THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Education Sector Analysis

2023/2024

CH1: Context of the Education Sector in Jordan
CH2: Access, internal efficiency, and out-of-school children
CH3: Cost and Financing
CH4: Education System Quality and Teacher Management
CH5: Inclusion and Diversity in Education
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FOREWORD BY H.E. THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Amid the rapid transformations taking place around the world, and in light of the increasing challenges facing societies in their pursuit of sustainable development, education remains the most important pillar, the most effective means of achievement and the ultimate goal. It is through education that nations are built, identities are forged and the future is shaped. From this standpoint, the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) places education at the forefront of its national priorities, as an investment in human capital and a gateway to progress and prosperity.

The analysis of the education sector in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as presented by the MoE in this document, is not merely a review of data or procedures. Rather, it is a responsible national action aiming to provide an in-depth assessment of the educational system's status, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and foresee prospects for its development in line with the ambitions of the Jordanian State and the aspirations of its citizens. This analysis aligns with the strategic plan of the Ministry, which is centred on improving the quality of education, enhancing equity in access to it, developing infrastructure, advancing human resources, and promoting good governance.

Recent data and official reports have shown that the Jordanian education system faces multiple challenges. These are related to disparate attainment levels, the growing gap between the centre and the periphery, and the increasing need to develop curricula, modernize teaching methods, and expand the scope of vocational and technical education while linking it to the labour market. Nevertheless, these challenges are not seen as obstacles, but rather as a driving force for renewal and an opportunity to rebuild on stronger foundations that are more responsive to the demands of the modern era.

The analysis pays special attention to early childhood, a stage proven to be the most important in shaping a child's mental, psychological and social abilities. The Early Childhood Education & Development Executive Plan (2016-2025) shows that investing in this stage positively affects children's school readiness, academic success and psychological and social well-being. This analysis highlights the challenges facing this sector in terms of infrastructure, staff training and curriculum development. It also proposes practical approaches for the educational system's development through an effective partnership between the public and private sectors, in cooperation with international organizations and civil society.

The analysis also addresses the integration of marginalized groups as an indicator of educational equity and a criterion for the quality of the education system. Inclusive education is not measured by the number of enrolled students, but rather by their ability to learn, engage, integrate and thrive in a safe and stimulating school environment. With the support of its partners, the MoE launched the National

Framework for Inclusion and Diversity in Education, which seeks to provide a fair and inclusive educational environment that takes into account individual differences and guarantees the right to education for all, including children with disabilities, children from less fortunate areas, refugees and other groups that deserve to be an active part of the educational community.

In this context, recognizing the importance of multiple partnerships emerges as an indispensable requirement for achieving the desired goals. Education is no longer the responsibility of one entity, but a collective responsibility that requires the combined efforts of the public and private sectors, academic institutions, civil society, international organizations and all those who believe that human development is the true gateway to nation-building. These partnerships, when managed with a clear vision and built on trust and integration, contribute to enhancing innovation, expanding the scope of impact, and accelerating progress.

Any discussion of educational development in Jordan would be incomplete without reference to the Royal Vision expressed by His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein – may God protect him – in the Seventh Discussion Paper. This vision emphasized that education is the core of reform and that a modern democratic model cannot be built without a robust educational system that produces active, critical, educated and creative citizens capable of interacting with the world and contributing to its progress. This vision constitutes a framework for every effort made to advance education. It stands as a beacon for educational policies and a source of inspiration for plans and programmes.

As we present this analysis of the education sector, we extend our deep appreciation to all those who contributed to its development: employees, experts, partners and stakeholders who devoted their time and effort to data collection, indicator interpretation and policy recommendation. We extend our thanks and appreciation to them for their profound commitment to the mission of education and their firm belief in its role in shaping both the individual and society. Their work is not merely a professional contribution; it is a noble patriotic act, deserving of appreciation and praise. It constitutes a fundamental building block of a brighter educational future – one in which we envision a society that keeps pace with international developments while honouring Jordan's unique characteristics in all aspects.

We believe that education is a national priority and that its development can only be achieved through a clear vision, strong will, coordinated collective action and multilateral partnerships based on trust, synergy and scientific and humanitarian principles. This document, including the analysis, review and recommendations, is not the end of the road, but rather the beginning of a long journey of reform and development, in which we hope Jordan's education system will become a role model and a source of pride for every Jordanian citizen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Education extends its sincere gratitude to its dedicated staff, whose extensive efforts, commitment and technical input were instrumental in the success of this work. Key contributions came from: the Development Coordination Unit; the General Education Directorate, which manages fields such as non-formal education, special education, early childhood and career guidance; the Educational Planning and Research Directorate, including its divisions and directorates managing financial resources, risk management, statistics, gender and strategic partnerships, educational research and development, and institutional performance; the Education Quality and Accountability Unit; the Examinations and School Tests Directorate; the Financial Affairs Directorate; the Human Resources Directorate; the Internal Control Unit; the Queen Rania Center for Education Technology and Information; the Vocational Education and Production Directorate; and the Training and Educational Supervision Directorate.

Senior leadership at the Ministry of Education also played a pivotal role in this achievement, under the leadership of His Excellency the Minister of Education, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Secretary General for Administrative and Financial Affairs, the Secretary General for Educational Affairs, the Secretary General for Higher Education, and the Secretary of Jordan's National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

This collective effort reflects the Ministry's close internal coordination and commitment to producing a comprehensive and data-driven sector analysis.

The Ministry also wishes to acknowledge and express its deep appreciation for the significant contributions made by key national entities and institutions – particularly the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and the Ministry of Social Development, as well as the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions, the Department of Statistics, the General Budget Department, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability, the National Center for Human Resources Development, and the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission – whose active engagement was essential to the development of this work.

The Education Sector Analysis was carried out over approximately one year, during which extensive data review, workshops, consultations, and technical meetings took place and included the participation of a broad spectrum of stakeholders across the education sector and other concerned sectors. These stakeholders included educators, academic institutions, civil society representatives and development partners (in particular through the Policy Planning and Coordination Committee/PPCC).

Importantly, this work, along with the broader initiative it supports, has been made possible by the technical support of UNESCO and its International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and with the generous financial support of the UNESCO Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) members (Canada, Italy, Norway and Switzerland) through the System Strengthening Partnership Program established with Jordan's Ministry of Education and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The Ministry extends its gratitude to UNESCO/IIEP and the donors involved for their continuous commitment to strengthening the education system in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

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ACRONYMS

AAGR	Average annual growth rates
ALMP	Active labour market policies
AQACHEI	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions
ASAS	Early Grade Education Activity (USAID-funded programme)
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CBJ	Central Bank of Jordan
COA	Chart of accounts
CSB	Civil Service Bureau
CSS	Centre for Strategic Studies
DAFI	Albert Einstein Academic Refugee Initiative
DEF	Development and Employment Fund
DHS	Demographic and health survey
DoS	Department of Statistics
ECCD	Early childhood care and development
ECDI	Early Childhood Development Index
ECED	Early childhood education and development
EDI	Early Development Instrument
EFA	Education for all
EFW	Education Finance Watch
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EIU	Early Intervention Units
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EMV	Economic Modernization Vision
ERICC	Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis
ESMP	Enhancing School Management and Planning
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
GAGE	Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
GAR	Gross attendance rate
GBD	General Budget Department
GBS	General budget support
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
GFMIS	Government Financial Management Information System
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPA	Grade point average
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Gender parity index
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting

HCD	Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
HDI	Human development index
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HPC	Higher Population Council
HRCRT	Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance
ICF	Inner City Fund
ICT	Information and communications technologies
IDELA	International Development and Early Learning Assessment
IEC	Internal efficiency coefficient
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
InfoRM	Index for Risk Management
IREX	International Research & Exchanges Board
IT	Information technology
JAA	Jordan Academy of Arabic
JLMPS	Jordan Labour Market Panel Survey
JMP	Jordan Model Parliament
JNQF	Jordan National Qualifications Framework
JOD	Jordanian dinar
LFS	Labour force survey
LQAS	Lot Quality Assurance Sampling
MASAR	Modernizing Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms
MDT	Multidisciplinary team
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MPWH	Ministry of Public Works and Housing
NAF	National Aid Fund
NAR	Net attendance rate
NCCD	National Centre for Curriculum Development
NCFA	National Council for Family Affairs
NCRA	National Centre for the Rehabilitation of Addicts

NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NFE	Non-formal education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFP	National School Feeding Programme
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OOS	Out-of-school
OOSCI	Out-of-School Children Initiative
ORF	Oral reading fluency
PI	Parity index
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Public-private partnerships
PRESTIJ	Pre-Service Teacher Education in Jordan
PROMISE	Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education in Jordan
PSTE	Pre-Service Teacher Education
PTR	Pupil-to-teacher ratio
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RAMP	Reading and Mathematics Project
SBS	Sector budget support
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
SLE	School life expectancy
SRGBV	School-related gender-based violence
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TES	Transforming Education Summit
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TLM	Teaching and learning materials
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TVSDC	Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VE	Vocational education
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WBL	Work-Based Learning
WFP	World Food Programme
WIDE	World Inequality Database on Education

CHAPTER 1:
Context of the Education Sector in Jordan

INTRODUCTION

Jordan is home to a young, educated population, predominantly concentrated in urban areas and highly diverse in character. Geographically situated in a turbulent region, the country has retained stability and currently hosts the world's second-highest number of refugees per capita (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2025). With limited natural resources, the Middle Eastern nation has leveraged its human capital to achieve high levels of human development, but continues to grapple with persistent inequalities, particularly for women and non-Jordanian populations. While educational attainment among adults has increased substantially for both sexes over the past decade, inequality persists, disproportionately affecting poorer households, rural areas and refugee groups (Department of Statistics, 2024a).

Surrounded by regional instability and the challenges of climate change, the Government of Jordan has been proactive in strengthening its capacity to manage risk. Despite significant vulnerabilities, Jordan's small economy has shown remarkable resilience in the face of economic shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic was particularly punishing, driving a sharp economic contraction, fuelling soaring public debt, and severely disrupting key sectors such as tourism and services (Central Bank of Jordan, 2025).

As the country rebounds, Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV) provides a blueprint for national development, setting clear investment priorities to foster sustainable growth and inclusion. The EMV identifies education as a strategic pillar for national recovery and prosperity, with early childhood care and education, basic, secondary, higher education and technical and vocational education and training all highlighted as strategic priorities (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022a).

Occupations requiring advanced education are on the rise in Jordan, yet labour market participation remains very low and highly gender-segmented (ILO, 2025). While the government has pursued a consistent fiscal policy in recent years, investment in education still falls short of international benchmarks and lags behind other countries in the region, highlighting the need for increased, sustainable financing if education is to fulfil its anticipated potential role as a driver for economic progress (World Bank, 2025).

This chapter provides an overview of the key factors likely to shape the development of Jordan's education sector in the coming years. It begins with a description of the country's demographic profile, then outlines the socio-economic context and provides an overview of the labour market. It goes on to discuss Jordan's vulnerabilities to crises, followed by an analysis of recent macroeconomic and fiscal performance. The final section introduces Jordan's national development policy framework and highlights the role of education within this strategy.

1.1. Demographic context

The size and characteristics of the school-aged population – key factors in educational planning – are determined by the age distribution of the population and how it changes over time. Jordan's population is predominantly young, concentrated in urban areas, and highly diverse, with a large share made up of refugees from conflict-affected countries in the region. Much of the demographic data in this section is based on Department of Statistics projections using Jordan's most recent population census, conducted in 2015.

Estimated at 11.5 million at the end of 2023, Jordan's population is densely concentrated in urban areas (90.3%), but unevenly distributed across its 12 governorates. Three governorates account for 75% of the total population: Amman (42%), Irbid (18.5%) and Zarqa (14.3%). Mafraq and Balqa together make up another 11% (5.8% and 5.2%, respectively), while the remaining 13% are spread across the other seven governorates (DoS, 2023).

Jordan's population growth has slowed, but demographic dynamics have been strongly affected by external shocks. Population growth declined from 4.9% in the period 1952–61, to 3.1% in the period 1994–2004 and 2.4% in the period 2015–2023, according to Department of Statistics estimates. The higher average growth rate between 2004 and 2015 (5.0%) is mainly explained by the influx of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly from the Syrian Arab Republic between 2012 and 2015. In 2023, annual population was the lowest in Jordan's history, at 1.9% (DoS, 2023).

About three in 10 residents of Jordan are of non-Jordanian nationality, according to the 2015 population census, the most recent available. The high share of non-Jordanians is partly attributable to Jordan's important role as a host country for refugees and asylum seekers in the region (see Box 1.1). While the change of government in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2024 raised hopes for the possible return of Syrian refugees, significant uncertainty about the country's future persists, preventing many Syrians living in Jordan from returning. These figures underline the importance of the raft of inclusive policies Jordan has put in place to help meet the education needs of these groups, which are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Box 1.1: Registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Jordan

Jordan hosts the world's second-highest number of refugees per capita, with 615,715 registered refugees and asylum-seekers as of early 2025. Women and girls account for exactly half of the total number of refugees. A total of 47% of all refugees and asylum-seekers are children under 15 years of age, and 5% are 65 years of age and older, indicating a high dependency ratio (1.07) among this subpopulation.

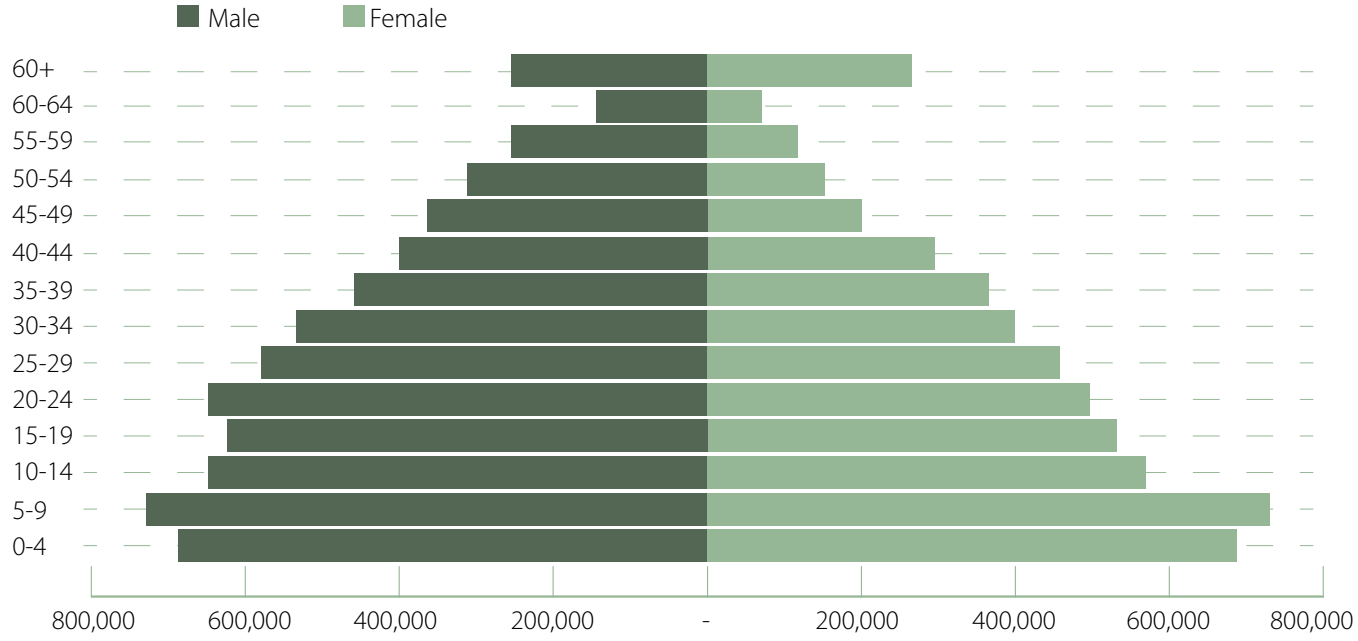
Overall, 90.7% of Jordan's refugees come from the Syrian Arab Republic, with smaller groups from Iraq (6.6%), Yemen (1.7%), Sudan (0.8%), and Somalia (0.1%). About three out of four refugees arrived in Jordan between 2012 and 2014. Since 2017, the number of yearly arrivals has been declining, with fewer than 100 new registered refugees in 2024. It should be noted that registration of asylum-seekers and refugees by UNHCR has been suspended since 2019, following a decision by the Jordanian Government.

An estimated 81% of Jordan's registered refugees live in urban areas outside refugee camps, most of them in Amman (35%) and Irbid (17.5%). Mafraq and Zarqa host the two largest refugee camps in Jordan: Zaatari and Azraq, which together host 19% of the total population of refugees and asylum-seekers in Jordan.

Source: (UNHCR, 2025)

Jordan's population is young. Children younger than 15 years of age accounted for 34.3% of the total population in 2023, while young people between 15 and 24 years of age made up another 19.9%. By contrast, only 3.7% of the population was 65 years of age or older in 2023. This demographic pyramid results in a relatively low dependency ratio – 0.61, or fewer than one resident of dependent age for every two residents of productive age **(Figure 1.1).**

Figure 1.1. Jordan's population pyramid in 2023



Source: DoS, 2023

With declining fertility rates and low infant mortality, Jordan's population is expected to live longer. The crude birth rate[1] fell from 23 per 1,000 in 2016 to 16 in 2023, while the total fertility rate declined from 3.4 live births per woman to 2.6 over the same period. Child marriage and teenage pregnancy rates remain low, though higher among refugee groups. The infant mortality rate dropped from 17 per 1,000 live births in 2016 to 14 in 2023. The crude death rate has remained stable, and life expectancy at birth stood at 75.3 years in 2023 **(Table 1.1).**

Table 1.1. Basic social indicators in Jordan, 2016-2023

Vital Rates	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Crude Birth Rate (per 000)	22.6	23.3	22.3	20.6	17.4	18.1	17.2	16
Crude Death Rate (per 000)	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Total Fertility Rate (Live Birth\ Women)	3.38	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 live births)	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	14
Life Expectancy at Birth (Both Sexes)	73.5	73.5	73.5	73.3	73.3	73.3	73.3	75.3
Population Growth Rate (per cent)	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.2	1.9

Source: DoS, 2023

1 Annual number of live births per 1,000 population.

Disability rates appear low, though survey data suggest a slight increase over the decade. According to the 2015 population census, 2.7% of the total population lived with "severe or absolute difficulty" in at least one functional domain. The 2023 Jordan population and family health survey, which used the Washington Group module,[2] found a prevalence rate of 4% among de facto household members of 5 years of age and above who reported having a lot of difficulty or being unable to function at all in at least one domain (Department of Statistics, 2024a). The next census, scheduled for 2026, will shed further light on this trend.

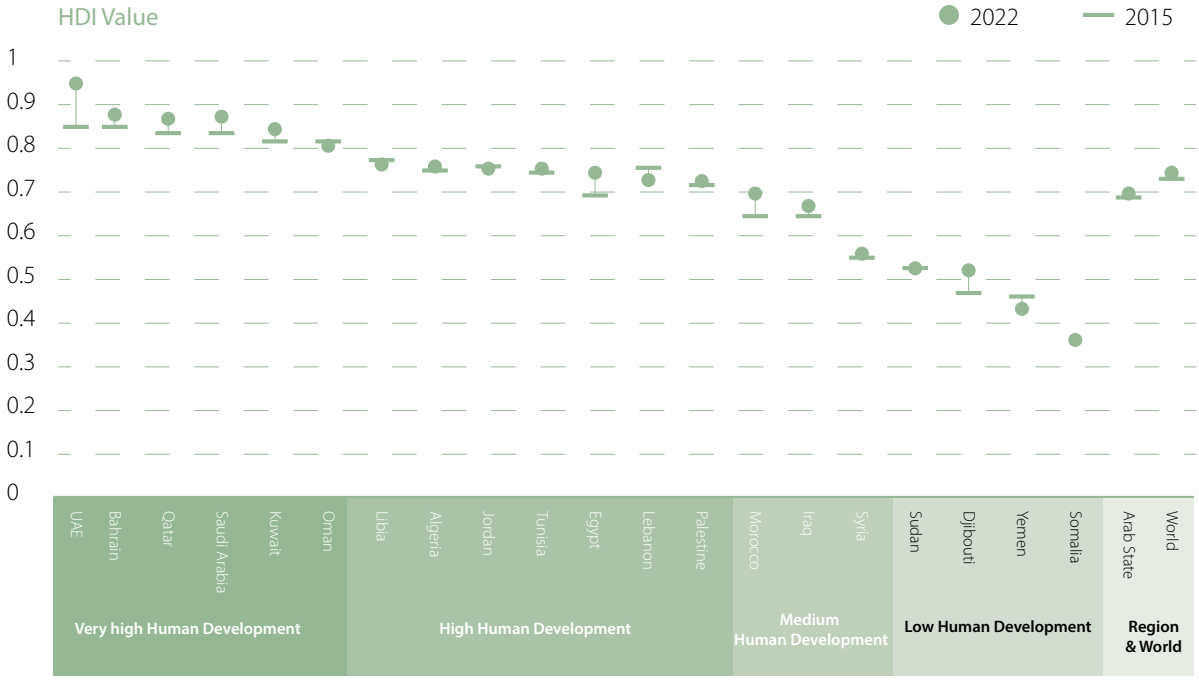
1.2. Socio-economic context

Jordan has achieved high levels of human development, yet important inequalities persist.

1.2.1 Social development

Jordan's level of human development is considered high and is comparable with several other countries in the region. The human development index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a composite measure of average attainment in three key dimensions: health, education and income. It therefore provides a useful overview of a country's well-being and development. In 2022, Jordan's HDI value was 0.736, close to that of other Arab countries such as Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia **(Figure 1.2).**

Figure 1.2. Human Development Index for Arab countries in 2015 and 2022

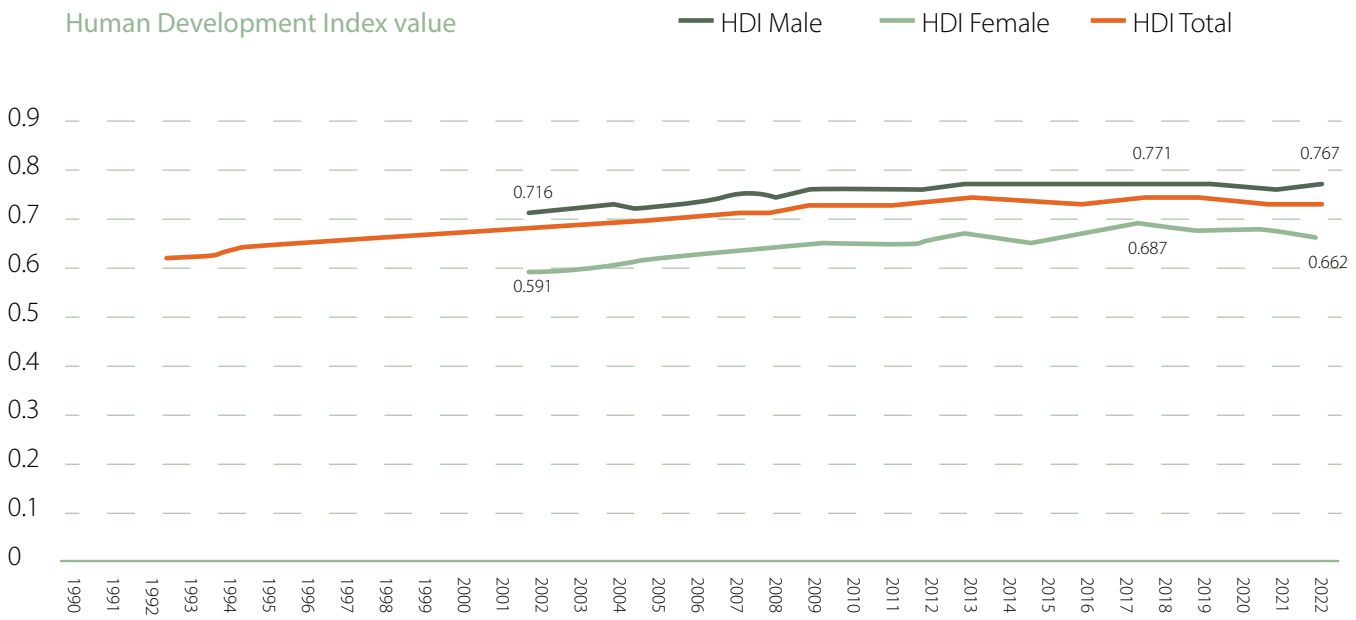


Source: (UNDP, 2025)

2 Rather than viewing disability as a medical condition, the Washington Group model focuses on difficulties in daily activities such as seeing, hearing, communication, cognition, mobility and self-care. It highlights how individuals' abilities interact with their environment and helps to identify those at risk of exclusion when the environment does not support their needs.

