissioned to design these questionnaires to determine Jordan's perception on this issue. We kindly ask you to answer objectively all the statements hereinafter based on your first-hand knowledge and experience, provided that this information will be kept confidential and will be used for scientific research purposes only.

We would like to point out that the questionnaire is divided into the following three sections upon UNESCO's request and in line with the other international efforts:

Section I: Learners preparedness and relevance of their pre-vocational basic skills and competencies.

Section II: Adequacy of teacher training programmes, delivery strategies and motivation schemes.

Section III: Relevance of Jordanian curricula to 21st Century and Knowledge Economy skills.

Thank for your cooperation and your contribution.

Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq

General Manager

ChangeAgent for Arab Development and Education Reform (CADER)

Occupation: Gender: Geographical area:

If you are a teacher, please state your school level:

If you are a student, please state your grade:

Under which category do you place yourself? Please tick in the appropriate box.

- Policy-makers, decision-makers
- Providers (university presidents, school principals and teachers, etc.)
- Beneficiaries and employers (students)
- Other interested groups (civil society, parents, journalists and others) - one group.

I. Prepare students and develop their skills and competencies in the general education:						
#	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Jordan education:						
1	Helps students apply knowledge and utilise it in practical and professional life.					
2	Provides students with skills of high transitional impact, such as thinking and problem solving.					
3	Enhances students' effective communication skills.					
4	Provides students with search for information skills.					
5	Provides students with positive values and attitudes towards vocational and technical work and handicrafts.					
6	Helps students choose the educational track according to their interests and abilities.					
7	Provides students with skills to enable them to generate entrepreneurial ideas and turn them into successful business opportunities.					
8	Enables students to utilize and use of ICTs in various fields.					
9	Provides students with a variety of learning resources that allow them to choose the appropriate learning resources.					
10	Provides students with the foundational literacy skills needed to improve chances of youths to enter the workforce.					
11	Provides students with basic numeracy skills needed to improve chances of youth to enter workforce.					
12	Provides students with reflection and self-evaluation skills.					
13	Develop students' ability to deal with different cultures and religions and individual diversity.					
14	Helps students choose a career path according to their interests and abilities.					
15	Takes into consideration the needs and requirements of disabled students to enter the workforce.					

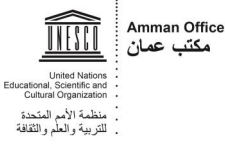
II. Adequacy of teacher training programmes, delivery strategies and motivation schemes						
#	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teacher preparation and training programmes in Jordan						
1	Meets teachers' needs and enhances their personal and professional development and performance.					
2	Provides teachers with effective communication skills with all school members.					
3	Provides teachers with teamwork skills.					
4	Provides realistic and appropriate solutions for teachers to be used in the classrooms.					
5	Helps teachers to diversify teaching and assessment methods to suit student needs.					
6	Helps teachers to develop innovative teaching methods.					
7	Helps teachers to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment for students.					
8	Enables teachers to lead a student-centred learning process that engages and respects students.					
9	Helps teachers to integrate ICT in education and self-directed learning.					
10	Offered in an interactive way which allows exchange of experience between adult learners.					
11	Combines theoretical, practical and applied training.					
12	Linked to the progress of teachers in the career rank (teacher assistant, head teacher, expert teacher, etc.)					
13	Sufficiently linked to teacher's motivation system.					
14	Provides teachers with reflection and self-evaluation skills.					
15	Enhances teachers' ability to deal with different cultures and religions and diversity among students					

III · Relevance of Jordanian curricular to 21st Century and Knowledge Economy skills.						
#	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Jordanian curricula						
1	Flexible and enable teachers to adapt their teaching methods to meet students' needs.					
2	Provide students with literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) that enable them to communicate effectively in their professional and personal lives.					
3	Provide students with numeracy skills needed in their professional and daily lives.					
4	Provide students with the 21 st century skills and the skills necessary to compete and succeed in a global knowledge society.					
5	Provide students with the skills needed to utilize ICT tools to obtain, manage and utilize information.					
6	Provide students with thinking and problem solving skills.					
7	Provide students with teamwork skills.					
8	Provide students with reflection and self-evaluation skills.					
9	Help students to connect experiences learned in the classroom to the real world.					
10	Provide a variety of learning sources.					
11	Make students the centre of the teaching-learning process.					
12	Help individualize education commensurate with students' characteristics of the students.					
13	Ignite students' motivation toward learning and creativity.					
14	Provide specialized academic knowledge coinciding with the rapid developments of the knowledge economy.					
15	Help build citizenship and respect for the law.					
16	Help raise sound environmental awareness among students.					
17	Include knowledge, skills and trends that encourage students to start their own business.					