After steady improvements in human development, progress has shown signs of regression in recent years. From 1990 to the early 2010s, HDI values rose consistently from 0.622 in 1990 to 0.681 in 2000 and 0.727 in 2010, placing the country among the high human development group of countries. The index peaked at 0.744 in 2017 and remained around this level until 2020, before slipping back to 0.736 in 2022, close to the levels seen in 2012–2015 **(Figure 1.3).**

Figure 1.3. Jordan Human Development Index by sex, 1990-2022



Source: (UNDP, 2025).

Pronounced gender inequalities continue to hamper women's progress in Jordan. In 2022, Jordan's female HDI was 0.662, compared with 0.767 for males **(Figure 1.3).** The gap between female and male HDI values has widened over the past two decades. Among the three HDI dimensions – health, education, and income – the greatest disparity is in income, the main driver of women's disadvantage. This reflects women's significantly lower labour force participation and earnings compared with men. Because income disparities are large, they have a disproportionate impact on the overall HDI, pulling it upwards and closer to the male value. The Social Institutions and Gender Index[3] of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), conducted in 2023, also confirmed persistently high levels of discrimination, compared with regional and world averages (OECD, 2025).

Gender inequalities in Jordan are embedded in social norms. Many of the gaps observed in the labour market, health and education are linked to traditional beliefs and stereotypes about women's roles. The World Values Survey (2017–2022) assessed attitudes towards gender equality across four areas: politics, education, the economy and physical integrity. According to the latest survey, almost all Jordanians (98.5%) held gender biases in at least one area, and 92.3% in at least two. The highest levels of bias were recorded in the economic domain (87%), followed by politics (84%) and physical integrity (81%). Gender bias in education was lower but still present among 24% of respondents. While these figures confirm that gender inequalities remain widespread, the survey also points to progress. Compared with the previous survey (2010–2014), gender bias has declined in all areas, with the greatest improvements in political attitudes (from 92% to

3 The Social Institutions and Gender Index of the OECD measures discrimination against women in four areas: family, physical integrity, access to productive and financial resources, and civil liberties.

84%) and education (from 29% to 24%) (World Values Survey Association, 2025).

The rate of early marriage among women in Jordan remains relatively high. According to the 2023 Jordan population and family health survey, 15% of women aged 20–49 were married by 18 years of age, compared with just 1% of men. Very early marriage, before the age of 15, is uncommon: only 2% of women in this age group were married that early (DoS, 2024a).

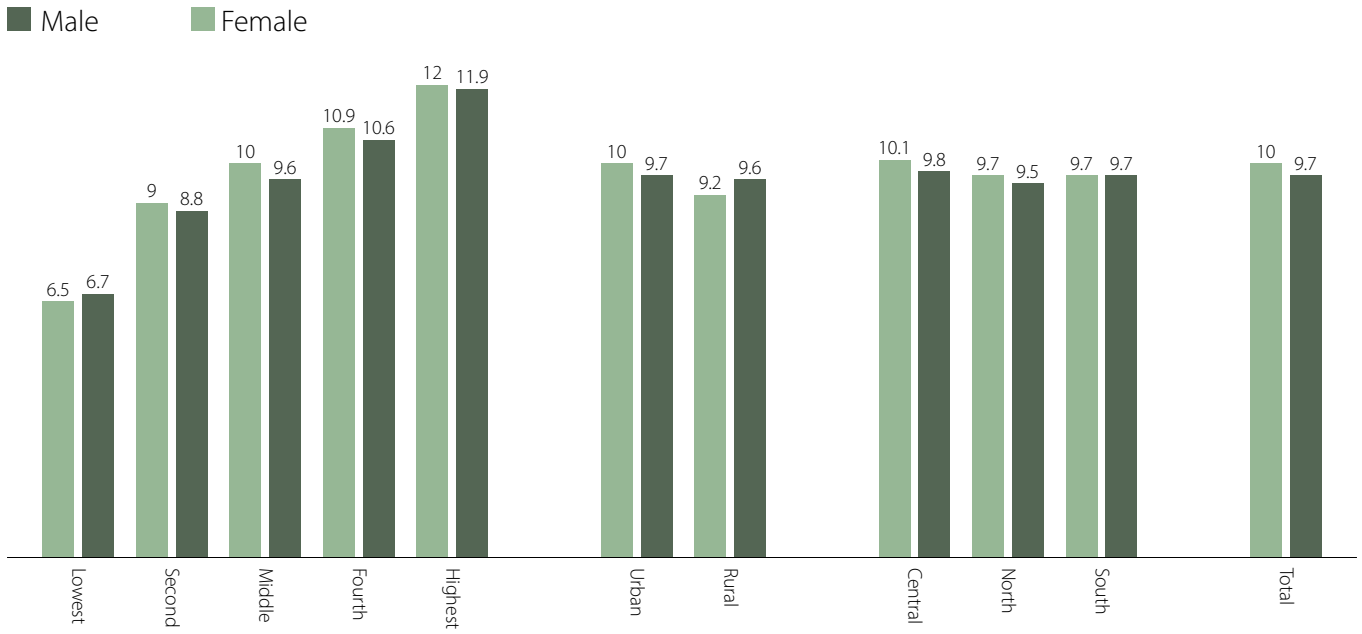
Poverty levels are relatively low but have shown signs of increase in recent years. The last official poverty data from the Department of Statistics dates back to 2010, when 14% of the population lived below the national poverty line – a rate unchanged since 2002. Poverty varied across regions, with Amman reporting the lowest rate (11%), while Ma'an (27%), Ajloun (26%), and Balqa (21%) recorded the highest. These three governorates also experienced the most severe poverty, with greater income disparities among those classified as poor. More recent government estimates, published in the world development indicators database indicate that by 2018, 16% of the population lived below the national poverty line, pointing to a gradual increase over the decade (World Bank, 2025). In 2023, Jordan was reclassified by the World Bank as a lower-middle-income country after having been classified as an upper-middle-income country between 2016 and 2022. The reclassification reflects a decline in gross national income per capita, influenced by broader economic challenges, including regional instability, the COVID-19 pandemic, and pressures on public services and employment.

The poorest households in Jordan are more likely to live in rural areas and in the central region. Urban households are more concentrated in the higher wealth quintiles: 22% of the urban population falls in the highest quintile, compared with 5% of the rural population. Wealth disparities are also evident across regions, with 25% of the population in the central region in the highest wealth quintile, compared with 11% in the North and 12% in the South (DoS, 2023).

1.2.2 Education overview

Educational attainment in Jordan is rising rapidly, but opportunities remain unequal. In 2023, Jordanian residents, both men and women, had completed an average of 10 years of schooling – double the figure in 1990. The 2023 Jordan population and family health survey collected data on educational attainment (years of schooling) for the household population aged 6 and above. It showed that between 1990 and 2023, the median years of schooling increased from 5.3 to 10.0 for women and from 6.2 to 9.7 for men. The data also show a clear increase in attainment levels from the lowest economic quintile (6.5 for females, 6.7 for males) to the highest (12 for females, 11.9 for males), with only slight gender differences across categories. Urban areas record slightly higher attainment (10 for females, 9.7 for males) than rural areas (9.2 for females, 9.6 for males), with rural females having the lowest level. Regional variations are small, though the central region shows slightly higher levels (DoS, 2024a; see **Figure 1.4**).

Figure 1.4. Mean years of schooling of Jordanian residents by sex, wealth quintile, location (rural/ urban) and region, 2023



Source: DoS, 2024

Important gaps in educational attainment remain. Data from two recent nationally representative surveys, published in 2023, complement the picture of educational attainment among Jordanian adults **(Table 1.2)** and reveal significant disparities, especially in relation to those who have no education and those who have not completed secondary school. A considerable proportion of adults, particularly women, have no formal education, and about half the population has not completed secondary education. This highlights a gap in educational opportunities, with many adults falling short of the basic levels of education needed for greater economic and social participation.

Table 1.2. Distribution of population aged over 15 years of age by educational attainment in Jordan, 2023, by sex

	Sex	No education	Less than secondary	Secondary	More than secondary	Missing
LFS[(1)]	Women	10.0%	44.0%	17.0%	29.0%	
	Men	4.0%	53.0%	17.0%	25.0%	
DHS	Women	6.2%	41.6%	24.4%	27.7%	0.1%
	Men	3.6%	46.3%	26.2%	23.9%	0.0%

Source: Author's calculations based on DoS data, 2024.

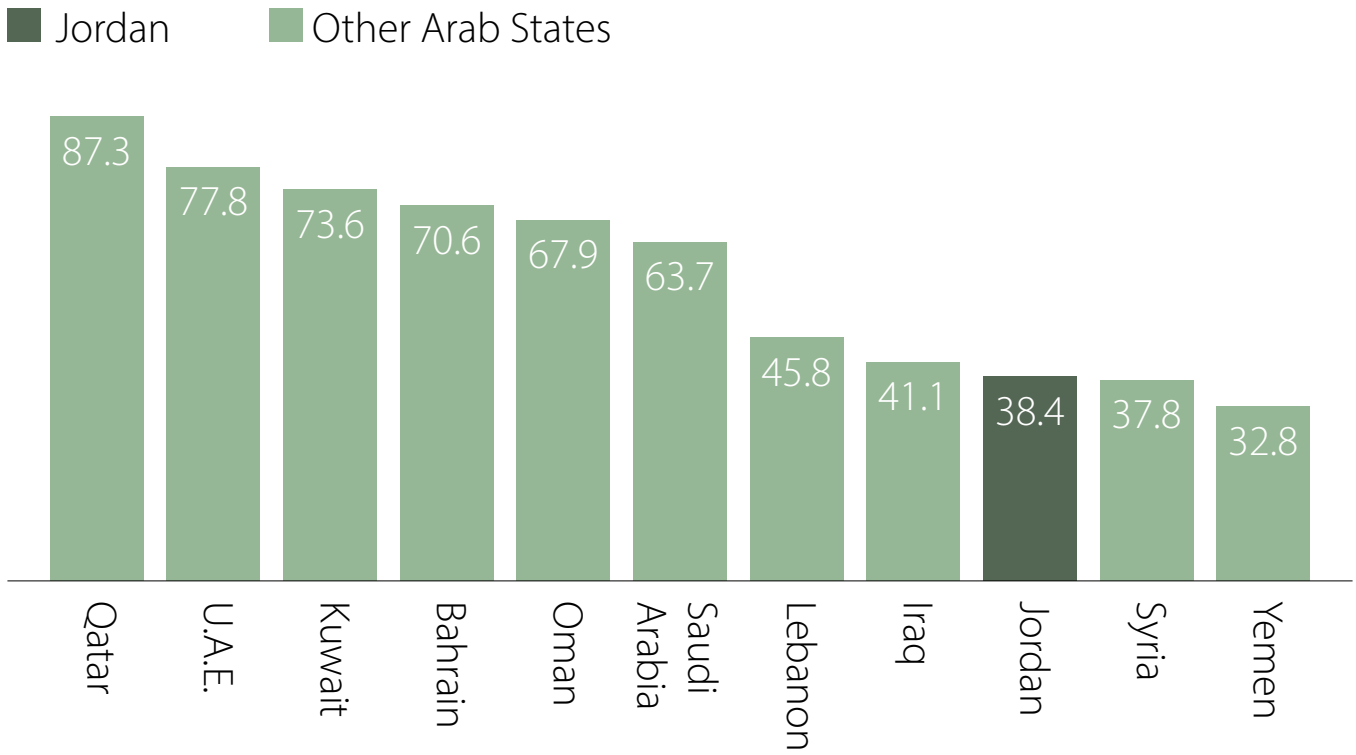
Note: (1) Categories of educational attainment used in the labour force survey (LFS) were grouped to align those used in the demographic and health survey (DHS). No education: "illiterate" or "read and write"; Less than secondary: "elementary", "preparatory" or "basic education"; Secondary: "vocational apprenticeship" or "secondary"; More than secondary: "Diploma intermediate" or "Bachelor and above".

1.2.3 Labour market trends

The analysis of labour market trends is essential for understanding and planning the supply of post-basic education. This helps to ensure that education and training programmes align with current and future workforce needs, thereby strengthening employability and economic productivity.

Overall, Jordan has one of the lowest labour force participation rates in the world, with marked gender gaps. According to data from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Jordan's participation rate (all nationalities) is low and comparable to that of the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq **(Figure 1.5).** Jordan's most recent labour force survey shows that only one in three Jordanians over 15 years of age (33%) were working or seeking work in 2023; results refer to the Jordanian population, as data for non-Jordanians is incomplete. This average masks a significant gender gap: 53% of men participated in the labour force, compared with just 14% of women (Department of Statistics, 2024b). Cultural norms, lack of child care support, limited flexible work arrangements and unsuitable working conditions all contribute to this gap (ILO, 2023). This issue is explored further in Chapter 9.

Figure 1.5. Labour force participation rates in Jordan and other Arab States, 2025 estimate



Source: ILO, n.d.

Paid employees accounted for 85% of Jordanian workers in 2023, followed by 10% who were self-employed and fewer than 5% who were employers. Jordanian women were less likely to be self-employed (2.5% of female Jordanian employment) or employers (1.7%), and more likely than men to be employed in the public sector (DoS, 2024b).

Female employment is concentrated in a limited number of sectors, particularly education, health, social work and manufacturing. Jordan's paid employees overall are evenly distributed across occupation requiring different levels of education, with a slight majority in jobs requiring advanced education. Women were more likely than men to work in such occupations

and are under-represented in those requiring little education. Among female paid employees, 42% were employed in education, 14% in health or social work, and 16% in manufacturing. On average, the monthly wage of Jordanian women is 10% lower than that of men (DoS, 2023).

Unemployment in Jordan is high, particularly among women, except in two governorates. In 2023, the unemployment rate for the population of Jordan aged 15 years and above was 22%. At 31%, women were around 50% more likely to be unemployed than men (20%). Variation across the governorates is limited: Ma'an and Mafraq are the only governorates where men and women face similar unemployment levels (DoS, 2024b).

The job market for occupations requiring advanced education shows signs of dynamism. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of Jordanian paid employees rose by about 95,000, with balanced growth across the private and public sectors and between men and women. Net new jobs were concentrated in occupations requiring higher educational attainment: 35% were for professionals, 28% in service and sales, and 12% in elementary occupations. Public administration, defence and social security accounted for 16% of new jobs, followed by wholesale and trade and education (14% each), and manufacturing (13%) (DoS, 2023).

1.3. Vulnerability to climate risk and other shocks

Jordan has taken concerted action to strengthen its risk management capacity amid regional instability and climate change uncertainty.

Jordan is considered globally to face a medium level of risk, with an Index for Risk Management (InfoRM)[4] index value of 3.7 in 2025. The country is moderately exposed to climate-related hazards, such as extreme temperatures, droughts, flash floods, storms and landslides. These hazards are increasing in frequency and intensity and are expected to affect various sectors, including agriculture, biodiversity, urban development, water, health and education (Ministry of Environment, 2021). Reliance on foreign aid, internal inequalities and the large size of vulnerable groups, including refugees and women, may exacerbate the impact of disasters. Jordan shows moderate capacity to cope with both natural and human-made hazards (European Commission Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre, 2024).

Over the past 15 years, Jordan's development has been significantly affected by external shocks, including the 2008 global financial crisis, the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic, and regional conflicts from 2011 to the present. These events disrupted trade and brought an influx of 1.3 million Syrian refugees, placing additional strain on Jordan's limited natural resources and services. Water scarcity and heavy reliance on food and energy imports remain Jordan's main vulnerabilities (World Bank, 2022). Within the education sector, COVID-19 disrupted the implementation of the MoE Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018–2025, hindering progress and overall performance. As a result, the plan was extended from 2018–2022 to 2025.

4 InfoRM is a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness and the European Commission. It produces an annual composite risk index based on three dimensions: hazards and exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity. Each is scored from 0 (low risk) and 10 (high risk), and the average provides the country's overall risk value. Source: InfoRM - Global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters.

The Government of Jordan is proactively engaged in mitigating the domestic impact of global and regional crises, especially climate change. In 2021, Jordan adopted its National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, followed in 2022 by the National Climate Change Policy 2022-2050 (Ministry of Environment; UNDP, 2022). Jordan's climate change adaptation priority sectors include water, agriculture, land use, coastal management, health and tourism. The National Climate Change Policy underscores the importance of mainstreaming climate change into educational curricula and training programmes (Ministry of Environment, 2021). Environmental sustainability is also a cornerstone of Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV), which identifies green economy development, improved sustainability of natural resources, and food security as key growth drivers (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022a). Climate change is already affecting education in Jordan, putting children's learning at risk. Extreme weather events, including heatwaves, droughts and flash floods, damage school infrastructure and disrupt learning. Rural and water-scarce areas are particularly affected, with children facing not only interrupted education but also greater risks to their well-being. These challenges add pressure on families and educators. With the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimating that nearly a quarter of a billion children's education worldwide was disrupted by climate crises in 2024, climate change risks will become an increasing concern for Jordan's education sector (UNICEF, 2025).

Jordan's current Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2023-2030 is an important road map for promoting a shared understanding of prevailing disaster risks and assessing the current disaster risk reduction system and its capacity to achieve its objectives. These objectives are determined by the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management, as the body responsible for coordinating national efforts in this area, in consultation with all relevant national institutions and entities.[5] In line with the education-related elements of the national strategy, Jordan has developed a Crisis and Risk Management Strategy for the Ministry of Education (2023-2027) and has taken significant steps towards the institutionalization of crisis and risk management at all levels of the education system (UNESCO, 2023a). A recent independent evidence review focusing on the education of conflict-affected children in Jordan concluded that there is a need for appropriate indicators to effectively drive and monitor progress in practice, especially with regard to refugee education outcomes and students with disabilities, and to enhance public accountability across all levels. Aware of this challenge, the government has made efforts to decentralize decision-making and promote school-level management for greater autonomy and responsiveness at the local level (Rauschenberger, Sabella, and ERICC consortium, 2023).

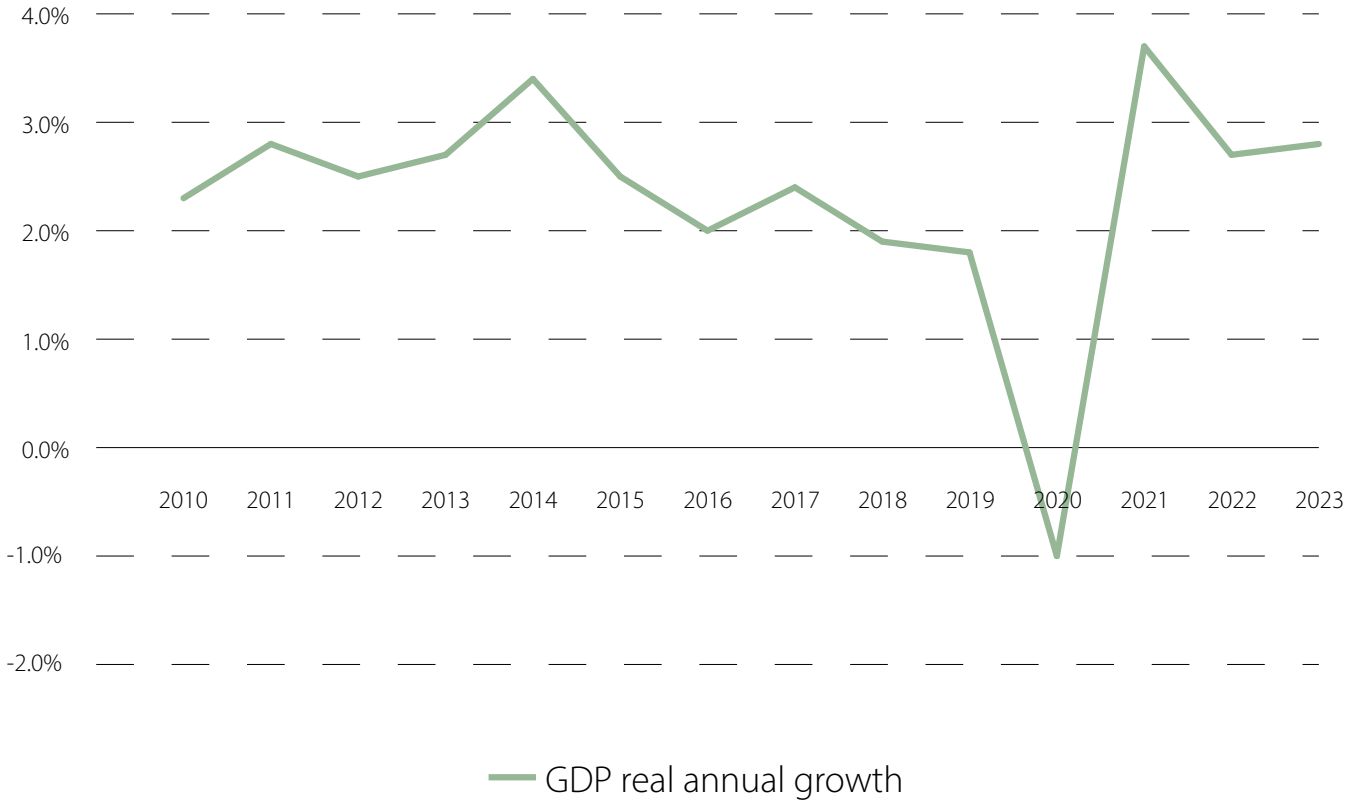
5 Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2023–2030. Available at: https://jordan.un.org/en/221401-natural-disaster-risk-reduction-strategy-2023-2030.

1.4. Macroeconomic context and outlook

Beyond demographic factors that define education needs, the expansion of a school system is also strongly shaped by the availability of national and international funding.

For the past 10 years, Jordan's economy has grown at an average annual rate of 2.2%, managing to absorb the impact of global and regional shocks relatively well. By 2021, signs of recovery from the devastating economic effects of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic were already evident, and this growth has been sustained since then, offering a positive outlook. In 2023, real gross domestic product (GDP) growth was estimated at 2.7%, slightly higher than the 2.6% recorded in 2022 **(Figure 1.6).** However, GDP per capita increased at a slower pace, with real growth of 3% between 2019 and 2023, reaching JOD 3,142 per capita in 2023.[6]

Figure 1.6. GDP real annual growth rates, 2010–2023



Source: Central Bank of Jordan, (2025)

The service sector is leading Jordan's GDP in 2023. The service sector, including public services, accounts for about 60% of Jordan's economy. Financial, insurance, real estate and business services accounted for 18% of Jordan's GDP in 2023, followed by government service producers, with another 14%. Social and personal services, transport and communication, trade, restaurants and hotels together accounted for another 26%. Manufacturing industries and agriculture accounted for only 17% and 5% respectively of Jordan's GDP in 2023 **(Table 1.3).**

6 Author's calculations based on (Central Bank of Jordan, 2025).

Table 1.3. GDP by economic activity at current prices in 2023

Economic activity	Million dinars	%
Agriculture	1,740.6	4.8
Mining and quarrying	1,157.0	3.2
Manufacturing industries	6,267.5	17.3
Electricity and water	573.0	1.6
Construction	964.3	2.7
Trade, restaurants and hotels	3,397.2	9.4
Transport and communications	2,871.9	7.9
Financial, insurance, real estate and business services	6,595.3	18.2
Social and personal services	3,228.8	8.9
Government services producers	5,044.4	13.9
Non-profit services producers serving households	324.6	0.9
Domestic services	503.8	1.4
Less: Imputed banking services	1,144.1	3.2
GDP at basic prices	31,524.0	87.1
Net taxes on products	4,663.0	12.9
GDP at market prices	**36,187.0**	**100.0**
Net income from abroad	(329.3)	
Gross national product at market prices	35,857.7	

Source: Central Bank of Jordan, 2025.

Jordan's foreign trade balance has historically been in deficit, and the country is becoming more reliant on food imports. In 2023, Jordan's foreign trade balance recorded a deficit of JOD 7,360 million, equivalent to 20% of GDP at current market prices. While high, this figure was much lower than in 2014, when the foreign trade deficit accounted for 32% of GDP. Imports in 2023 were led by machinery and transport equipment (21%), followed by food and live animals (18%) and mineral fuels and lubricants (16%). This shift in the distribution of imports reflects a reduced reliance on energy and consumer goods, together with increasing dependence on food imports compared with a decade ago.

The Government of Jordan has long operated with an annual deficit at relatively stable levels. In 2023, consolidated revenues totalled JOD 12,500 million (35% of GDP), while public expenditures reached JOD 13,106 million (36% of GDP), resulting in a budget deficit of 4% of GDP. As part of fiscal consolidation efforts, tax revenues accounted for 55% of total domestic revenues in 2023 – lower than in 2020–2021 (58%) but higher than in 2019 (51%). Foreign grants continued to decline, making up just 2% of total revenues **(Table 1.4).**

In 2024, government revenues were affected by weaker domestic demand and a sharper-than-expected drop in key export prices. To offset the shortfall and contain the central government budget deficit, the authorities introduced strong corrective measures and plan to pursue gradual fiscal consolidation in 2025, with a view to reducing public debt and ensuring medium-term fiscal sustainability.

Table 1.4. Government revenues and expenditures in 2023 at current prices (JOD million and % of GDP)

	JOD million	% of GDP
Total Revenues and grants	**12,500**	**34.5**
Domestic revenues	11,766	32.5
Tax	6,416	17.7
Pension contribution	2,161	6.0
Foreign grants	734	2.0
Other revenues	3,190	8.8
Total expenditures	**13,106**	**36.2**
Current expenditures	11,684	32.3
Capital expenditures	1,423	3.9
Deficit/surplus		
Including grants	(695)	-1.9
Excluding grants	(1,428)	-3.9

Source: Ministry of Finance, 2024

Total public expenditure per capita increased by 12% in real terms in five years, reaching JOD 1,138 per year in 2023, equivalent to 36% of Jordan's GDP per capita – the same level since 2020.[7] Over the past five years, current expenditures have accounted for about 89% of total public expenditure in Jordan. Salaries, wages and employee compensation together represented 19% of total expenditure, while interest payments accounted for 10% in 2023, up from 8% in 2019 (Ministry of Finance, 2023).

Jordan's level of public education expenditure is relatively low. As further discussed in Chapter 3, the Government of Jordan's expenditure on education in 2023 represented 3.5% of GDP, appreciably below the recommended 4–6% global benchmark. This is also significantly below the level of public education spending in countries such as Saudi Arabia (5.1% of GDP in 2023) and the United Arab Emirates (3.9% of GDP in 2021) (World Bank, 2025).[8]

Jordan is prudently navigating debt and economic uncertainty. In 2023, general government debt reached JOD 27,989 million, equivalent to 77% of GDP. This was 14 percentage points higher than in 2019 but remained below the 88% benchmark set in Jordan's medium-term fiscal framework (2023-2026). Over the same period, the Central Bank's total reserves remained around 36% of GDP. While fiscal performance in 2023 aligned with the baseline scenario of Jordan's fiscal framework, projections for 2024 and 2025 now resemble a higher-risk scenario. Economic growth met expectations in 2023 (2.7%), and government revenues and expenditures were close to the fiscal framework's estimates. However, more recent projections show weaker growth – 2.3% in 2024 and 2.5% in 2025 – before picking up in later years, assuming regional conflicts are resolved and reforms continue.

To offset revenue shortfalls from weaker domestic demand and declining export prices, Jordanian authorities took strong fiscal measures in 2024 and plan to continue gradual consolidation in 2025 to reduce public debt and ensure medium-term sustainability. Inflation is expected to remain low (around 2%), reflecting the Central Bank's commitment to monetary stability and the exchange rate peg. Despite challenges, Jordan's external position remains relatively strong.

7 Author's calculations based on (Ministry of Finance, 2024) and (Jordan, Central Bank of Jordan, n.d.).
8 Few countries in the region report this indicator, and no regional average is available.

1.5. Policy context

Within Jordan's national development policy framework, education is strategically positioned as a key growth driver of Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV). Jordan's national social and economic development in recent years has been guided by two consecutive policy blueprints: Jordan 2025, published in 2013 and running until 2025, and the EMV. Published in 2022, the EMV updated the previous blueprint and runs until 2033. The EMV is integrated with the Jordan 2025 plan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the education sector contributing by providing qualified and trained human capital.

In the development and implementation of the Ministry of Education's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2018-2025), the National Human Resources Development Strategy (2016-2025) has also played an important role. The National Human Resources Development Strategy is a comprehensive framework for the development of the education sector in Jordan, focusing on improving the quality and accessibility of education and enhancing the alignment between education outcomes and labour market needs.

Education is pivotal to achieving the goals of the EMV, which are based on two strategic pillars, with sustainability as a cornerstone of the vision: one focused on accelerating growth by unleashing Jordan's full economic potential, and the other on improving quality of life for all citizens.

Through the first pillar, Jordan aims to achieve rapid economic growth and create job opportunities over the next decade, with steady increases in per capita income. Through the second pillar, it seeks to realize significant improvement in quality of life, positioning itself at the forefront of countries in the region in this regard (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022b).

Mechanisms are in place to support policy implementation. From 2018 to the present, implementation of these policy blueprints has been guided, first, by the Jordan Economic Growth Plan 2018–2022 and, subsequently, by the EMV Executive Programme 2023–2025. The latter covers the first of three implementation phases – 2022–2025, 2026–2029 and 2030–2033. The EMV Executive Programme sets targets, priorities and projected investments for each of its eight growth drivers, including education, with the intention of contributing to the achievement of two major outcomes by 2033. Education is also a key component of one of the eight growth drivers identified in Jordan's national development strategy (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022b).

As detailed in Chapter 5, Jordan has put in place a highly supportive policy framework to promote greater gender equality, equity and inclusion in education. At the international level, Jordan is a signatory to key United Nations conventions affirming the rights of children, women, and persons with disabilities, as well as the SDG agenda. These commitments are reflected at the national level in strategic initiatives explicitly aimed at achieving education for all and leaving no one behind.

This chapter has provided an overview of the demographic, socio-economic, macroeconomic, and policy landscape, all of which play a role in shaping the development of the education sector and its opportunities and outcomes for children in Jordan. The following chapters elaborate further on issues touched on in this chapter, looking at education access, internal efficiency and out-of-school children (Chapter 2); the cost and financing of education (Chapter 3); the quality of education and teacher management (Chapter 4) and diversity, equity and inclusion in education (Chapter 5). Three subsectors, early childhood education and development, technical and vocational education and training, and higher education, are examined in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively, concluding with an analysis of the labour market situation relevant to education in Chapter 9.

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

Jordan's population, estimated at 11.5 million in 2023, is predominantly young, urban and diverse. The majority of the population is concentrated in urban areas, particularly in Amman, Irbid and Zarqa. The country has experienced a decline in population growth, with the lowest growth rate recorded in 2023 at 1.9%. Approximately one-third of residents are non-Jordanians. Fertility and infant mortality rates have decreased, contributing to an increase in life expectancy over the past two decades.

Jordan has achieved high human development, but inequalities – particularly gender-based – remain significant. Gender disparities are especially pronounced in income and labour force participation, with persistent biases rooted in social norms: in 2023, female labour force participation stood at just 14%, compared with 53% for men. Recent job growth has mostly favoured positions requiring higher education, with around 80% of new jobs between 2017 and 2021 created in sectors such as information and communication technologies, finance and professional services.

Jordan faces a medium level of disaster risk, arising from a combination of natural and human-induced hazards, and is increasingly affected by climate-related hazards such as extreme heat, droughts and flash floods. These risks are worsening and affect various sectors, including education. The country also struggles with structural vulnerabilities – water scarcity, reliance on imports and the presence of refugees. In response, Jordan has adopted the National Climate Change Policy (2022–2050) and the Education Crisis and Risk Management Strategy (2023–2027).

Over the past decade, Jordan's economy has grown steadily at an average of 2.2% a year, with real GDP growth reaching 2.7% in 2023. Despite external shocks, including COVID-19 and regional instability, the economy has shown resilience, though GDP per capita grew more slowly, reaching JOD 3,142 in 2023. Jordan's trade deficit, though still high at 20% of GDP in 2023, has declined from 32% in 2014, with increasing reliance on food imports.

Education is a central pillar of Jordan's national development strategy and a key driver of the EMV 2022–2033, which builds on earlier plans such as Jordan 2025 and the National Human Resources Development Strategy. The EMV highlights education's role in driving economic growth and improving citizens' quality of life, with implementation guided by phased executive programmes. Jordan also promotes equity and inclusion in education through strong national policies and international commitments to human rights and the SDGs.

CHAPTER 2:

Access, Internal Efficiency and Out-of-School Children

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring access to education for all is a fundamental human right and a critical component of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) for education. Ensuring universal access to 12 years of quality education is essential for equipping children and youth with the skills, knowledge and opportunities to thrive in the twenty-first century, laying the foundation for lifelong learning, while driving broader societal and economic progress. For instance, Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV) aims to accommodate over 1 million young people in the labour market by 2033, a goal that requires enhancing access, improving internal efficiency and reducing out-of-school children. Analysis of key aspects of access data can help identify areas of internal inefficiency within education systems and point towards areas for optimizing resource allocation, improving educational quality, and enhancing overall system performance.

In the Jordanian context, great strides have been made in recent years to expand access, achieving nearly universal enrolment in lower basic education and seeing significant growth in the number of students in school at all levels, partially driven by a growing school age population, including refugee children, as well as concerted government efforts. Progress is particularly striking at secondary and higher education levels, though increases vary across governorates. Notable progress has also been achieved in expanding early childhood education, with the public sector doubling its share of kindergarten enrolments in recent years.

Despite this progress, persistent challenges remain. Among these challenges, dropout rates emerge as a critical concern, particularly during the transitions between key education levels. While enrolment at the lower basic level is nearly universal, completion rates begin to decline substantially in upper basic education. Secondary level, where education becomes non-compulsory, sees the highest attrition rates, with over a third of students who begin formal schooling failing to complete this stage. Contributing factors include economic pressures, opportunity costs, and systemic inefficiencies such as grade repetition and educational discontinuities.

Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that all children, regardless of their circumstances, can access and complete their education. For the Ministry of Education, enabling all children to enter and progress through school at the right age and complete a full 12-year cycle of school education will make more efficient use of scarce resources, and ensure that the education system delivers on its potential to build a skilled workforce equipped for the demands of the labour market.

This chapter focuses primarily on access to general education (basic education and secondary education, with some reference to kindergarten), while early childhood education and development are covered in full in Chapter 6, technical and vocational education and training (secondary and higher) in Chapter 7, and higher education in Chapter 8. While certain geographic and other disparities are touched on, this chapter looks predominantly at overall trends for the student cohort as a whole, rather than for specific groups. A more detailed discussion of disparities by gender and other dimensions of disadvantage is presented in Chapter 5 on inclusion and diversity in education.

The chapter begins by presenting the key characteristics of the education system structure in Jordan, highlighting the policies and legal statutes used in the management of education in the country, including the structure through which education is delivered. It goes on to analyse enrolment dynamics and school coverage, as well as children's access to formal schooling and retention throughout the education ladder. The internal efficiency of the education system is also examined, looking into key indicators relating to repetition, out-of-school children, education discontinuity, and retention profiles. Examination of global internal coefficients and school life expectancy complete the suite of analyses, which together provide a robust evidence base to inform educational policies for improving access to high-quality education for all children in Jordan.

2.1. Structure of the education system

Education in Jordan is governed by the Education Act (Act No. 3 of 1994), which was amended in 2006 and 2013 (Act No. 68/1/56788) (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2019a). This Act sets out the objectives and policies of the education system in Jordan, and the responsibilities and functions of national stakeholders. The main responsibility for the implementation of the Education Act lies with the Ministry of Education (MoE).

The Education Act mandates 10 years of basic compulsory education for all Jordanians between 6 and 16 years of age. The Act also provides for 13 years of free education, from the last grade of pre-school through to the last grade of secondary school, for all Jordanian citizens in government schools. Refugee children who meet specific requirements, such as being registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), are issued "service cards" by the Ministry of Interior (MOI), which enable them to enrol in government schools free of charge.[9]

Jordan's formal education system is divided into three main sub-sectors: (1) general education for a maximum of 14 years (including kindergarten, basic and secondary cycles, with the secondary cycle comprising academic and vocational streams); (2) higher education; and (3) technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Kindergarten education is managed jointly by the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) and the MoE. School education is the responsibility of the MoE, while higher education is overseen by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR). The Government of Jordan has announced plans to merge the MoE and MoHESR into a single Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MoEHRD) for oversight of the whole sector (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022a, pp. 38, 60) with a view to streamlining processes and improving efficiency.

The structure of the Jordanian formal education system is shown in **Table 2.1.**

9 Before 2020, this policy applied only to Syrian refugees, while other non-Jordanians relied on private education or paid an annual fee of US $56 (JOD 40), in addition to providing a residency card. In 2020, the MoE extended the policy to exempt non-Syrian refugee children from documentation traditionally required at enrolment. In 2022, the MoE also exempted all refugee children from school registration and textbook fees.

Table 2.1. Structure of the Jordanian formal education system

<table>
<tr><th>Age</th><th colspan="2">Formal education programmes</th><th>Grade</th><th>ISCED level</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">Doctoral degree
(at least 3 years)</td><td></td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Master's degree
(2 years)</td><td>Higher diploma
(1 to 2 years)</td><td></td><td>6/7</td></tr>
<tr><td>22</td><td rowspan="4">Bachelor's degree
(4 to 5 years)</td><td rowspan="4">Technical and intermediate diplomas
(1 to 3 years)</td><td rowspan="4"></td><td rowspan="2">5</td></tr>
<tr><td>21</td></tr>
<tr><td>20</td><td rowspan="3">4/5</td></tr>
<tr><td>19</td></tr>
<tr><td>18</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Tawjihi Examination</td></tr>
<tr><td>17</td><td rowspan="3">Secondary education</td><td rowspan="3">Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) programme</td><td>Grade 12</td><td rowspan="3">3</td></tr>
<tr><td>16</td><td>Grade 11</td></tr>
<tr><td>15</td><td>Grade 10</td></tr>
<tr><td>14</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">Basic (upper basic) education
(compulsory)</td><td>Grade 9</td><td rowspan="3">2</td></tr>
<tr><td>13</td><td>Grade 8</td></tr>
<tr><td>12</td><td>Grade 7</td></tr>
<tr><td>11</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="6">Basic (lower basic) education
(compulsory)</td><td>Grade 6</td><td rowspan="6">1</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>Grade 5</td></tr>
<tr><td>9</td><td>Grade 4</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Grade 3</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>Grade 2</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Grade 1</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Kindergarten education</td><td>Kindergarten 2</td><td rowspan="2">0</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Kindergarten 1</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Authors, based on (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2019a)

Each level of education is further divided into sublevels, with different ages of entry, durations, and characteristics.

The general education level is subdivided into three sublevels (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2019b), as follows:

1. **Kindergarten education consists of two years,** termed Kindergarten 1 (KG1) and Kindergarten 2 (KG2). Kindergarten education has a starting age of 4 years (or at least 3 years and 8 months) and children are allowed to stay up to the age of 6 years. This level is not compulsory, and students can enter at any point if they are within the appropriate age range. The MoE regulates both KG1 and KG2 classes, but while KG1 providers are private, the MoE also acts as a provider of KG2 classes (Ghawi et al., 2018).[10] The MoE aims to ensure that all children have access to KG2, with plans for rapid expansion through the growth of both public and private providers. The MoE has expressed an intention to integrate KG2 into compulsory basic education by 2030, providing the system only a few more years to establish a sufficient supply (Ministry of Education, 2023a, p. 11).[11]
2. **Basic education has a duration of 10 years and is compulsory for all children.** For the purposes of this report, this level is further divided into two sublevels:
   2.1. Lower basic covers the first six grades of basic education (Grades 1–6) with a theoretical starting age of 6 years (or at least 5 years and 8 months).
   2.2. Upper basic covers the last four grades of basic education (Grades 7–10) with a theoretical starting age of 12 years.
3. **Secondary education has a duration of two years (Grades 11–12) and a theoretical starting age of 16 years.** After participating in the general certificate of secondary education exam (tawjihi) at the end of the cycle, all streams lead to a certification that can be used to access entry-level university programmes. Secondary education is not compulsory in Jordan.

The TVET subsector consists of programmes for upper basic, secondary, and higher education students, in addition to vocational training programmes outside the formal education system. At the end of basic Grade 9, a learner can enter the formal vocational education track, which follows the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) system. The BTEC system is a relatively new innovation in Jordan's education sector, welcoming its first cohort of Grade 10 students in the 2023/2024 academic year. TVET is also available outside the formal education system via Vocational Training Corporation centres and other public and private providers under a unified national qualifications framework (see Chapter 7 for full details on BTEC and the TVET subsector).[12] TVET opportunities are also available in higher education through vocational and technical diploma programmes.

Higher education can start after the completion of secondary education and varies depending on the length of the programme. Study programmes in higher education include:

1. **Technical diploma:** An academic degree awarded to a student after completing at least two academic years or 72 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions, following successful completion of secondary school. The focus is on the practical aspect of the specialization, with the student required to study at least 50% of the specialization courses in practical applications.

10 Some nurseries also offer pre-school services, including KG1 classes. In such cases, they are regulated by the Ministry of Social Development.

11 A school mapping exercise found existing KG2 capacity in MoE schools to be 65,969 children, accounting for only 22% of the total KG2-aged population. To achieve full capacity, an additional 225,904 KG2 seats are required (Saqib, forthcoming).

12 The Vocational Training Corporation offers programmes leading to qualifications recognized by the Jordan National Qualifications Framework, such as the vocational diploma. It also offers programmes that do not result in formal recognition through the Framework, including adult and lifelong learning courses.

2. **Vocational diploma:** A non-academic training programme awarded by post-secondary community colleges, in accordance with the 2019 regulations for conducting diplomas and training courses in Jordanian higher education institutions. The programme duration must not be less than nine months or at least two academic semesters, with a minimum of 300 training hours or 24 credit hours equivalent to 384 training hours. Participants are awarded a printed training certificate indicating that they have successfully completed the vocational or training diploma.
3. **Intermediate diploma:** An academic degree awarded to a student after completing at least two academic years or 72 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions, following successful completion of secondary school.
4. **Bachelor's degree:** An academic degree awarded to a student after completing at least 132 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions.
5. **Higher diploma:** An academic degree awarded to a student after obtaining a bachelor's degree and completing a minimum duration of one year or 24 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions.[13]
6. **Master's degree:** An academic degree awarded to a student after obtaining a bachelor's degree and completing a minimum duration of two years or 33 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions.
7. **Doctoral degree:** An academic degree awarded to a student after obtaining a master's degree and completing a minimum duration of three years or 54 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions.

2.2. Enrolment analysis

This subsection describes historical trends in enrolment by education level and school type (public and private) over the past decade and for some specific subgroups. It also examines trends in enrolment coverage for each level of education. The purpose of this section is to understand the extent to which student numbers at different educational levels have increased or decreased, and what has been driving that evolution.

2.2.1. Enrolment dynamics

All levels of general education saw an increase in the number of students between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023, primarily driven by a growing school-age population, the continuing influx of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and other countries, and the expansion of the government school system, as shown in **Table 2.2.** Including higher education, the system has 17.2% more students than in the 2016/2017 academic year, rising from 2,236,827 (male: 1,124,222; female: 1,112,605) to 2,621,826 (male: 1,311,420; female: 1,310,406) as of the 2022/2023 academic year.

For general education, secondary education has experienced the greatest growth in enrolments. Since 2012 the greatest average annual growth rates (AAGRs) have been in

13 Jordanian higher education institutes also offer the higher specialization programme, a vocational certificate specific to the medical field, under the mandate of the Jordanian Medical Council.

secondary education (5.7%; notably the secondary academic stream with an AAGR of 6.2%), with notable growth also in kindergarten (5.0%) and upper basic (4.2%). At the kindergarten level, KG2 enrolments both account for a greater proportion of all pre-basic enrolment (83.6% as of the 2022/2023 academic year) and have grown significantly more than KG1 enrolments over the period of analysis (an AAGR of 6.0% compared with 0.7%, respectively). A similar relationship is observed between the academic and vocational streams at the secondary level, with the former both representing a greater proportion of all secondary enrolments (89.3% in the 2022/2023 academic year) and experiencing greater growth between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023 (an AAGR of 6.2% compared with 2.3%, respectively).