List five priorities for education in Jordan you deem important that are not mentioned in the previous questions:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Annex 3: Address by Anna Paolini, Director of UNESCO Amman Office



On the occasion of the UNESCO-sponsored National Forum on: 'Making education relevant to the workplace for youth in Jordan' 19 February 2013

Your Excellencies,
Dear Resident Coordinator and dear colleagues from sister agencies and donors' community,
Distinguished Guests and Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen...

I am very pleased to welcome you all to this two day National Forum organized by the UNESCO Office in Amman on the theme: '*Making education relevant to the workplace for Youth in Jordan.*'

Due to the dynamic role that it plays in various international arena, Jordan has been selected among a sample of countries around the world to host national consultations on various thematic areas including education, in order to inform the on-going global process of defining a universal and inclusive Development Agenda after 2015 that represents better the aspirations of the world citizens from the grassroots rather than solely from the elite.

For UNESCO, young people represent such a social stratum that has the immense potential to propel their communities toward collective prosperity if provided the opportunities to succeed in fulfilling their aspirations. Promoting equal opportunities in schooling and strengthening the quality and relevance of education to the labour market are essential for UNESCO to prepare young people for the skills they need to secure decent jobs.

The choice of the theme of this two-day national consultation has been prompted by the very informative findings of the UNESCO-led 2012 Education for All (EFA), Global Monitoring Report entitled: '*Youth and skills: Putting education to work*'.

The UNESCO Office in Amman is very pleased to count on the presence among us of Dr. Pauline Rose, the Director of the independent and highly authoritative EFA Global Monitoring Report at UNESCO Headquarters, who will be sharing some of the key lessons and policy implications stemming from the latest report on youth, their skills and employability challenges.

As you are probably aware, all countries including Jordan committed themselves in Dakar (Senegal) in 2000 to achieve six major educational goals by the year 2015. These are:

- i) Expand early childhood care and education,

- ii) Provide free and compulsory primary education for all,
- iii) Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults,
- iv) Increase adult literacy by 50 per cent,
- v) Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015, and,
- vi) Improve the quality of education.

Later in the same year, in September 2000, World Leaders joined their voices at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the *Millennium Declaration*, committing their Nations to eight so called *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) aiming at reducing extreme poverty worldwide by 2015. Among these eight goals featured two of the EFA goals, namely: universal primary education completion and gender equality in primary and secondary education.

As the target date of 2015 for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, the international community is actively taking stock of headways or setbacks encountered by countries on their way to achieving these universal goals.

Jordan should be commended for being one of the top four high achievers among the Arab States in the Education For All (EFA) goals for promoting access to compulsory education, literacy and particularly gender equity and equality.

Indeed, in line with the international Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) targets, Jordan has made steady progress in improving access to compulsory education, in raising completion rates of primary education and eliminating gender disparities in education. In 2010, the primary net enrolment rate was 91%. This clearly places Jordan above the regional average. Youth literacy (age 15 to 24) is close to 100%. Although access to early childhood education has surged over the past several years to reach 32% in 2010, a lot more effort is needed for its expansion. Most statistics clearly show that Jordan offers equal learning opportunities for males and females.

As we all know, the King and the Queen's personal commitments toward education have certainly contributed to such progress. This probably explains why Jordan spends among its national priorities nearly 14% of total government expenditure on education which is higher than the average for countries with similar population sizes and income levels. The majority of education expenditures are targeted to basic education, which receives around 72% of total education expenditure.

The public-private partnership support to enrolling children is also dynamic and vibrant in Jordan. The private sector contributes for about 40% of the total number of schools. At the same time private schools enrol around 20% of the total number of Jordanian students with much improved pupil-teacher ratios.

Jordan should be also praised for addressing the educational needs of vulnerable groups such as working children, school dropouts, disabled children, and displaced persons.