Table 2.2. Enrolments by education level, 2015/2016–2022/2023

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Kindergarten	**115,560**	**122,176**	**128,035**	**134,733**	**145,189**	**119,828**
KG1	25,256	24,171	25,383	28,330	29,615	10,327
KG2	90,304	98,005	102,652	106,403	115,574	109,501
Basic	**1,594,545**	**1,679,993**	**1,722,678**	**1,759,590**	**1,769,593**	**1,796,494**
Lower basic (G1-6)	1,049,674	1,106,611	1,133,982	1,147,202	1,126,254	1,112,411
Upper basic (G7-10)	544,871	573,382	588,696	612,388	643,339	684,083
Secondary (G11 – G12)	**189,173**	**190,312**	**201,126**	**220,396**	**236,888**	**260,985**
Academic path	163,787	163,715	177,945	196,844	211,973	233,645
Vocational path	25,386	26,597	23,181	23,552	24,915	27,340
Higher*	**-**	**244,346**	**245,239**	**252,298**	**270,437**	**280,197**
Technical diploma**	-	0	108	241	393	427
Vocational diploma*	-	93	84	263	1,231	219
Intermediate diploma*	-	5,304	6,989	10,656	13,755	15,117
Bachelor's*	-	218,345	215,902	218,660	230,825	238,343
Higher diploma*	-	311	300	674	1,253	1,525
Master's*	-	16,411	17,931	17,786	18,981	20,520
Doctorate*	-	3,882	3,925	4,018	3,999	4,046
Total	**-**	**2,236,827**	**2,297,078**	**2,367,017**	**2,422,107**	**2,457,504**

Sources: Education Management Information System (EMIS), 2015/2016 – 2022/2023; MoHESR 2015/2016 – 2022/2023

*Notes: BTEC not included, as the first cohort began in 2023/2024 academic year. * refers to calculation for total percent change and average annual growth rate adjusted for a 2016/2017 starting period. ** refers to calculation for total percent change and AAGR adjusted for a 2017/2018 starting period. Enrolment numbers for vocational diplomas also include students enrolled in the higher specialization (medicine) programme.*

	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	Total percent change	Average annual growth rate (%)
Kindergarten	**140,928**	**162,071**	**40.2**	**5.0**
KG1	19,011	26,563	5.2	0.7
KG2	121,917	135,508	50.1	6.0
Basic	**1,827,154**	**1,833,683**	**15.0**	**2.0**
Lower basic (G1-6)	1,113,808	1,105,189	5.3	0.7
Upper basic (G7-10)	713,346	728,494	33.7	4.2
Secondary (G11 – G12)	**276,669**	**278,586**	**47.3**	**5.7**
Academic path	248,539	248,785	51.9	6.2
Vocational path	28,130	29,801	17.4	2.3
Higher*	**308,346**	**347,486**	**42.2**	**6.0**
Technical diploma**	404	371	243.5	28.0
Vocational diploma*	97	1,020	996.8	49.1
Intermediate diploma*	17,431	20,529	287.0	25.3
Bachelor's*	266,231	298,293	36.6	5.3
Higher diploma*	879	1,645	428.9	32.0
Master's*	19,482	21,647	31.9	4.7
Doctorate*	3,822	3,981	2.6	0.4
Total	**2,553,097**	**2,621,826**	**17.2**	**2.7**

The higher education level has seen an AAGR of 6.0%, with vocational (49.1%), higher (32.0%), technical (28.0%) and intermediate diplomas (25.3%) having experienced the greatest growth.

This change in student enrolments is not homogeneous across the Kingdom. Table 2.3 presents the AAGR of basic and secondary education enrolments by governorate between 2015/2016 and 2022/23. While growth in basic education appears more evenly distributed across the country, kindergarten and secondary education show sharper disparities. The Governorate of Mafraq has experienced significant growth in student numbers at both the kindergarten and upper basic levels, most notably due to the influx of Syrian refugees and the increase of educational services available to such children in both camps and host communities. The Governorate of Aqaba has seen the greatest growth in secondary student numbers across the nation, potentially driven by the region's surge in economic, labour and higher education opportunities. The Amman, Tafilah, and Zarqa Governorates have seen the lowest increases in general enrolments (between 1-2% at the lower basic level, 3-4% at the upper basic level, and 4-6% at the secondary level).

Table 2.3. Average annual growth rate in general enrolments by education level and governorate, 2015/2016–2022/2023

Governorate	Total	Kindergarten	Lower basic	Upper basic	Secondary
Mafraq	4.3%	11.4%	1.8%	7.2%	7.1%
Aqaba	3.6%	4.6%	1.5%	5.2%	9.9%
Ma'an	3.6%	5.8%	1.8%	5.3%	6.9%
Ajloun	3.2%	10.2%	2.1%	3.1%	4.2%
Madaba	3.1%	5.8%	1.4%	4.6%	5.2%
Jerash	2.9%	2.0%	1.7%	4.7%	4.6%
Irbid	2.8%	5.6%	1.1%	4.0%	5.8%
Karak	2.7%	3.9%	0.8%	4.6%	5.4%
Balqa	2.5%	2.3%	0.8%	4.5%	6.2%
Amman	2.3%	3.8%	0.4%	4.0%	5.5%
Tafilah	2.2%	0.5%	1.0%	3.7%	4.9%
Zarqa	1.9%	7.0%	-0.3%	3.5%	5.3%

Source: EMIS 2015/2016–2022/2023

Notes: Governorates are ordered by their average annual growth rate of all general education enrolments, from highest (first row) to lowest (last row).

Ensuring equitable access to education requires a detailed analysis of gender-specific barriers that influence enrolment, retention and transition rates. For example, early marriage, school-related gender-based violence, and caregiving responsibilities disproportionately affect girls, while boys are often at higher risk of leaving school due to economic pressures and labour market demands. Addressing these gendered risks in analysis can lead to more precise identification of challenges across different education levels. A fuller discussion of disparities by gender is presented in Chapter 5 on diversity, equity and inclusion in education.

Boys' enrolments in secondary education outpaced those of girls' between the 2015/2016 and 2022/2023 academic years.

In basic education, the growth of boys' and girls' enrolments is relatively similar, with boys experiencing an AAGR of 2.1% compared with girls at 2.0% **(Table 2.4).** Girls experienced greater growth in enrolments at the kindergarten level (AAGR of 5.3% compared with 4.6% for boys) between the 2015/2016 and 2022/2023 academic years. At the secondary level, boys have experienced a greater growth rate overall (AAGR of 6.7% compared with 4.8% for girls) and in the academic stream (AAGR of 7.5% compared with 5.0% for girls), although girls' enrolments have slightly outpaced those of boys in the vocational stream (AAGR of 2.5% compared with 2.2% for boys). The growth in enrolment of female students in higher education, at an AAGR of 6.9%, is larger than that of male students, with an AAGR of 5.1%.

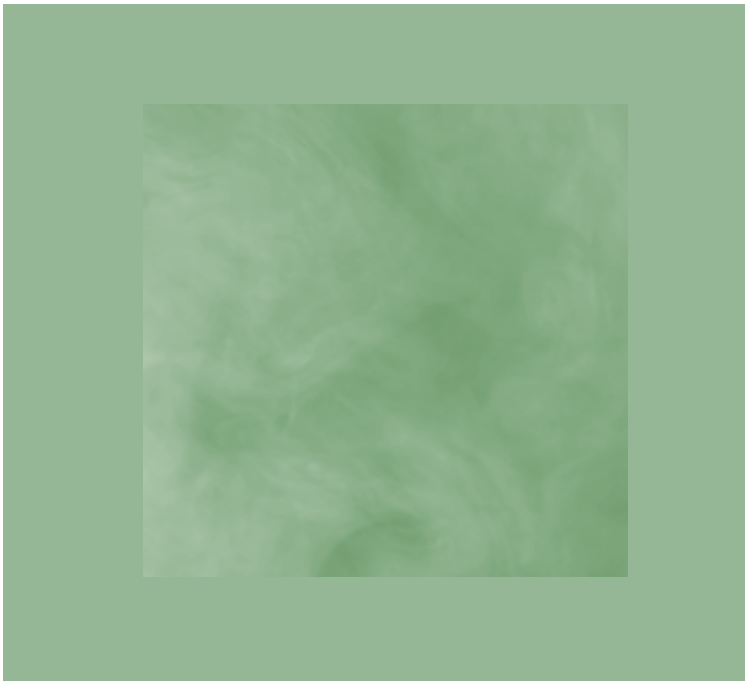


Table 2.4. Enrolments by education level and student gender, 2015/2016–2022/2023

	Student gender	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019
Kindergarten	Male	60,156	62,300	65,403	68,913
	Female	55,404	59,876	62,632	65,820
Basic	Male	810,736	855,829	877,542	895,835
	Female	783,809	824,164	845,136	863,755
Lower basic (G1–6)	Male	535,062	564,908	579,209	586,200
	Female	514,612	541,703	554,773	561,002
Upper basic (G7–10)	Male	275,674	290,921	298,333	309,635
	Female	269,197	282,461	290,363	302,753
Secondary (G11–12)	Male	85,836	88,582	93,794	105,592
	Female	103,337	101,730	107,332	114,804
Academic path	Male	72,138	72,911	79,820	91,981
	Female	91,649	90,804	98,125	104,863
Vocational path	Male	13,698	15,671	13,974	13,603
	Female	11,688	10,926	9,207	9,949
Higher Education*	Male	-	117,511	116,888	114,664
	Female	-	126,835	128,351	137,634
Total*	Male	-	1,124,222	1,153,627	1,185,004
	Female	-	1,112,605	1,143,451	1,182,013

Source: EMIS 2015/2016 – 2022/2023; MoHESR 2015/2016 – 2022/2023

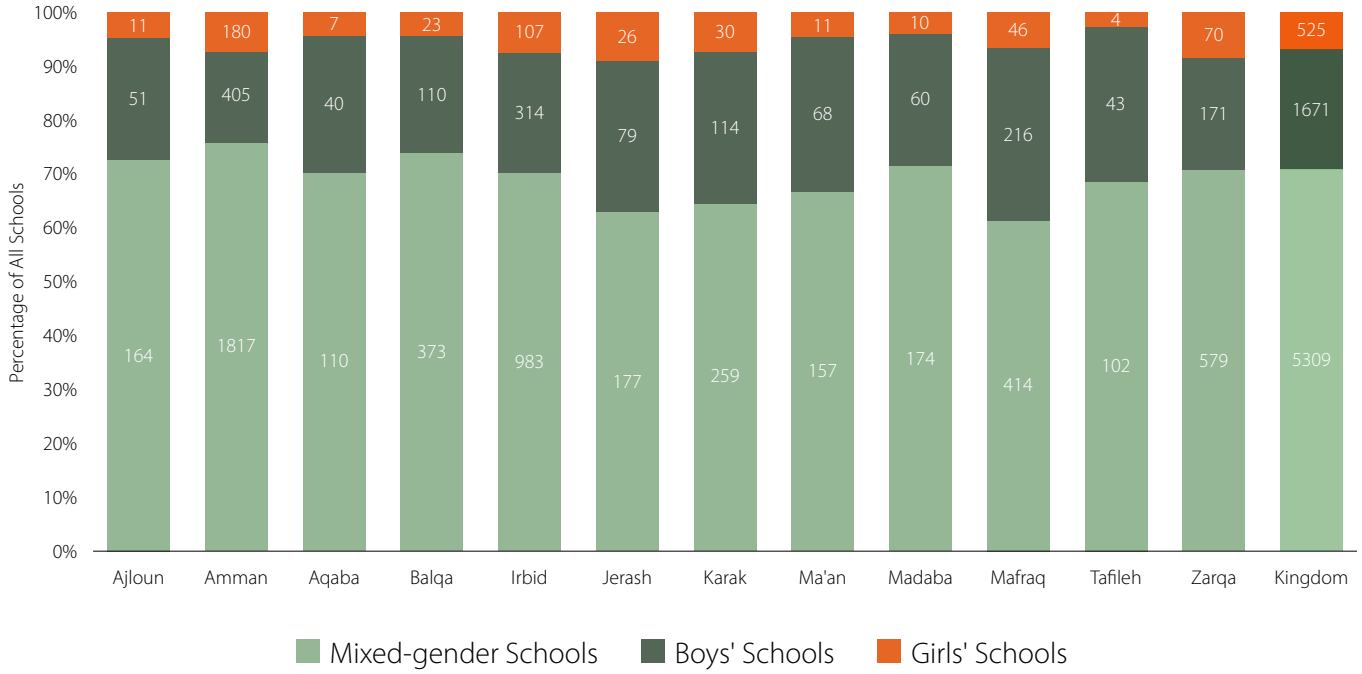
*Notes: * refers to the calculation for total percent change and AAGR adjusted for a 2016/2017 starting period.*

2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	Total percent change	Average annual growth rate (%)
74,316	60,813	71,445	82,478	37.1	4.6
70,873	59,015	69,483	79,593	43.7	5.3
899,912	915,326	931,918	935,248	15.4	2.1
869,681	881,168	895,236	898,435	14.6	2.0
575,249	569,036	569,909	566,503	5.9	0.8
551,005	543,375	543,899	538,686	4.7	0.7
324,663	346,290	362,009	368,745	33.8	4.2
318,676	337,793	351,337	359,749	33.6	4.2
113,248	126,512	136,749	135,418	57.8	6.7
123,640	134,473	139,920	143,168	38.5	4.8
99,362	111,330	121,298	119,479	65.6	7.5
112,611	122,315	127,241	129,306	41.1	5.0
13,886	15,182	15,451	15,939	16.4	2.2
11,029	12,158	12,679	13,862	18.6	2.5
120,005	124,793	138,639	158,276	34.7	5.1
150,432	155,404	169,707	189,210	49.2	6.9
1,207,481	1,227,444	1,278,751	1,311,420	16.7	2.6
1,214,626	1,230,060	1,274,346	1,310,406	17.8	2.8

Although the education system formally provides equal opportunities for boys and girls, structural factors such as gendered expectations, labour market segmentation, and family dynamics shape students' progression. Differences in the growth of vocational and academic secondary streams between girls and boys warrant a deeper examination of the underlying drivers, such as career perceptions, teacher biases, and parental expectations, that may influence educational decisions. Gendered subject selection, which is known to influence long-term labour market outcomes and reinforce occupational segregation, is further explored in Chapter 5.

Public school classrooms in Jordan are segregated by gender after Grade 4. As of 2023, there were 7,505 schools operating in Jordan, of which 70.7% were mixed-gender.[14] In other words, for every girls' school in Jordan, there are about three boys' schools and 10 mixed-gender schools. The teaching workforce at public schools is also gender-segregated in accordance with the school's gender classification.[15] The distribution of schools by gender inclusion is somewhat evenly spread across the Kingdom, with the proportion of mixed-gender schools within a governorate ranging from 61.2 to 75.6%, that of boys' schools ranging from 16.9 to 32.0%, and that of girls' schools ranging from 2.7 to 9.2% **(Figure 2.1)**[16]

Figure 2.1. Percentage and number of schools by gender and governorate, 2022/2023



Source: EMIS 2022/2023

Education in Jordan is delivered by both public and private institutions. Of the 7,505 schools operating in Jordan in the 2022/2023 academic year, 4,110 were public schools. Public schools are those managed, controlled, and financed by the MoE (4,062 schools; 54% of all schools), the Ministry of Defence (46 schools; less than 1% of all schools), or the Ministry

14 Mixed-gender schools are those that include both male and female students up until Grade 4 and only female students at higher grade-levels. Boys' and girls' schools admit only male and female students, respectively, regardless of grade. Private schools are not required to adhere to the segregation rule after Grade 4.

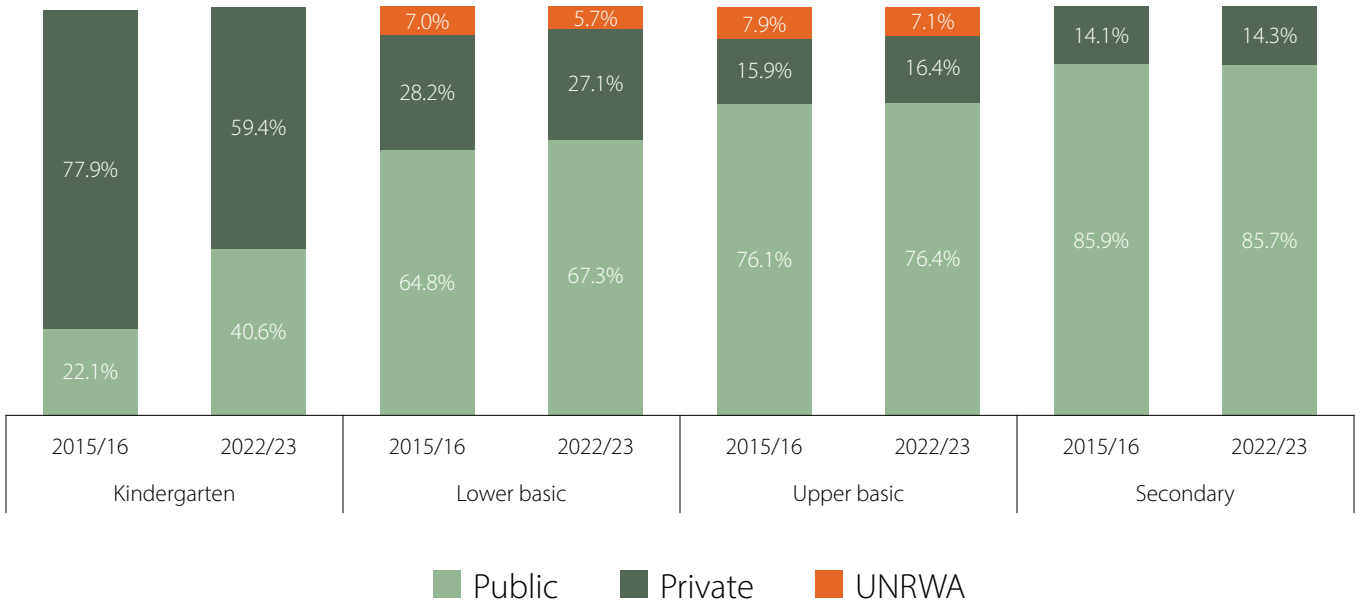
15 There is also a small subset of boys' schools in Jordan (informally termed "feminine schools") with an all-female staff; fewer than 50 such school exist.

16 The 2033 Sector Vision and Strategic Road Map for Education, aligned with the Economic Modernization Vision for Jordan, proposes converting all public basic schools to a mixed-gender system (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in Jordan, 2022b, p. 77), though further elaboration is unavailable at the time of writing.

of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places (2 schools; less than 1% of all schools). Article 2 of the Education Act (Act No. 3 of 1994) defines "private education institutions" as "every licensed non-governmental educational institution that applies the curriculum and textbook prescribed in government educational institutions". Private schools, numbering 3,234 in 2022/2023, include those managed by private, fee-bearing entities (3,189 schools; 42% of all schools), in addition to a group of tuition-based schools operated by the MoHESR (six schools; less than 1% of all schools) and the MoSD (39 schools; less than 1% of all schools). A third category contains schools funded and managed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which provide Palestinian refugees with free basic education (161 schools; 2% of all schools). All educational institutions must undergo an official licensing process before being allowed to enrol students.

The majority (70.6%) of students in general education in Jordan are enrolled in public institutions. As shown in **Figure 2.2,** the public share increases at higher levels of education. Kindergarten is the only level where private enrolment exceeds public, with 59.4% of kindergarten students in private institutions as of 2022/2023. UNRWA schools account for notable shares of students enrolled at the lower basic (5.7%) and upper basic (7.1%) levels.

Figure 2.2. Share of students by school authority and education level, 2015/2016 and 2022/2023

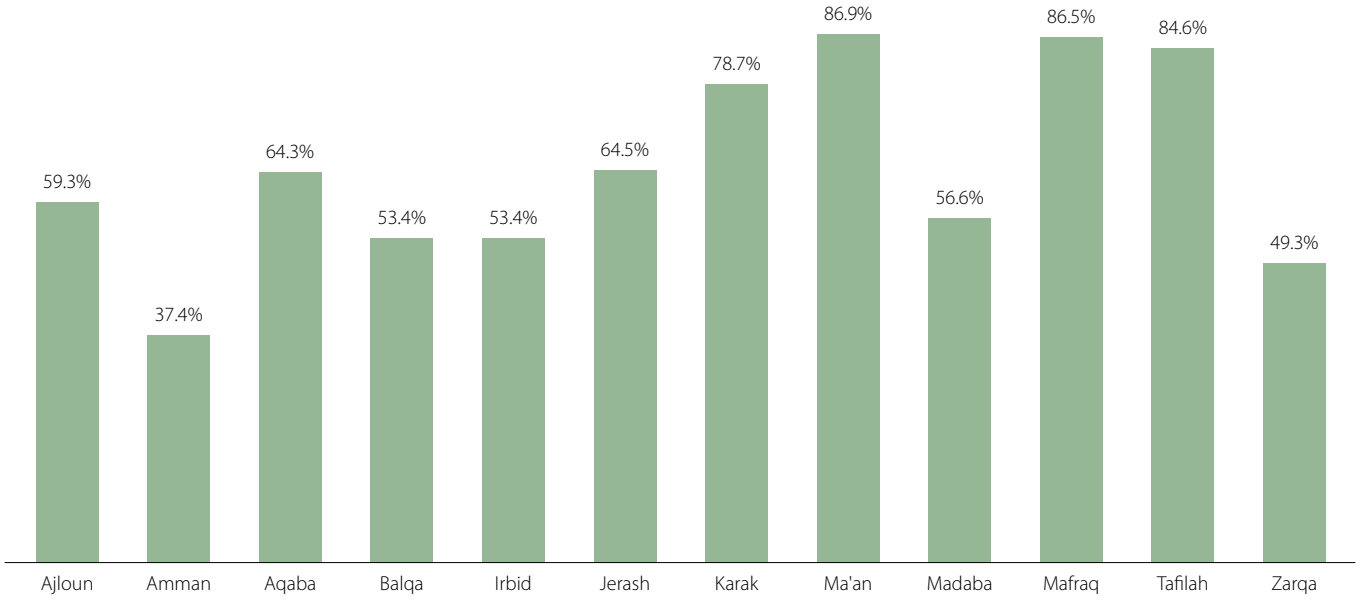


Source: EMIS 2015/2016, 2022/2023

Moreover, the proportion of students in private institutions across all general education levels has decreased slightly over the last eight years, from 26.3% in 2015/2016 to 24.4% in 2022/2023. The private share has remained unchanged or fallen slightly at the lower basic, upper basic, and secondary levels, suggesting that the public sector has absorbed the steady enrolment increases shown in **Table 2.2.** At kindergarten level, the public share has nearly doubled, from 22.1% in 2015/2016 to 40.6% in 2022/2023, a striking achievement, as the government has worked to increase access to KG2 classes in public schools.

The distribution of public and private education institutions is not uniform across the Kingdom (Figure 2.3). Slightly over half of Jordan's schools are public (54.8%), but this masks significant regional differences. The two most populated governorates, Amman and Zarqa, have the highest proportions of private schools, at 62.6% and 50.7%, respectively. By contrast, over 80% of schools in Ma'an, Mafraq and Tafilah are government-owned.

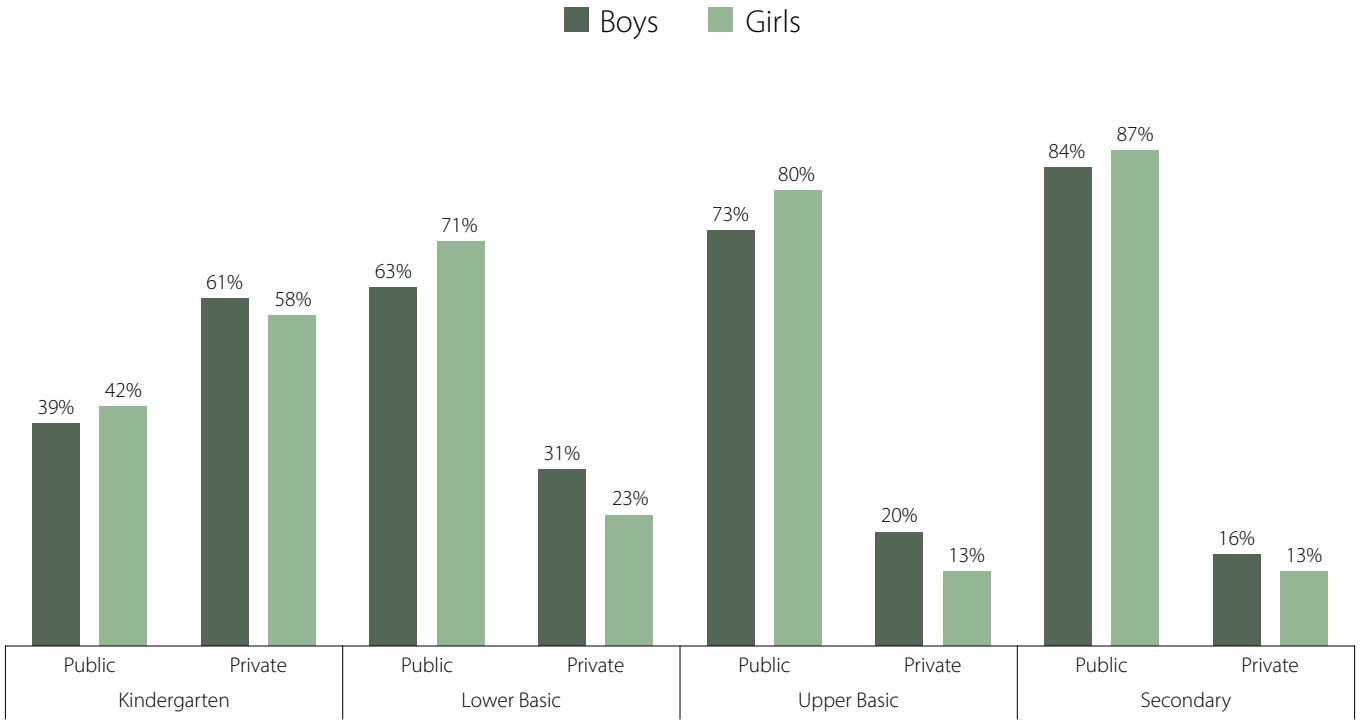
Figure 2.3. Proportion of public schools by governorate, 2022/2023



Source: EMIS 2022/2023

At all general education levels, boys are more likely than girls to be enrolled in a private school. At the lower basic and upper basic levels, boys are 8 and 7 percentage points more likely, respectively, to attend a private school than their female classmates **(Figure 2.4).**

Figure 2.4. Share of enrolments by education level, gender, and school authority, 2022/2023

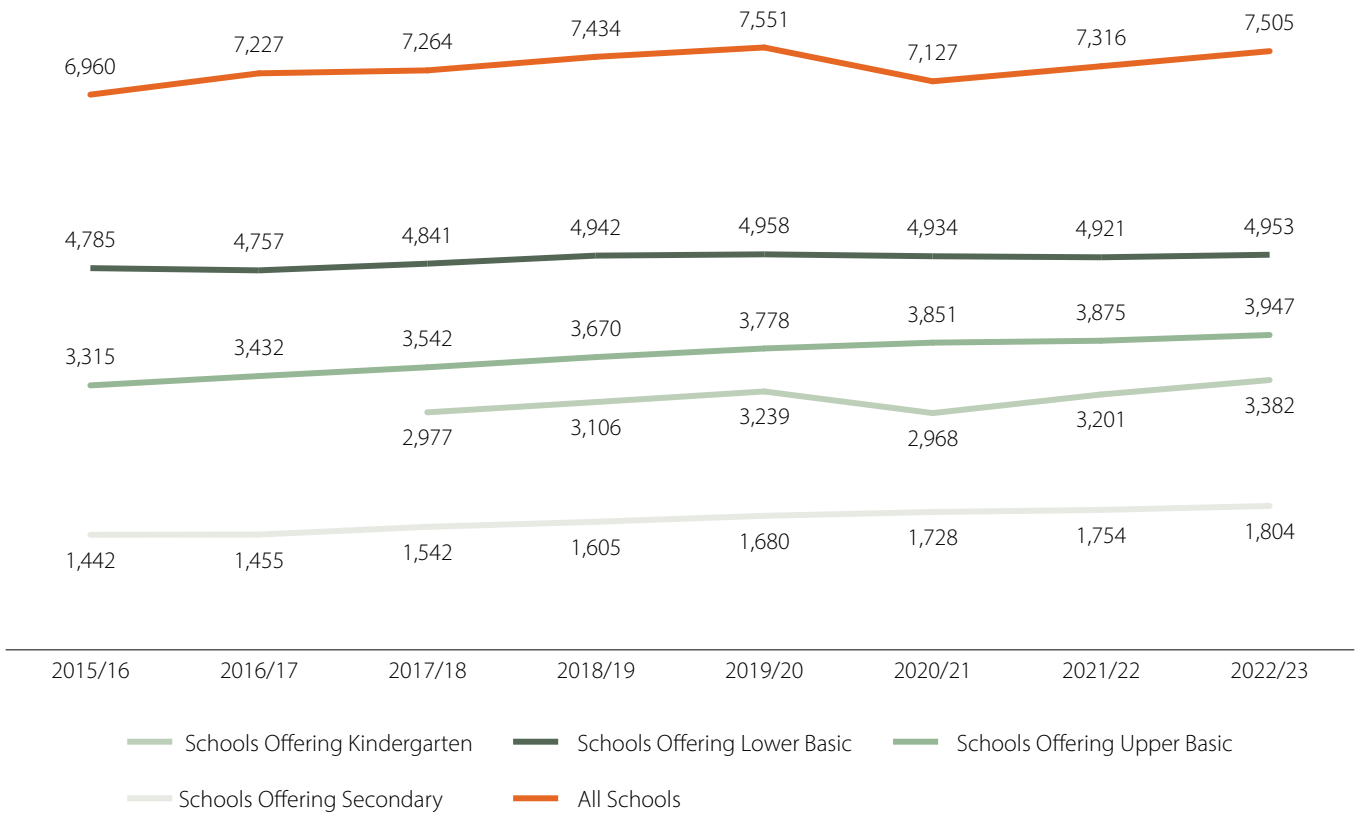


Source: EMIS 2022/2023

Multiple factors could influence families' decisions to enrol their children in private schools, and their likelihood of enrolling boys more than girls. Families may believe the returns on education for boys are greater than for girls and therefore are more willing to financially invest in their quality of education. The general perception of the quality of public boys' schools may also be lower than that of public girls' schools, motivating families to shift boys into tuition-collecting private schools if possible. Of the 3,234 private schools operational in Jordan in the 2022/2023 academic year, the vast majority (98.1%) were mixed-gender schools.

There were 545 more schools in 2022/2023 than in 2015/1206. As of the 2022/2023 academic year, there were 7,505 operational schools in Jordan, up from 6,960 in 2015/2016.[17] While the number of public and private schools increased by 383 and 179, respectively, between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023, there were 17 fewer UNRWA schools, resulting in a net increase of 545 new schools overall during the period. There was a significant drop in operational schools with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as several private schools offering only kindergarten classes closed (from 1,935 in 2019/2020 to 1,516 in 2020/2021). The number of schools offering access to various education levels increased gradually between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023 **(Figure 2.5).** Schools offering upper basic grade levels experienced the greatest growth (up 632 schools), while schools offering lower basic grew the least (up 168 schools).

Figure 2.5. Number of schools by education levels offered, 2015/2016–2022/2023



Source: EMIS 2015/2016–2022/2023

Notes: Schools in Jordan may offer any combination of general education levels. Therefore, the categories represented above are not mutually exclusive. The category "all schools" is not the sum of the other four categories, but the total number of schools in the education system, regardless of which and how many education levels they offer.

17 For the purposes of this report, different school shifts within the same building are counted as their own schools. From this understanding, there were 7,505 schools in Jordan as of 2023, but 6,984 distinct school campuses/buildings. In 2015/16, there were 6,658 distinct school campuses/buildings.

Of the 7,505 schools in Jordan active as of 2023, 1,042 (14%) operated on a double-shift system. A school is classified as double-shift if it runs one of two separate sessions – either a morning or evening shift – within the same building as another school. The double-shift system gained traction in Jordan in the 1960s as a response to overcrowding in schools, and its use has expanded in recent years. Among these 1,042 double-shift schools in 2023, all were either public or UNRWA schools. While only 8.5% of mixed-gender schools were double-shift, 22.4 % of boys' schools and 41.1% girls' schools operated on the shift system. The majority of double-shift schools (849 out of 1,042) were at the basic education level, with only 18 and 175 at the kindergarten and secondary education levels, respectively. These trends suggest that double shifting is more common in single-gender schools and basic schools than in mixed-gender, kindergarten or secondary schools. There are 204 evening-shift schools specifically for refugee children, and of the 77 schools operating within refugee camps, 67 use the shift system (see Chapter 5 for more information on refugee education). A forthcoming school mapping exercise found that the regions with the highest number of double-shift schools were Zarqa, Amman and Irbid (Saqib, forthcoming). While the double-shift system enables greater access to education by increasing the system's absorptive capacity, the quality of teaching and learning in such schools depends greatly on management (Bray, 2008). As noted in Chapter 4, further research into the management of double-shift schools in Jordan is needed.

2.2.2. School coverage

Common measures of school coverage, such as gross and net enrolment ratios, rely on population data. However, reliable population estimates were not available for this analysis **(Box 2.1).** As a result, it was not possible to estimate gross and net enrolment ratios.[18] Therefore, alternative sources of nationally representative data, such as household surveys, were used when necessary. In the analyses presented below, household survey data provide indicators on school coverage.

Box 2.1. Challenges with population data and their use for educational planning

The size of the school-age population directly reflects the demand for education and serves as a critical foundation for many indicators in education analysis, such as enrolment capacity and equity.

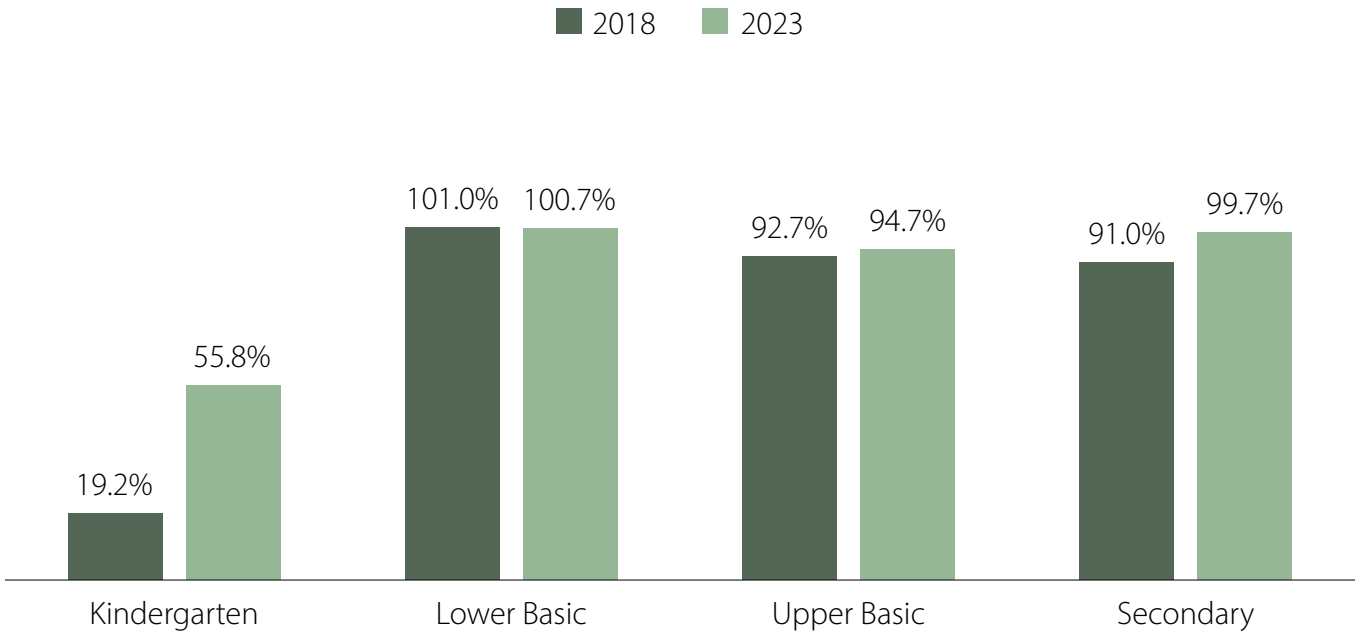
In Jordan, however, the most recent census was conducted in 2015, which is now a decade old. This raises concerns about the reliability of population estimates, particularly given the significant migration flows into Jordan since then, driven by conflicts in neighbouring countries. These flows, which are difficult to model accurately, further challenge the credibility of the data.

A new General Population and Housing Census, launched in 2024, is currently under way. National-level results are expected by April 2026, with disaggregated microdata available to external users by June 2026. Given this timeline and the needs of the education sector analysis, it was decided to rely on household survey data for the analysis, which offers a more up-to-date and relevant basis for assessment.

18 Enrolment ratios indicate the total number of students enrolled at a specific level of education, expressed as a percentage of the officially defined school-age population for that level in a given school year. However, calculating enrolment ratios is not possible without reliable population data. Attendance ratios, on the other hand, measure the number of students attending a given level of education at any time during the reference academic year, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population for the same level. Such indicators can be calculated using household survey data. Both indicators show the general level of participation in a given level of education and indicate the capacity of the education system to enrol students of a particular age.

Disregarding the official age ranges associated with different education levels, household surveys confirm high school coverage at lower basic, upper basic and secondary education. **Figure 2.6** shows that, besides kindergarten with a gross attendance rate (GAR) of only 55.8% in 2023, all other education levels have shown a GAR of over 90% at least since 2018. However, growth in gross attendance has varied by educational level. There has been a marked increase in student attendance in kindergarten and secondary education, from 19.2% and 91.0% in 2018 to 55.8% and 99.7% five years later, respectively. As discussed further below, such increases in the GARs of secondary and kindergarten have been accompanied by greater shares of over- and under-aged students at both education levels. By comparison, upper basic education saw a smaller amount of growth over the same period, increasing by a total of only 2.0 percentage points between 2018 and 2023. Lower basic education remained relatively unchanged over the period, with a slight decline in gross attendance of only 0.3 percentage points. An intersectional analysis, examining how gender interacts with economic status, disability and refugee status to influence school participation, is presented in Chapter 5.

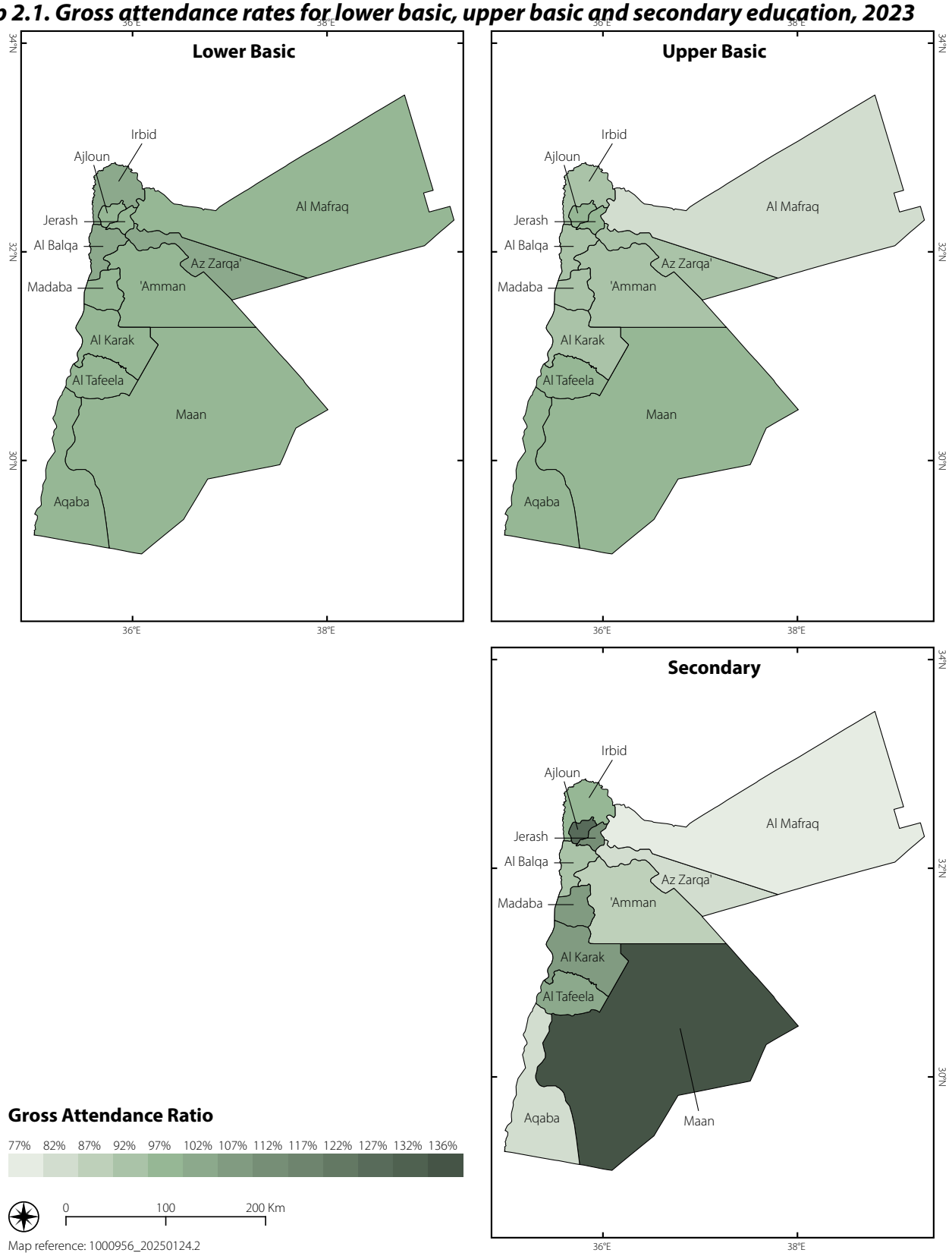
Figure 2.6. Gross attendance rates by education level, 2018 and 2023



Source: Demographic and health surveys 2018 and 2023

There are regional disparities in school coverage, although these vary by education level. Map 2.1 shows GARs by governorate at all levels of general education. School attendance has the least regional variation at the lower basic level, with all governorates having a GAR between 97 and 103%. However, household survey data show greater regional disparities in school coverage at upper basic (with a range of 18 percentage points) and secondary education (with a range of 58 percentage points). At the secondary level, GARs range from under 80% (Mafraq) to over 130% (Ajloun and Ma`an). Such a large range in GARs suggests that some governorates are facing very different issues in ensuring high-quality secondary education for all children. Some governorates, such as Aqaba, Mafraq and Zarqa, have been unable to overcome supply and demand barriers to provide universal access to post-basic education, such as the indirect costs of schooling on families and/or perceptions of low returns to education. Other governorates, like Ajloun, Jerash and Ma'an, face large under- and over-age student populations caused by repetition and late enrolment.

Map 2.1. Gross attendance rates for lower basic, upper basic and secondary education, 2023

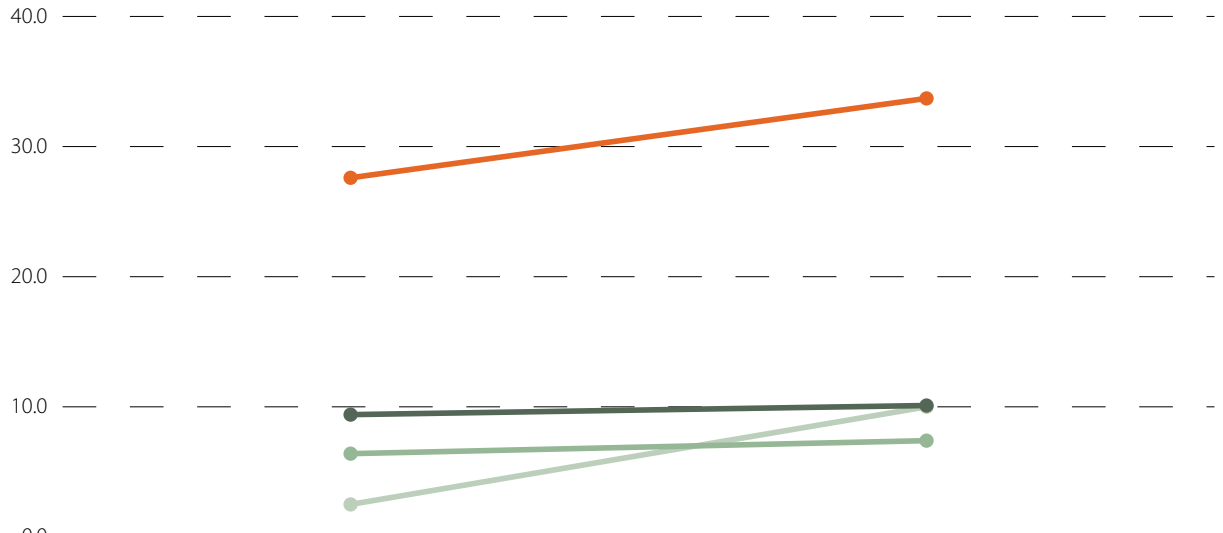


Source: Demographic and health survey 2023, (UN Geospatial, 2024)Note: Official boundaries of Jordan from the United Nations second administrative level boundaries programme (2024).

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The proportion of under- and over-age students at all levels has increased over the last decade, most notably at the secondary level. Figure 2.7 presents the difference between the GAR and net attendance rate (NAR) – which indicates the proportion of under- and over-age students among those attending – as calculated from household surveys conducted in 2018 and 2023.[19] The proportion of under- and over-age students has increased marginally at the lower and upper basic levels over the period of analysis, by 1.0 and 0.7 percentage points, respectively. However, issues of age-appropriate enrolment appear to be most severe at the kindergarten and secondary levels. In 2023, about a third (33.7%) of students at the secondary level were under- or over-age, up from 27.6% in 2018. At the kindergarten level, the proportion increased by 7.5 percentage points between 2018 and 2023.