Despite such significant achievements, the quality of education remains uneven. Discrepancies persist between urban and rural areas. Jordan's results from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in the three years of participation (1999, 2003, 2007) indicates that there is still a lot to do for improving the quality of education, for realigning curricula and transforming teaching and

learning methods. Although Jordan's grade 8 students ranked first in science and second in mathematics in the Middle East region on the 2007 TIMSS test, the score falls below the international average in mathematics. Furthermore, while Jordan showed slight improvement in its science scores between 1999 and 2003, it showed decline in its mathematics scores during the same period.

In early grades, the USAID-led national test released in 2012 on Reading skills in Jordan revealed that by the end of grade 3, the majority of students had not yet acquired sufficient foundational skills to read fluently with comprehension in Arabic. In short, the USAID study showed that students lack fundamental and critical skills for learning to read and spell correctly in Arabic. A parallel test by USAID on Mathematic skills shows that while the same young students are quite comfortable with some of the procedural mathematics skills, their conceptual understanding needs to be strengthened by well-trained teachers equipped with more innovative teaching practices.

Above all, the most worrying observation from the school system is the relevance of its outputs to the labour market.

According to the Director General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova, *“We are witnessing a young generation frustrated by the chronic mismatch between skills and work. Many youth, and women in particular, need to be offered alternative pathways to education, so that they gain the skills to earn a living, live in dignity and contribute to their communities and societies.”*

The Arab Spring has also brought our attention to similar frustrations among university graduates unable to find jobs to meet their aspirations.

Unemployment clearly remains a challenge for Jordan, especially among young people from 15-24 years of age. The unemployment rate for this age group has reached 27.7% in 2010 - that is more than twice the national unemployment rate (12.5%) among the total active age population.

According to a baseline study on vocational education sub-sector commissioned by the Ministry of Education and released in 2010 within the framework of the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy II (ERfKE II), employers rated vocational education graduates as poor in English and Mathematics with only 30% of employers stating that graduates had sufficient English skills to perform adequately on the job. This should be concern to all of us given the increasingly globalized and highly competitive labour market environment. No single employer among the ones interviewed in the study stated that they had ever been consulted to provide input, expectations or suggestions during curriculum reform processes.

The same study including other national policy framework reviews covering community colleges and universities revealed many other systemic weaknesses such as:

- vii) lack of flexible or demand-driven curricula,
- viii) low attractiveness of vocational sector in favour of field of studies that are only a trajectory to universities and later on to public sector jobs,
- ix) low entrepreneurship and self-employability skills among graduates,

- x) dysfunctional cooperation between employers and the business community leading to poor development of internship and apprenticeship schemes,
- xi) ineffective mechanisms, low quality and low relevance of pre- and in-service training for teachers,
- xii) weak governance structures and imbalanced financing of the vocational education and training sub-sector, etc.

In light of the high youth unemployment rate in Jordan, UNESCO considers the ‘vocationalisation’ of education and training as a potential key development challenge for youth in Jordan now and beyond 2015.

As the King and the Queen, rightly understood it, this must remain a transversal consideration for all stages of the education system, from kindergarten to university. This will imply a constantly innovative and careful identification of the core skills to be acquired at each stage of the education system given our rapidly changing information and knowledge-based economy environment.

As already identified through goal 8 of the MDGs at the beginning of the last decade, the potential of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) should be harnessed to promote efficiency in the delivery education to our young generation. These technologies open up new horizons for our young generation not only for their learning opportunities but also to learn how to live together as global citizens, to engage with new societal values of democracy, human rights, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among racial or religious groups...

The MDGs were meant to promote development through economic growth to alleviate poverty. However, the international community is increasingly realizing with the recurrent environmental calamities, that the pursuit of economic growth and development must be *sustainable*. This means we should care more and more about the pace at which world natural resources are being depleted. Else, the potential repercussions in terms of stagnating poverty pockets will lead to countries’ vulnerability and eventually to conflicts that we need to tackle from the roots. Knowing the two major national challenges faced by Jordan specifically on energy and water, UNESCO Office in Amman is proud that Jordan is forcefully committed to implementing new curricula on Education for Sustainable Development, on Water Education, including Disaster Risk Reduction awareness as part of extra-curricular activities in schools.