Figure 2.7. Percentage point differences between gross and net attendance rates by education level, 2018–2023



	2018	2023
Kindergarten	2.5	10.0
Lower Basic	6.4	7.4
Upper Basic	9.4	10.1
Secondary	27.6	33.7

Source: Demographic and health surveys 2018 and 2023

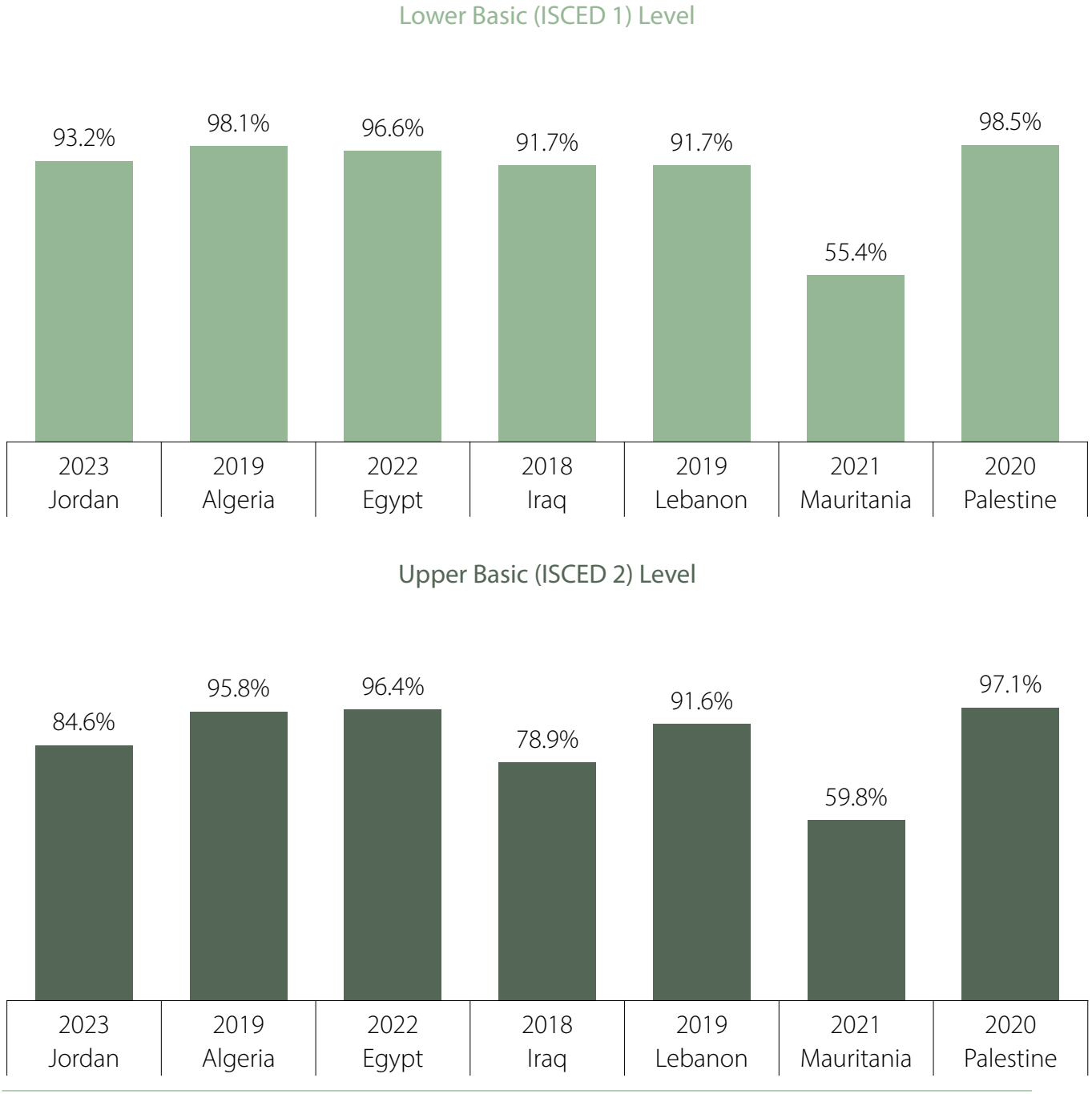
Of those secondary learners who were outside the official age range of 16 to 17 years in 2023, the vast majority were over-age. Only 1.9% of these learners were under-age (15 years or younger). While over half (52.7%) of these learners were only one year above the official age range, at 18 years old, another 45.4% were at least two years above this official age range. Such trends suggest that the growing difference between Jordan's GAR and NAR at the secondary level can be attributed to repetition, late enrolment, or other disruptions to children's educational journeys that cause them to leave and re-enter the formal education system.

While the NAR at the lower basic level in Jordan is comparable to those of other countries within the Mashreq and Maghreb

19 For the purposes of this analysis, being under- or over-aged is defined as a learner's age falling outside the official age range for a given education level by at least one year. For example, a student of 3 years of age attending kindergarten (official age range of 4 to 5 years) would be considered under-aged. A student aged 16 years of age attending upper basic (official age range of 12 to 15 years) would be considered over-age.

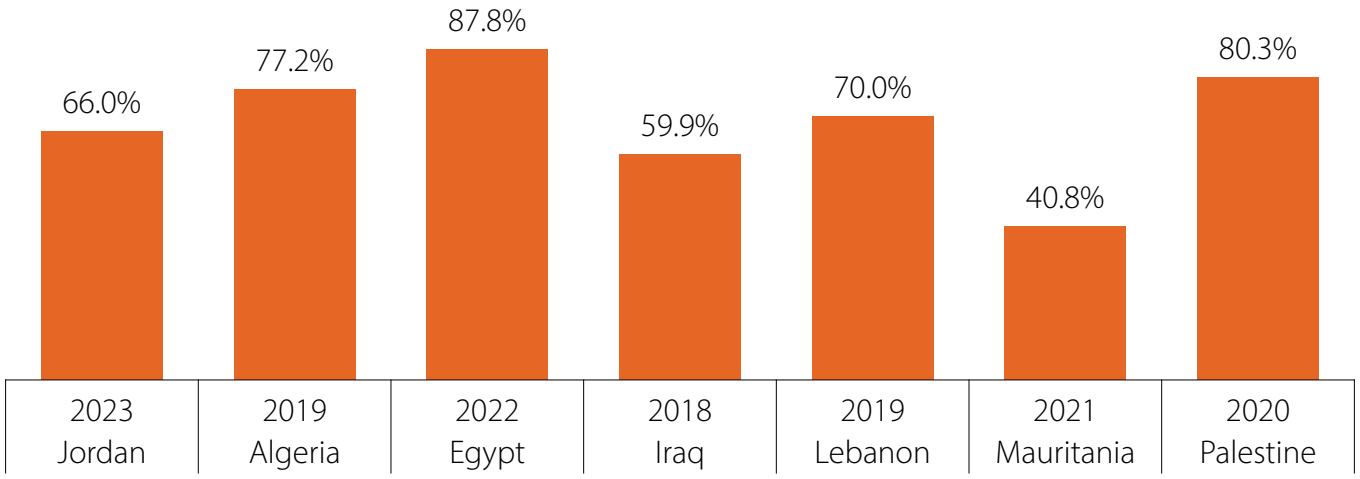
regions,[20] NARs at the upper basic and secondary levels are some of the lowest regionally. NAR comparisons were calculated between 2018 and 2023 using data available via the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). NAR data were not available for Libya, Morocco, Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Jordan's lower basic NAR (corresponding to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 1, often termed primary), at 93.2%, was the median value of the sample of seven countries **(Figure 2.8)**. Its NAR at the upper basic (ISCED 2, or lower secondary) and secondary (ISCED 3, or upper secondary) levels surpassed only those of Iraq and Mauritania. Due to the escalation of conflict within the region in recent years, these results will need to be re-examined with more current NAR data once available.

Figure 2.8. NARs by education level for countries within the Mashreq and Maghreb regions, 2018–2023



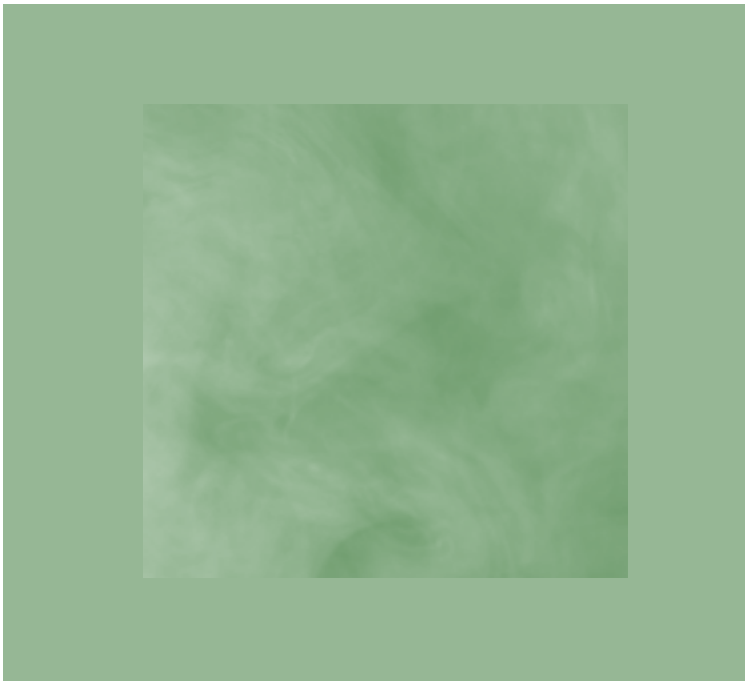
20 The Mashreq region consists of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Maghreb region consists of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Sudan.

Secondary (ISCED 3) Level



Source: Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023, UIS

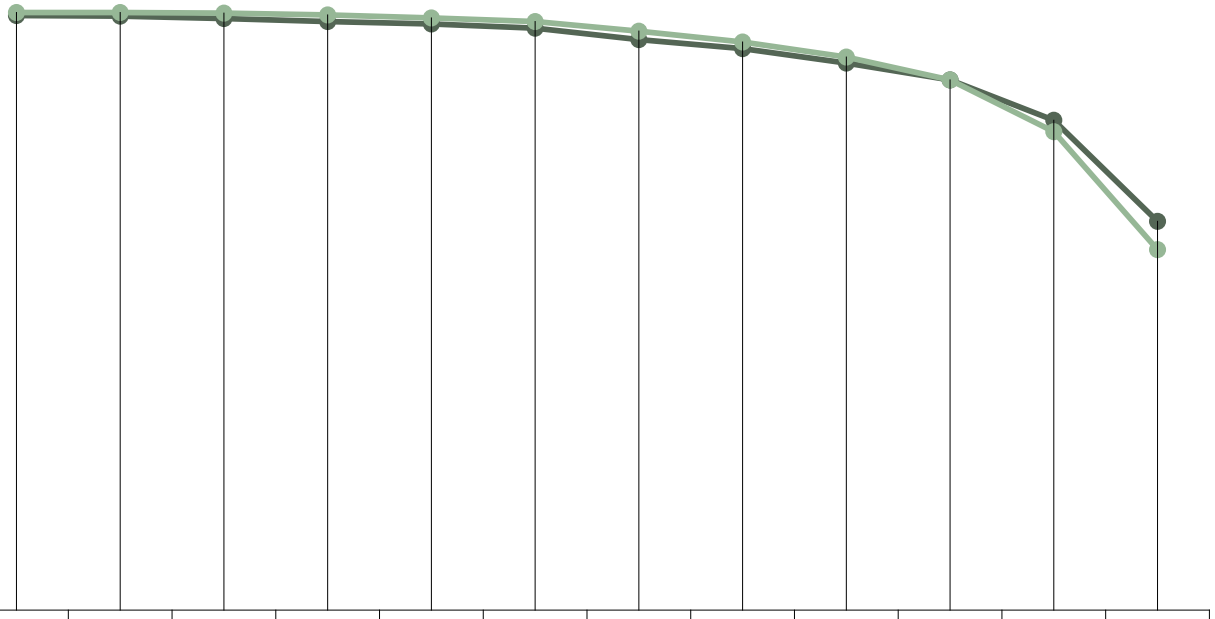
Notes: UIS does not collect GAR or NAR data at the kindergarten level. NAR data were not available for Libya, Morocco, Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic on the UIS database.



2.3. Access and transition of learners up the education ladder

To better understand the flow of students in the education system – from entry into the first grade of lower basic, their grade-to-grade transition, and up to completion – it is important to analyse the schooling profile in Jordan. The schooling profile allows policymakers and analysts to identify challenges in terms of access and retention, providing information on where these problems are more acute, as opposed to a smooth transition of students up the education ladder.

Figure 2.9. Probabilistic cross-sectional schooling profiles, 2012 and 2023



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Lower Basic						Upper Basic			Secondary		
2023	98.8%	98.7%	98.3%	97.8%	97.4%	96.7%	94.8%	93.3%	90.9%	88.1%	81.4%	64.6%
2012	99.3%	99.3%	99.2%	98.9%	98.4%	97.8%	96.2%	94.4%	91.9%	88.1%	79.5%	59.9%

Sources: Demographic and health surveys 2012 and 2023

The flow of students in an education system follows a somewhat consistent trajectory from lower basic to upper basic to secondary. However, several factors, such as repetition and dropout, may delay or interrupt progress. The flow or transition of students can be visualized in a cross-sectional schooling profile, which represents the educational progression of an average child in a country, from initial enrolment to completion. In Jordan, **Figure 2.9** illustrates the probabilistic cross-sectional schooling profile for basic and secondary education in 2012 and 2023, as determined using completion rates calculated with household survey data. A more detailed gender-disaggregated analysis of student flow and transition points – such as the transition between upper basic and secondary education – is presented in Chapter 5.

Enrolment in lower basic is almost universal, with most students entering and completing this cycle. In Grades 1 to 6, completion rates have remained above 95% for over a decade, indicating consistently high retention.

Completion rates start to decline more noticeably once students transition to upper basic education. The transition from Grade 6, the

final grade of lower basic, to Grade 7, the first grade of upper basic, shows the first significant drop, of about 2 percentage points. Completion rates then continue to fall across the upper basic cycle, from 94.8% in Grade 7 to 88.1% in Grade 10.

The greatest loss of students occurs at the transition to, and within, the secondary cycle. The 2023 schooling profile shows a significant drop between the completion of the last grade of basic education and the first grade of secondary education. While 88.1% of students complete upper basic, only 81.4% transition to and complete Grade 11. As students move up the education ladder, completion rates continue to decline until the final grade of secondary education. These substantial drops can be attributed to the non-mandatory nature of this level in Jordan, with opportunity costs an additional factor.

Over a third of students who begin formal schooling do not complete secondary education. While retention at the basic level remained relatively unchanged between 2012 and 2023, the percentage of learners reaching and completing the secondary level has increased over the past decade. However, the secondary cycle still ends with a completion rate of only 64.6%, compared with 98.8% for Grade 1. In other words, there is a loss of 34.2 percentage points between learners who complete the first grade of lower basic education and those who complete the last grade of secondary, with much of this occurring from the beginning of upper basic to secondary. Specifically, in 2023, only 3.3% of students failed to reach the end of lower basic, whereas 8.6% exited the formal education system during upper basic education, and another 23.5% during the secondary cycle. Retention at the secondary level emerges as a critical policy priority for Jordan's next education strategic planning cycle. Tackling this challenge requires addressing supply and demand factors to reduce dropout in basic and secondary education and improve overall student retention.

2.4. Internal efficiency

The concept of internal efficiency focuses on the use of resources to achieve an objective compared to an ideal situation. This section explores the factors impacting internal efficiency of the education system in Jordan: grade repetition and dropouts. Dropout rates and grade repetition not only waste valuable resources for both government and households but also hinder the socio-economic development of the country by limiting the number of students who acquire higher-level skills and knowledge. Additionally, for young people, low schooling attainment can limit their access to a broader range of personal and professional opportunities

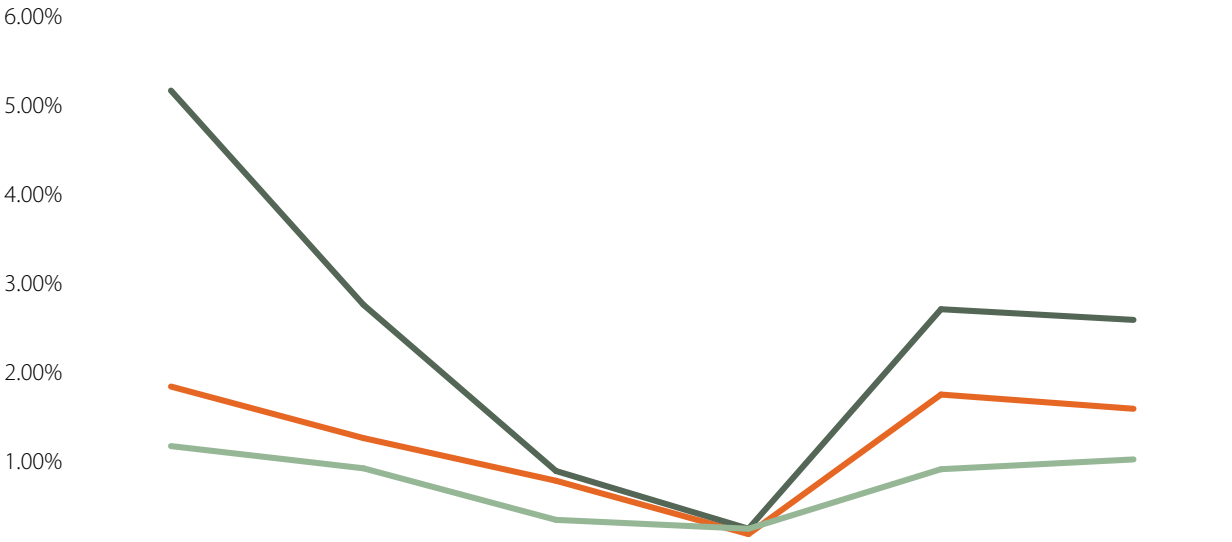
In the following sub-sections, analyses of repetition and dropout are presented, followed by a discussion of out-of-school children and the retention profile. Subsequently, the internal efficiency coefficients (IEC)[21] and school life expectancy (SLE) indicators are calculated for Jordan, adding further depth to the repetition and dropout analysis.

21 The IEC is calculated as the ratio between the number of years of study theoretically required to complete an educational cycle and the number of years actually consumed by students. In practice, the latter is often higher owing to grade repetition and dropout. The IEC equals 1 in the ideal case where all students complete the cycle without repetition or dropout. Conversely, it equals 0 in the hypothetical case where no child reaches the end of the cycle. The complement to 1 of the IEC thus indicates the percentage of resources wasted due to grade repetition and dropout.

2.4.1. Repetition

While the repetition rate at the upper basic level has been significantly reduced over the past six years, these rates at the lower basic and secondary levels have remained relatively unchanged (Figure 2.10). The repetition rate is a crucial indicator of internal efficiency that measures the proportion of learners enrolled in a given grade in one school year who remain in the same grade the following school year. In an efficient education system, the repetition rate should always be zero. The higher the repetition rate, the less efficient the education system. Evidence also suggests that children who repeat grades are more likely to stop going to school before completing primary or secondary education (Hares et al., 2020). Despite still having the highest repetition rate of all general education levels, upper basic has seen repetition rates fall by almost half between 2017/2018 and 2022/2023, from 5.18% to 2.60%. Repetition rates are lowest for students in lower basic, most likely driven by an automatic promotion policy for Grades 1-3. However, after a postponement of regular repetition policies during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, rates have since returned to pre-pandemic levels. For example, while the repetition rate at lower basic was 0.93% the year before the onset of the pandemic, it had risen again to 1.03% in 2022/2023.

Figure 2.10. Repetition rates by education level, 2017/2018–2022/2023



	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Lower Basic	1.18%	0.93%	0.35%	0.25%	0.92%	1.03%
Upper Basic	5.18%	2.77%	0.90%	0.25%	2.72%	2.60%
Secondary	1.58%	1.27%	0.79%	0.19%	1.76%	1.60%

Source: EMIS 2017/2018–2022/2023

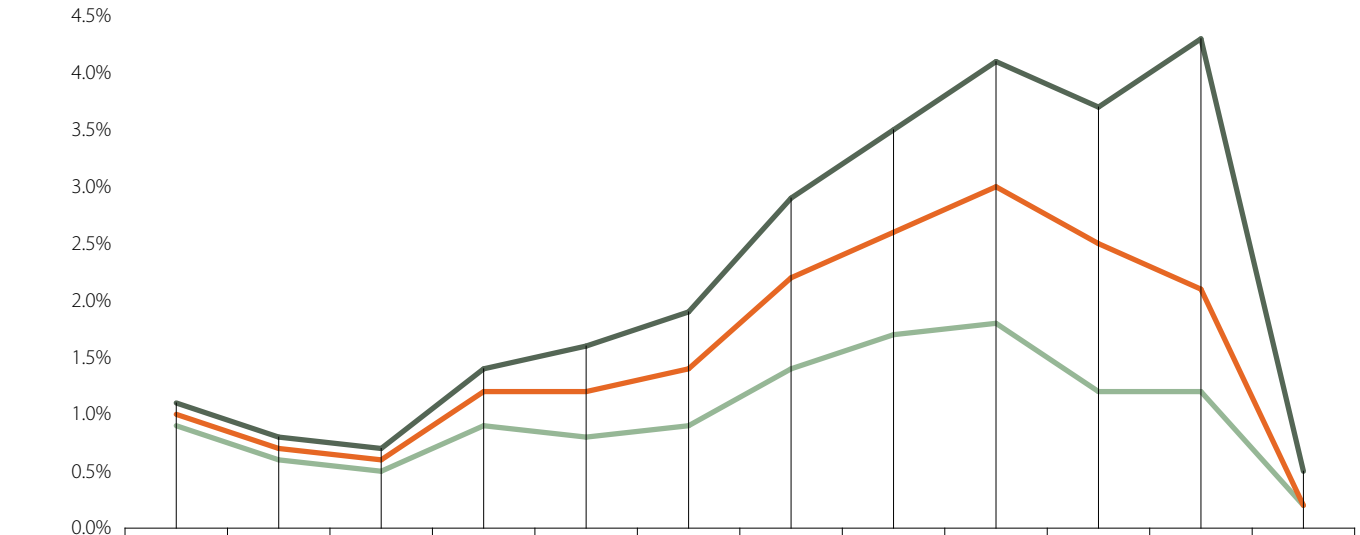
While the school system in Jordan automatically promotes students between the lower basic Grades 1-3, learners who perform poorly in Grades 4-6 are required to repeat the grade, up to twice if necessary.[22] In upper basic and secondary, students under 17 years are allowed to repeat a grade once. From Grades 4 to 12, grade promotion is contingent on both academic performance and attendance. A student passes if he or she has met the required attendance threshold and scored at least 50% of the total mark in each subject (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2019c). In the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years, in response to extended school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic,

22 After repeating twice at the lower basic level, students are automatically promoted to the next grade regardless of performance.

the MoE automatically promoted students who would otherwise have repeated a grade due to performance issues.

Boys' repetition rates are more than double those of girls at the upper basic and secondary levels. Repetition is a gendered phenomenon in Jordan, with boys more likely to experience grade repetition at every level and grade of general education than girls **(Figure 2.11)**. As of the 2022/2023 academic year, girls had a repetition rate of 1.53% and 0.72% at the upper basic and secondary levels, respectively, compared with 3.54% and 2.50% for boys. The disparity in repetition rates is less pronounced, but still significant, at the lower basic level, with girls at 0.78% compared with boys at 1.28%. Such gender disparities bring into question the quality of instruction at boys' schools and require further investigation into gender differences in of student attendance.

Figure 2.11. Repetition rates by grade and student gender, 2022/2023



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Lower Basic						Upper Basic				Secondary	
Total	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%	2.2%	2.6%	3.0%	2.5%	2.1%	0.2%
Male	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%	1.4%	1.6%	1.9%	2.9%	3.5%	4.1%	3.7%	4.3%	0.5%
Female	0.9%	0.6%	0.5%	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%	1.4%	1.7%	1.8%	1.2%	1.2%	0.2%

Source: EMIS 2022/2023

Repetition rates are highest between Grades 7 to 11, ranging from 2.1% to 3.0%. However, whereas girls experience their greatest risk of repetition at Grade 9, the highest repetition rate for boys is at Grade 11. The lowest rates of repetition occur between Grades 1-3, where students are automatically promoted except in extenuating circumstances, and Grade 12. The largest increases in repetition rates occur between Grades 3 and 4 (from 0.6% to 1.2%) and Grades 6 and 7 (from 1.4% to 2.2%).

Grade repetition in Jordan is influenced by multiple factors, including poor academic performance, frequent absenteeism and family-related decisions. However, Jordan's EMIS does not collect data on reasons for individual student grade repetition, limiting this report's ability to determine the extent to which different factors influence its occurrence. As discussed further in Chapter 4, high rates of student absenteeism may be contributing to repetition. Insufficient instructional time within the school day or academic year, poor time on task, overly ambitious curricula, and ineffective instructional tactics may also drive repetition by inhibiting children's ability to learn in the classroom (issues further discussed in Chapter 4). International trends also suggest that

repetition rates are higher among children from poorer households, who may face greater barriers to regular attendance and are more likely to attend poorly-resourced schools (Hares et al., 2020). In other contexts, repetition is also influenced by high-stakes examinations, such as the tawjihi. Resource constraints could also contribute to grade repetition, such as an under-supply of available places in upper grades. More research on the drivers of repetition in Jordan is necessary.

2.4.2. Out-of-school children

Understanding and addressing the issue of out-of-school (OOS) children is vital for enhancing educational access and equity in Jordan. This section delves into the current status and characteristics of OOS children, providing a comprehensive analysis based on the latest methodologies and data available in the country (UNICEF, UNESCO, & ILO., 2023). For more information on methodological changes, see **Box 2.2.**

As discussed above, due to a lack of reliable population estimates, it was not possible to estimate an absolute number of OOS children in Jordan for this analysis.

The primary source for the analysis is household survey data from the 2023 Jordan demographic and health surveys (DHS). The analysis focused on computing indicators to identify the proportion of OOS children of kindergarten, lower basic, upper basic and secondary age. EMIS data from the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic years were also used to compute estimates of children at risk of dropping out.

Besides presenting estimations of the proportion of children in the country who are OOS, the analysis also estimated the share of OOS children who had never attended and those who had attended but dropped out. In addition, Chapter 5 further investigates the situation of OOS children in Jordan by disaggregating results by sex, region, household economic status, functional difficulties, and other characteristics.

Box 2.2. Methodology for estimating out-of-school (OOS) children: from five dimensions of exclusion to seven dimensions of exclusion.

The study of OOS children is crucial for education policy, as it allows policymakers to quantify and characterize children excluded from the education system and to design effective policies to improve equitable access and retention in education.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, through the global initiative on out-of-school children (OOSCI), developed a methodology for identifying OOS children, published in the operational manual of the OOSCI in 2015. In that manual, the OOSCI outlines the five dimensions of exclusion, which served as the primary framework for examining the status of out-of-school children and those at risk of dropping out. These dimensions include kindergarten-aged children not enrolled in kindergarten or primary school (dimension 1), primary-aged children not enrolled in primary or secondary school (dimension 2), and lower secondary-aged children not enrolled in primary or secondary school (dimension 3). Additionally, the framework considered primary school children and lower secondary school children who are at risk of dropping out (dimensions 4 and 5, respectively). The methodology can be used to better understand trends concerning OOS children both in aggregate and across multiple equity dimensions.

In 2020, the Jordanian MoE and UNICEF Jordan produced a report on OOS children using the OOSCI methodology described above and data from the 2018 demographic and health survey. It identified the number of children aged 6 to 15 years of age who are out of school, as well as their profiles and the reasons for their exclusion from education. Moreover, it investigated supply- and demand-side barriers to education, estimated the costs and returns from education in Jordan, and proposed policy options to make inclusive education for all children a reality (UNICEF, 2020).

Since the 2015 operational manual, there have been significant updates in the calculation of indicators. In 2023, the OOSCI published a revised version of the operational manual, introducing a new methodology for computing the prevalence of OOS children. This new approach calculates the number of OOS children by subtracting the total number of students of the official age for a given educational level who are enrolled in early childhood, primary, secondary, or higher education from the overall population of the same age. This method differs from previous OOSCI guidance by considering all students of the official age as "in school", regardless of the level in which they are enrolled.

The revised methodology expanded the dimensions to include two additional categories, now referred to as the seven dimensions of exclusion, aligning better with the SDG 4 commitment to achieve universal primary and secondary education and incorporating two dimensions relating to youth of upper secondary age. The seven dimensions of exclusion are as follows:

- **DE1:** Children aged one year younger than the official primary school entrance age who are not enrolled in early childhood education (including kindergarten) or primary school.
- **DE2:** Primary school-aged children who are not enrolled in school, regardless of the level.
- **DE3:** Lower secondary-aged adolescents who are not enrolled in school, regardless of the level.
- **DE4:** Primary school students who are at risk of dropping out before completing the level or of not continuing to lower secondary.
- **DE5:** Lower secondary students who are at risk of dropping out before completing the level or of not continuing to upper secondary.
- **DE6:** Upper secondary-aged youth who are not enrolled in school, regardless of the level.
- **DE7:** Upper secondary students who are at risk of dropping out before completing the level.

This expanded framework provides a more comprehensive analysis of out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth, facilitating targeted interventions to improve educational access and retention across all age groups.

Access to lower basic and upper basic education is not universal despite being compulsory. According to the 2023 demographic and health survey, 2.6% of lower basic-aged children (6-11 years) were out of school **(Table 2.5)**. This rate has remained unchanged from 2018, although gender differences have narrowed slightly. For those aged 12-15 years (upper basic level), an estimated 5.0% of children were out of school in 2023, a slight improvement from 2018. At both levels of basic education, male students are still out of school in a higher proportion than female students, with a 0.5 percentage point difference at the lower basic level and a 1.0 percentage point difference at the upper basic level. While an estimated 77.9% of OOS children at the lower basic level have never entered school, about three-quarters of OOS children at the upper basic level have attended formal schooling for some time (with an estimated 68.4% having completed up to Grade 6).

Table 2.5. Out-of-school rates by age and school exposure, 2018 and 2023

	2018			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
DE1: Children aged 5 years (kindergarten)	54.8%	52.9%	53.9%	27.6%	27.5%	27.6%
DE2: Children aged 6-11 years (lower basic), of which:	3.1%	2.1%	2.6%	2.9%	2.4%	2.6%
Children who never entered school	82.3%	83.3%	82.7%	73.2%	83.7%	77.9%
Children who dropped out	17.7%	16.7%	17.3%	26.8%	16.3%	22.1%
DE3: Children aged 12 - 15 years (upper basic), of which:	6.0%	5.3%	5.7%	5.4%	4.4%	5.0%
Children who never entered school	17.6%	12.9%	15.5%	26.5%	22.0%	24.5%
Children who dropped out, of which:	82.4%	87.1%	84.5%	73.5%	78.0%	75.5%
Those who dropped out after completing lower basic	69.9%	73.8%	71.7%	64.6%	73.1%	68.4%
DE6: Children aged 16-17 years (secondary), of which:	23.5%	17.7%	20.7%	14.6%	10.5%	12.7%
Children who never entered school	3.4%	10.8%	6.5%	10.4%	15.8%	12.5%
Children who dropped out, of which:	96.6%	89.2%	93.5%	89.6%	84.2%	87.5%
Those who dropped out after completing at least lower basic	87.0%	94.2%	89.9%	90.7%	92.1%	91.2%
Those who dropped out after completing upper basic	45.9%	41.5%	44.1%	42.7%	43.7%	43.1%

Source: Demographic and health surveys 2018 and 2023

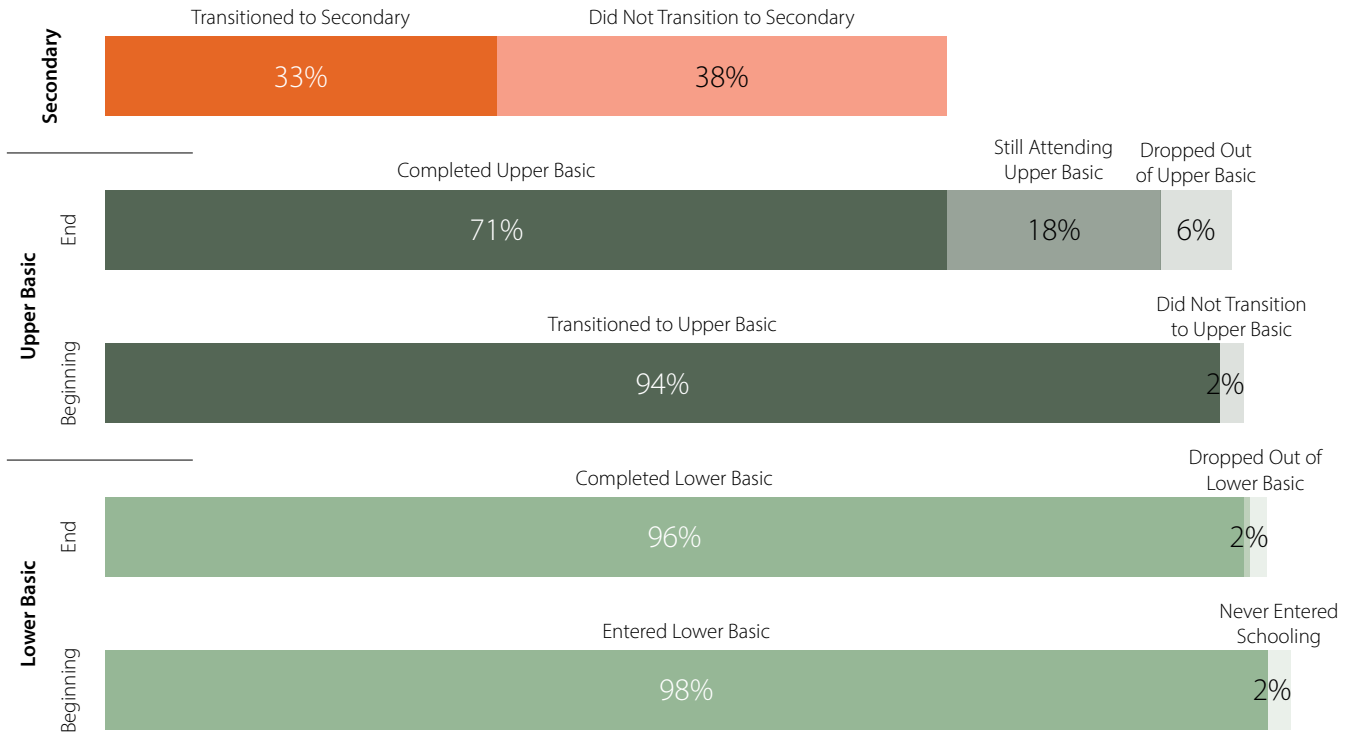
Notes: Estimates for 2018 OOS rates may differ from those presented in the 2020 country report on out-of-school children by the MoE and UNICEF, due to the 2023 update in the OOSCI methodology for calculating such indicators.

OOS rates are much higher at the non-compulsory levels of kindergarten and secondary education, although significant improvements were made over the period of analysis. In particular, more than 12% of teenagers of 16 to 17 years of age were not attending any level of formal education in 2023. The higher proportion of OOS children at this level compared to basic education suggests a substantial dropout rate as children progress beyond lower basic (with only 12.5% having never entered formal schooling). Boys of secondary education age continue to be disproportionately more likely to be out of school, with an OOS rate of 14.6% compared with 10.5% for girls. The OOS rate is highest for children of kindergarten age, with over a quarter of 4–5-year-olds out of school in 2023. However, the rate of OOS children at the kindergarten and secondary levels reduced significantly between 2018 and 2023, from 53.9% to 27.6% for children of 4–5 years of age and from 20.7 to 12.7% at the secondary level.

The gender dynamics influencing school participation and exclusion are discussed at length in Chapter 5.

Nearly all children in Jordan enter lower basic education, although an estimated 2% have never attended formal school. Figure 2.12 presents an education pathway analysis – a retrospective cohort analysis – for adolescents aged 16 and 17 at the time of the 2023 demographic and health survey. It illustrates how many children transition from one stage of education to another. Of those who entered school, 96% completed the first six grades of basic education, while 2% of 16–17-year-olds dropped out before finishing lower basic. Among the 16–17-year-old cohort, 94% transitioned to upper basic education, while a further 2% completed lower basic, but left school before progressing to the next cycle.

Figure 2.12. Education pathway analysis, 2023

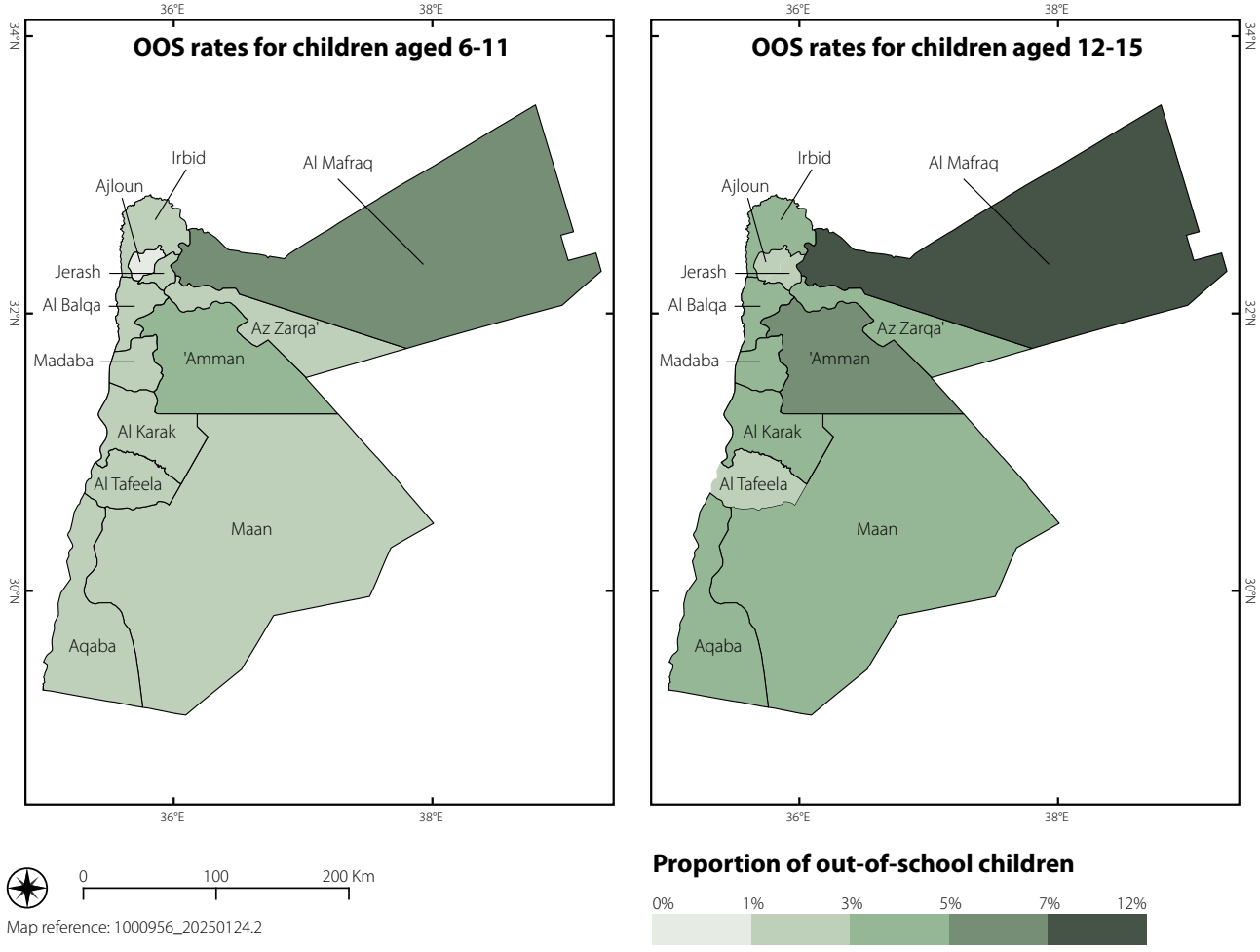


Source: Demographic and health survey 2023

School dropout and grade repetition become more prevalent during the upper basic and secondary levels. According to the education pathway analysis presented above, for every 100 students of 16–17 years of age in Jordan, only 71 will finish upper basic education on time, while another six will drop out at some point between Grade 7 and Grade 10, and an additional 18 will still be in upper basic due to repetition or late entry. Of the 71 expected to finish upper basic education, only 33 are expected to transition to secondary education, with the remaining 38 are expected not to continue formal schooling past Grade 10, representing a significant loss of human potential.

Significant regional disparities in OOS rates for compulsory education are seen across Jordan, as shown in Map 2.2. Mafraq exhibits the highest OOS rates for both lower and upper-basic-aged children. In 2023, while OOS rates for 12–15-year-olds ranged from 1.3% to 6.1% across other governorates, 12.3% of children in this age group in Mafraq were not attending school. Amman has the second highest OOS rates at both lower and upper basic levels. In contrast, Ajloun, Jerash and Tafilah report some of the lowest OOS rates, suggesting more favourable access to education in these regions, particularly for children of 12–15 years of age.

Map 2.2. OOS rates for children aged 6–11 and 12–15 years (%) in 2023



Source: Demographic and health survey 2023, (United Nations Geospatial, 2024)

Note: Official boundaries of Jordan from the United Nations second administrative level boundaries programme (2024).

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations, UNESCO or the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Initiatives and programmes to support the education and reintegration of OOS children into the formal education system are discussed at length in Chapter 5.

While the above analysis of dimensions DE1, DE2, DE3 and DE6 focuses on school exclusion once it has occurred, dimensions DE4, DE5 and DE7 concern children who are still in school but at risk of dropping out.

Over the years, different OOSCI studies have used various measures to calculate the risk of dropping out. For this analysis, the number of students likely to drop out in the future was estimated based on historical survival trends drawn from administrative data, as outlined in the OOSCI operational manual for Risk of Dropout (UNICEF, UNESCO, & ILO., 2023, pp. 59–61).

Over 90,000 students were at risk of dropping out across all general education levels in the 2022/2023 academic year. As shown in **Table 2.6**, 94,762 students were at risk of leaving the formal education system in 2022/2023. At every level of education, boys were at greater risk of dropping out than girls, with the largest gender difference occurring at the upper basic level, with 8.4% of boys were at risk compared with 5.1% of girls.

Risk of dropping out is highest at the upper basic level. At this stage, 6.7% of students are at risk, almost twice the rate at lower basic and secondary levels (3.6 and 2.6%, respectively). This risk is more prevalent during the cycle than at the transition to secondary (5.1% compared with 1.7%).

Table 2.6. Students at risk of dropping out, by education level and type of risk, 2022/2023

	Boys		Girls		Total	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
DE4: Children in lower basic at risk of dropping out	21,038	3.7%	18,529	3.4%	39,564	3.6%
Risk of dropping out during the cycle	18,451	3.2%	16,873	3.1%	35,321	3.2%
Risk of dropping out during transition to the next cycle	2,587	0.5%	1,656	0.3%	4,243	0.4%
DE5: Children in upper basic at risk of dropping out	30,312	8.4%	17,880	5.1%	48,126	6.7%
Risk of dropping out during the cycle	21,818	6.0%	14,500	4.1%	36,252	5.1%
Risk of dropping out during transition to the next cycle	8,494	2.3%	3,380	1.0%	11,874	1.7%
DE7: Children in secondary at risk of dropping out	4,245	3.1%	2,851	2.0%	7,072	2.6%
Total	**55,596**	**5.2%**	**39,260**	**3.8%**	**94,762**	**4.5%**

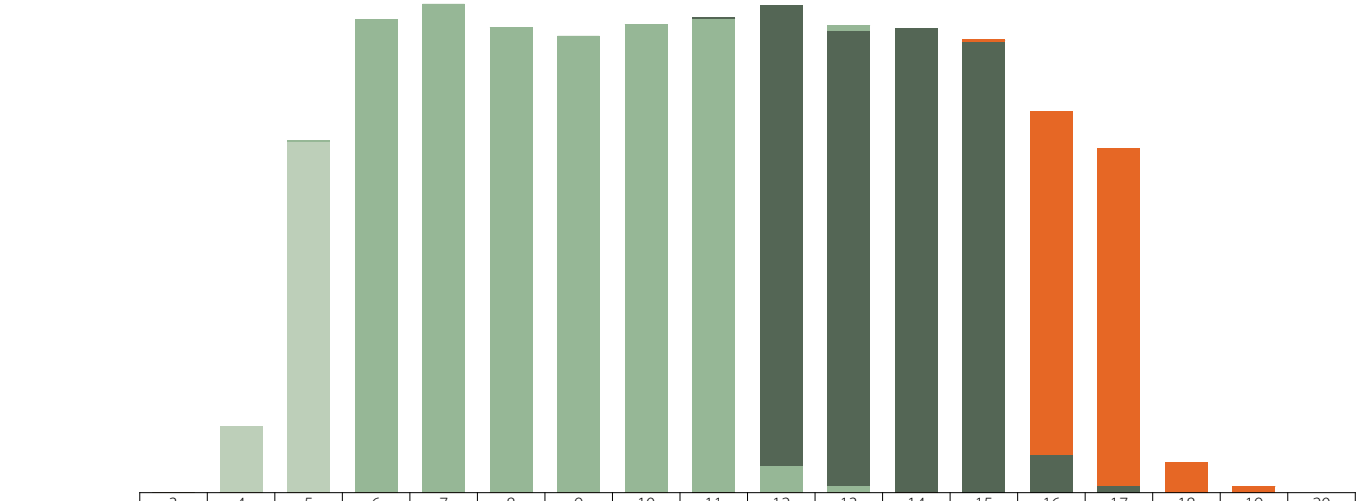
Source: EMIS 2021/2022–2022/2023

Several factors contribute to school dropout. While child labour is more likely to disrupt the education of boys, child marriage disproportionately affects girls, leading to early exits from education. Inadequate funding and inequitable distribution of resources further hinder access to good quality schooling, particularly for children from low-income households. Conflict and insecurity can also disrupt education. These challenges, and their differing impact on children from various backgrounds, are discussed at length in Chapter 5.

Late entry into formal schooling can lead to dropout. However, most students in Jordan enter education at the prescribed age: 6 for lower basic, 12 for upper basic, and 16 for secondary. For example, of the 183,636 6-year-olds enrolled in 2022/2023, over 99% were appropriately enrolled in lower basic education **(Figure 2.13)**.

Nonetheless, a sizeable share of students enter upper basic and secondary education late. In 2022/2023, 12,816 learners aged 12–14 years of age were still enrolled in lower basic classes, and 18,065 learners aged 16–18 years of age were still enrolled in upper basic classes. Such students are at greater risk of dropping out of the formal education system.

Figure 2.13. Enrolments by student age and education level, 2022/2023



	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Secondary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	965	132842	130335	11737	2435	272
Upper Basic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	540	177985	178670	179375	173859	14428	3161	476	0	0
Lower Basic	0	0	71	182907	188932	179959	176581	181047	182876	10314	2061	441	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten	203	25709	729	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: EMIS 2022/2023

Another reason for dropout is discontinuity in class progression. **A school is classified as incomplete when it does not offer all the grades of a given cycle.** This discontinuity forces students to change schools when their current one does not provide the next grade. In remote areas, such moves often mean longer commutes and higher transport costs for families, which can contribute to dropout.