Within the next two days, the challenges ahead of us are to determine:

- 1) how adequate are the foundational skills being delivered by the Jordanian education system to students before they finish compulsory education at an age where they are legally allowed to enter the job market?
- 2) how satisfied are we with the modalities whereby teachers are trained and supported throughout their career in effectively and innovatively delivering required knowledge, values and skills to our youth?
- 3) how relevant and responsive are the contents of the Jordanian curricula to prepare our young generation for 21st Century and Knowledge Economy skills?

We hope to have responses to these questions and learn a lot from your participative deliberations over the coming sessions.

UNESCO, as an international laboratory of ideas, is globally engaged in the on-going process for defining the post-2015 Development Agenda by mobilizing global knowledge, catalysing the sharing of good practices and stimulating forward-looking research in order to identify, understand and anticipate the challenges for the future of education in an increasingly complex and changing world.

Beyond the contribution to the Post 2015 Development Agenda, UNESCO Office in Amman expects to build on your recommendations to re-focus its short and long term technical assistance to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan toward the continuous reform of its education sector.

I am confident that by the end of this National Forum, we will all feel enriched by the experiences shared and will be full of new ideas for developing innovative pedagogical approaches to better prepare our students for the needs of the labour market and enable them to reach their aspirations.

I would like to finish by saying that your active participation is crucial not only to this Post 2015 Development Agenda process but more importantly to mitigate educational and employability challenges among Jordanian Youth.

Thank you very much!

Annex 4: Address by Ms. Costanza Farina, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Jordan

On the occasion of the UNESCO-sponsored national forum for the Post-1015 Development Agenda on: 'Making education relevant to the workplace for youth in Jordan' 19 February 2013

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

It is an honour for me to be with you today at this Forum on the theme of on quality education for employment opportunities.

I wish to thank UNESCO and its partners for taking the initiative of organizing the Forum and for the continuous commitment to support Jordanian institutions in promoting quality education.

The event today is very timely and represents a key contribution to a larger process being rolled out nationally, regionally and internationally.

Globally, work is now under way to define a development agenda for the period after 2015, which is the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UN objective is to eradicate extreme poverty, promote equitable economic opportunity for all and protect the environment.

The first priority is to meet the promise of the MDGs. The credibility of the post-2015 development agenda depends on our success with the current one.

The MDGs rallied the donor community around some of the most pressing challenges of our time and helped set global and national development policy. But, we have yet to reach all the goals -- and the deadline is fast approaching. Progress is uneven and inequalities have increased. We need a new development framework that builds on the lessons of the MDGs -- a **long-term vision for people and for the planet**.

This is the second priority. The UN is leading the global conversation, engaging all actors in all regions.

We need a set of clear, concise and easy to communicate development goals that are universal but recognize national differences.

The core MDG issues will remain priorities, but the new agenda will encompass a broader set of interlinked challenges -- including **sustainability essentials** such as climate and energy, urbanization and agriculture, while also incorporating attention to conflict and fragility, and issues such as governance and accountability.

Third, we need a strong financial framework, with clear and effective monitoring mechanisms. The current global partnership for development needs to be rebalanced and redefined -- taking into account emerging economies, South-South partnerships, private sector engagement and innovative financing.

Marked by a bottom-up approach, the global consultations have the ambitious goal to reflect the views and the aspirations of the largest population, cutting across sectors and social groups.

The process is inclusive and designed to amplify the voices of those, who have not been heard.

Jordan is well positioned to play a prominent role and make substantive contributions at different levels within the Post 2015 dialogues.

Jordan has been recently invited (and has accepted) to co-host, with Switzerland and the Netherlands, the newly formed global thematic consultation on Water. We all know how critical water is for Jordan and in this region. It is therefore, highly significant that, as co-host country, Jordan will have a key role to play in the Post 2015 global dialogue on Water.

Jordan is also represented in the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons appointed by the UN Secretary General last July to advise on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Her Majesty Queen Rania has graciously accepted to be member of that Panel and is proactively engaged in its works.

In addition to these initiatives, Jordan is among the 8 other countries in the Arab region (and 65 countries in the world) that have been selected to conduct Post 2015 **national consultations**.

What should the Post 2015 development framework address? What are the aspirations and concerns of a young student in Irbid, or of a person with disabilities in Karak, or of an elderly in Aqaba?

The national consultations in Jordan are attempting to gather messages and responses to these and other questions in a very inclusive and transparent manner.

Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the UNCT has been tasked to facilitate this process and since last November has engaged with a broad range of partners: government, volunteers, youth and women organizations, media professionals, academia, the private sector and others stakeholders. The feedback has been so far very encouraging: there is enthusiasm, great interest in participating in the discussions and a high sense of ownership.

The SG Envoy for Youth, Mr Hindawy, from Jordan, told us recently: “**Contributing to shape the post 2015 development agenda is every body’s job**”

In line with this approach, the consultations made efforts to reach out to people beyond the capital, and went to in Irbid, Aqaba and Mafraq among others.

Around 15 dedicated events have taken place so far, and 14 more are upcoming. As of today, 950 people have been directly consulted, 55% of which are women and half are below 30 years old. By the end of March, we expect that around 2900 people would have been engaged in the process.

A communication strategy has been developed to sustain the consultations: global and national online surveys have been launched through our social media accounts, and some 3200 people have been reached, mainly youth.

It is within this context, that I very much look forward to the outcomes of the discussions today, since they will touch upon a critical topic, which has already emerged as a priority in some events: namely quality education and its relevance for the labour market.

Let me conclude now with a quote we received from a young participant in one of the early post 2015 events and which expresses anxiety for the future:

And I quote:

“Seeking a job is an arduous journey into the impossible”

I hope the recommendations of this forum will support concrete approaches and solutions to enable education to be **the vehicle** to expand young people’s opportunities and to fulfil their rights and aspirations.

Thank you for your attention.

Annex 5: Forum Agenda

Date	Time	Activity
Tuesday 19/02/2013	13:00 – 13:30	Registration of participants
	13:30 - 15:10 (with the presence of invited sister agencies and donors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief opening: Framing the purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome remarks <i>by Dr. Anna Paolini, Director and Representative of UNESCO Office in Amman</i> • Introduction of the Jordan Post-2015 National Consultation Process <i>by Dr. Costanza Farina - UN Resident Coordinator for Jordan</i> • Self-introduction of participants (led by CADER) ▪ Setting the stage: What works internationally? What do you want for Jordan? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the 'Education for All' Global Monitoring Report 2012 – major findings on successful policies and good practices of skills development for youth across the world <i>by Dr. Pauline Rose, Director of the 'Education for All' Global Monitoring Report Team - UNESCO Headquarters (Paris)</i> • Presentation of the Background Paper's major findings on the alignment of education to the workplace for youth in Jordan <i>by the Lead Facilitator</i>
	15:10 – 15:30	Coffee/tea break in breakout rooms
	15:30 – 17:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Three thematic working groups: Shaping the future you want (World Café style) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners preparedness and relevance of their pre-vocational basic competencies • Adequacy of teacher training programmes, delivery strategies and motivation schemes • Relevance of Jordanian curricula for 21st Century and Knowledge Economy skills
	17:30 – 18:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of outcomes of the three thematic working groups by <i>the Groups' Rapporteurs</i> (including a mind-mapping exercise led by CADER)
Wednesday 20/2/2013	9:30 – 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update on emerging trends from the consultations on education at the global level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation/discussion of the emerging Post-2015 global educational goals and overview on the on-going online consultation on education <i>by Dr. Pauline Rose, Director of the 'Education for All' Global Monitoring Report Team - UNESCO Headquarters (Paris)</i> ▪ Debriefing of working groups' session findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary presentation of the consolidated findings of the three thematic working groups <i>by the Lead Facilitator</i> • Voting on the mind-map
	11:00 – 12:00	Coffee/tea break
	12:00 – 1:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Debate/discussion in roundtables (8-10 people per table seated by profile) guided by moderators ▪ Designated table rapporteurs report on following outcomes from each table: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 issues of pride/success • 2 issues of regret/sorry/improvement • 3 action points to move forward and a slogan ▪ Preliminary summary of the initial outcomes of the National Forum on Education Relevance by the Lead Facilitator
	1:30 – 2:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forum conclusion: What is the world you want in brief? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding address <i>Dr. Anna Paolini, Director and Representative of UNESCO Office in Amman</i>
	2:00	Lunch/end

Annex 6: Mind Map for the Areas of Consultation