As of the 2022/2023 academic year, over 30% of basic students in Jordan attended schools without access to all basic grades. Of the 1,833,683 basic students 567,999 (31.0%) were in schools offering fewer than all 10 basic grades **(Table 2.7)**.[23] Furthermore, 64.1% of lower basic students were in schools that offered at least Grades 1-6. Across the entire general education cycle, from lower basic to secondary, only 17.4% of students were in schools with all grades (Grades 1–12). For the remaining 82.6%, students will need to change schools at some point to complete all 12 years of schooling. Educational discontinuity is therefore widespread in Jordan, and its likelihood increases at higher levels of education.

23 This does not, however, necessarily mean that all of these children are facing a supply shortage at this point in their schooling. For example, it is common that some recently opened schools do not initially offer all grades but gradually inaugurate new successive classes as pupils progress, ensuring that they can complete the cycle.

Table 2.7. Schools and students by grade offerings, 2022/2023

School grade offering	Number of schools	Number of students
Grade 1 only	8	255
Grades 1–2 only	21	3,684
Grades 1–3 only	227	53,267
Grades 1–4 only	289	69,831
Grades 1–5 only	275	67,686
Grades 1–6 only (full lower basic cycle)	583	136,324
Grades 1–7 only	389	94,934
Grades 1–8 only	259	76,217
Grades 1–9 only	190	65,801
Grades 1–10 only (full basic cycle)	706	275,742
Grades 1–11 only	56	23,162
Grades 1–12 (full cycle)	614	367,613

Source: EMIS 2022/2023

Note: Student totals do not include learners enrolled in kindergarten. School counts include public, private and UNRWA-operated schools.

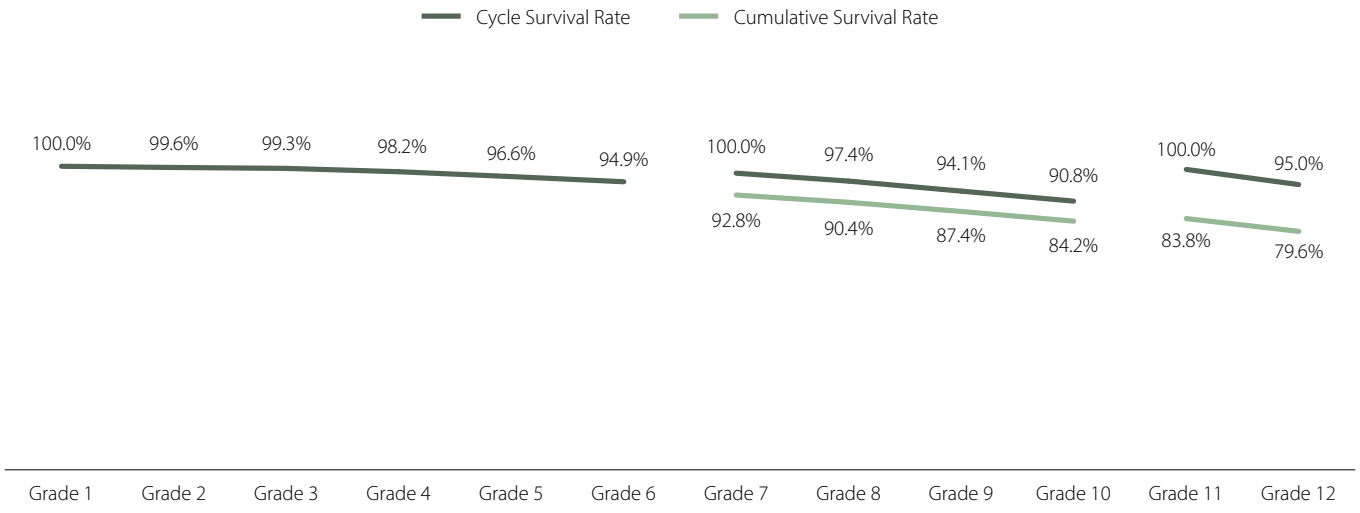
In 2024, a major school mapping exercise, integrated with a rationalization process aimed at optimizing resource allocation and improving access to education, was initiated, resulting in a baseline study. The MoE, with UNESCO technical assistance, is planning an in-depth analysis of supply and demand, including demographic changes and population growth, school capacity and conditions, overcrowded schools, redundant grades, underutilized schools, double-shift schools, rented schools, kindergarten, and the Business and Technology Education Council, to develop a ten-year school rationalization plan. Preliminary findings from the baseline study indicate that, of a total of 4,084 schools, 2,093 (51%) were overcrowded.[24] An additional 766 schools (19%) were identified as underutilized.[25] Overcrowded schools were concentrated regionally, with Jordan's northern governorates being the most affected (Saqib, forthcoming). Findings from this baseline analysis related to how access to adequate school facilities differs between boys and girls are further discussed in Chapter 5.

24 A school is considered overcrowded if the area per student is less than 1.4 square meters.
25 A school is considered underutilized if its occupancy rate, also referred to as the utilization rate, is less than 70%.

2.4.3. Retention profile

Student retention in Jordan is lowest in upper basic education. A retention profile consists of a series of survival rates for each individual grade and complements other indicators to provide a complete picture of internal efficiency. **Figure 2.14** presents the cycle survival rates, which refer to the students who continue from one grade to the next without dropping out or repeating a grade within each education cycle or level. Additionally, the cumulative survival rates are presented to depict the transition of learners through the formal education system, including dropout after completing basic education, to assess the level of retention within each cycle. The figure indicates that only about 90.8% of children who enter the first grade of upper basic education finish the cycle, compared with 94.9% in lower basic and 95.0% in secondary education.

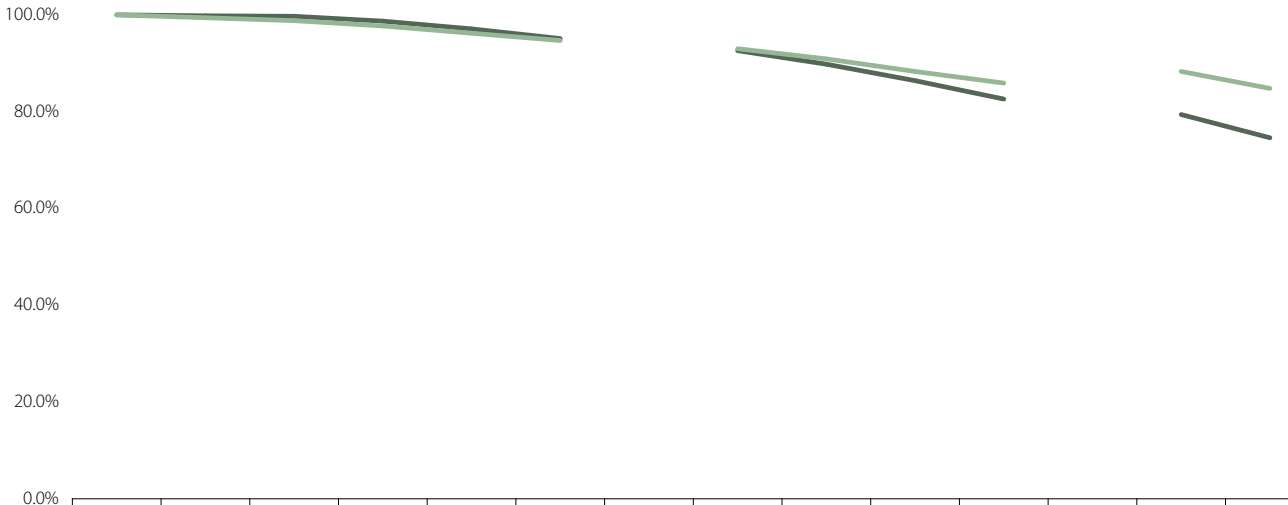
Figure 2.14. Cycle and cumulative survival rates, 2022/2023



Source: EMIS 2021/2022–2022/2023

Boys experience worse retention throughout general education than girls. For every 100 boys who enter the first grade of Jordan's formal education, about 75 will reach the end of the secondary cycle **(Figure 2.15)**. In comparison, for every 100 girls who begin formal education in Jordan, an estimated 85 will reach the end of secondary education. While retention at the lower basic level does not differ significantly by gender, boys are much more likely to drop out of the formal education system at the upper basic and secondary levels.

Figure 2.15. Cumulative survival rates by student gender, 2022/2023



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6		Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10		Grade 11	Grade 12
Male	100.0%	99.8%	99.7%	98.7%	97.1%	95.1%		92.6%	89.8%	86.4%	82.6%		79.4%	74.6%
Female	100.0%	99.4%	98.8%	97.7%	96.2%	94.7%		93.0%	90.9%	88.3%	85.9%		88.3%	84.8%

Source: EMIS 2021/2022–2022/2023

These survival rates fall far short of the ideal scenario. For every 100 children who enter the first grade of Jordan's formal education, about 95 will progress to the end of the lower basic cycle, 84 to the end of the upper basic cycle, and 80 to the end of the secondary cycle, leaving 20 children unable to fulfil their school-level learning potential.

These findings provide further evidence of serious internal inefficiencies in the system and indicate scope for significant improvement to ensure that students can progress smoothly through all levels of education. To address such inefficiencies, it is important to understand the phenomena of both repetition and dropout in Jordan.

2.4.4. Internal efficiency coefficients

The internal efficiency coefficient (IEC) measures the burden of dropouts and repetition on education financing. It is assumed that those who complete the cycle will not drop out and return later to continue the cycle. The IEC assesses the share of resources devoted to the schooling of children who complete each cycle without repeating any grade or dropping out. A 100% share indicates perfect internal efficiency. If all children followed this path, the coefficient would be 1.

Three types of IECs are calculated:

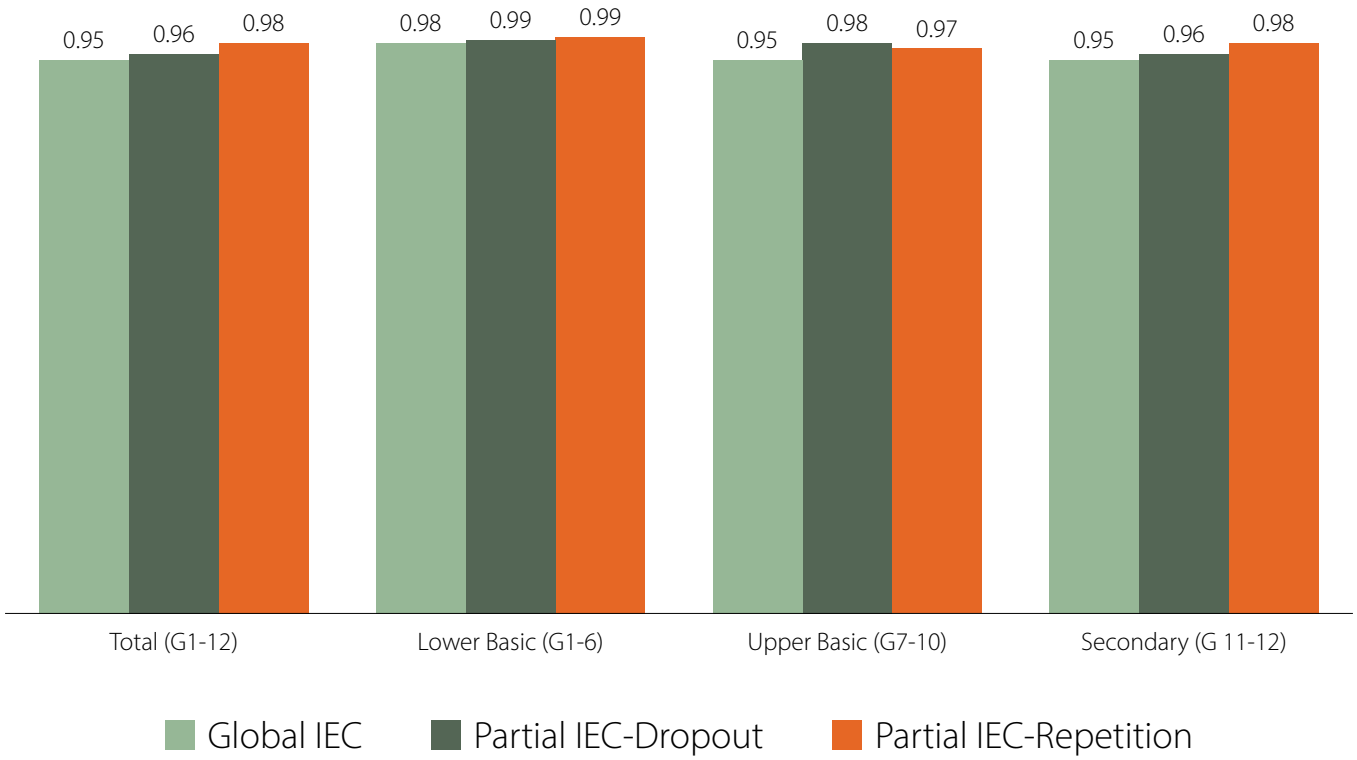
- The global coefficient measures the share of public spending dedicated to schooling students that has been useful in producing the observed outcome (completion of cycles in this case). The system is more efficient the higher this coefficient is.
- The dropout IEC is a partial measure of internal efficiency that excludes grade repetitions. It assesses the share of resource wastage attributable to school dropouts.
- The repetition IEC is also a partial measure of internal efficiency. It estimates the share of resource wastage attributable solely to grade repetitions within the education system.

Calculations using enrolment information from EMIS 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 reveal a global IEC of just 0.95 across both basic and secondary levels. The global IEC indicates that approximately 95% of public expenditure is effectively utilized in educating pupils who complete the entire general cycle without repetition or dropping out. Conversely, 5% of resources are wasted, representing a serious drain on scarce domestic resources for education.

Partial IECs indicate that a greater share of resource wastage can be attributed to children dropping out of the formal education system than to repeating grades. The same analysis referenced above reveals partial IECs of 0.96 for dropout and 0.98 for repetition. The slightly lower partial IEC value for dropout suggests that public resources are more likely to be wasted due to student dropout than on repeated years of schooling, although this difference is marginal.

While repetition is a greater contributor to the wastage of resources at the upper basic level, dropout is a greater challenge at the secondary level. Global and partial IEC values differ by education level in Jordan, as shown in **Figure 2.16**. Lower basic has the greatest global IEC, at 0.98, suggesting only 2% of resources are wasted at this level, compared with 5% at both the upper basic and secondary levels. At the upper basic level, the partial IEC for dropout is greater than that of repetition, at 0.98 and 0.97, respectively, suggesting a greater burden of repetition on education financing at this level. At the secondary level, the partial IEC for repetition exceeds that of dropout (at 0.98 and 0.96, respectively), suggesting a greater proportion of resources are lost to dropout at this level.

Figure 2.16. Global and partial internal efficiency coefficients by education level, 2022/2023



Source: EMIS 2021/2022–2022/2023

2.4.5. School life expectancy

As a result of grade repetition and dropout, school life expectancy (SLE) measures the average number of years of schooling that a young Jordanian can expect to receive, given current schooling conditions. SLE can be calculated from gross attendance rates (GARs) by education level. For example, the level-specific attendance rate of 94.7% at the upper basic level also means that, on average, a Jordanian has a 94.7% probability of being in school at that level. By calculating these GARs across all levels, the school life expectancy is obtained. The calculation presented below includes years of repetition.

Table 2.8. School life expectancy in years by education level, 2023

Education level	Theoretical duration of cycle (years)	School life expectancy (years)		
		Total	Boys	Girls
Kindergarten	**2**	**1.12**	**1.10**	**1.13**
Basic	**10**	**9.81**	**9.74**	**9.89**
Lower basic	6	6.04	6.05	6.03
Upper basic	4	3.77	3.69	3.86
Secondary	**2**	**1.99**	**2.03**	**1.96**
Total	**14**	**12.92**	**12.87**	**12.98**

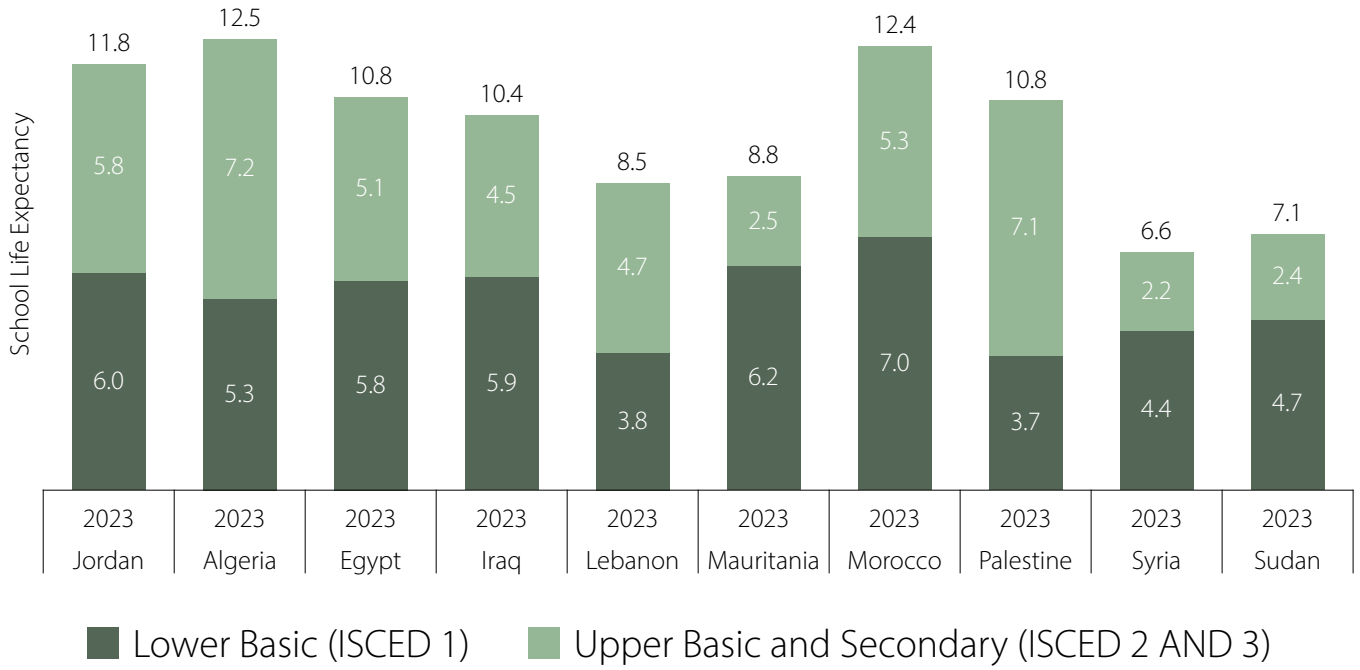
Source: Demographic and health survey 2023

Note: Calculated as the product of the GAR and the theoretical duration of the cycle, at the education level. This calculation does not exclude repetition.

Of a theoretical duration of 14 years, school life expectancy at the general level is 12.9 years, based on household survey data from 2023 **(Table 2.8)**. The average duration of schooling is distributed between 1.1 years in kindergarten, 6.0 years in lower basic, 3.8 years in upper basic, and 2.0 years at secondary. A SLE of 12.9 years, lower than the total theoretical duration of 14 years, suggests a slight underachievement in schooling across the full duration of general education. Boys have a slightly lower SLE at the general education level than girls, 12.9 compared to 13.0 years, respectively. Excluding kindergarten, Jordan has an average SLE of 11.8 years, compared to the theoretical 12 years of the basic and secondary cycles.

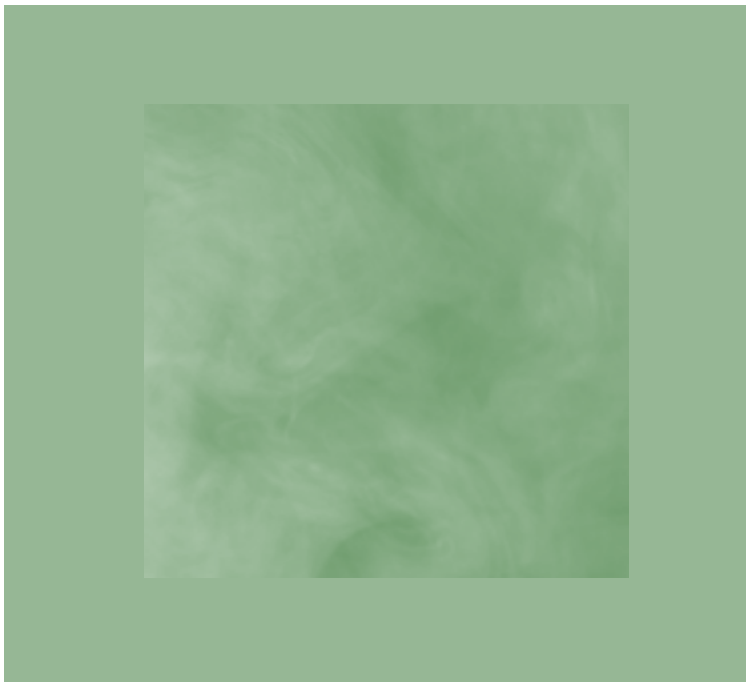
Jordan has the third highest school life expectancy in the Mashreq and Maghreb regions. SLE comparisons were calculated between the years of 2019 and 2023 using data available from UIS **(Figure 2.17)**. Excluding the kindergarten level, Jordan had a SLE of 11.8 years in 2023, only surpassed by the SLEs of Algeria (at 12.5 years) and Morocco (12.3 years). Jordan's SLE exceeds the Mashreq and Maghreb average of 10.0 years.

Figure 2.17. School life expectancy in years by education level for countries in the Mashreq and Maghreb regions, 2019–2023



Source: Demographic and health survey 2023, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Notes: For Jordan, SLE was calculated as the product of the GAR and the theoretical duration of the cycle, at each education level. For other countries, SLE values from the UIS were calculated as the sum of age-specific enrolment rates for the levels of education specified. For Mauritania, the SLE value at the primary level (ISCED 1) is for 2023, while the SLE value at the upper basic and secondary level (ISCED 2 and 3) is for 2020.



2.5. The efficiency of public education spending

The efficiency of public spending on education can be assessed by comparing the SLE to the financial resources mobilized for the sector. This ratio indicates the number of years of schooling an education system provides for each percentage unit of its GDP that it spends on education. Countries with the highest ratios are the most efficient.

Table 2.9 reveals significant variability in SLE and in the resources allocated to education across countries in the Mashreq and Maghreb regions. For instance, Egypt devotes only 2.5% of GDP to education, while Morocco spends 6.0%. Jordan is among the few countries spending less than 4% of its GDP on education. However, higher spending does not necessarily translate into complete schooling for children. This is reflected in the variation in SLE across systems: 12.5 years in Algeria compared with only 8.8 years in Mauritania.

Table 2.9. International comparison of the efficiency of education systems

Country	Year	SLE (years)	Education expenditure (as a % of GDP)	Ratio (SLE/education expenditure)
Egypt	**2021**	10.7	2.5	4.3
Jordan	**2023**	11.8	3.5	3.4
Algeria	**2023**	12.5	5.6	2.2
Morocco	**2023**	12.4	6.0	2.1
State of Palestine	**2021**	11.0	5.4	2.0
Mauritania	**2023**	8.8	4.8	1.8

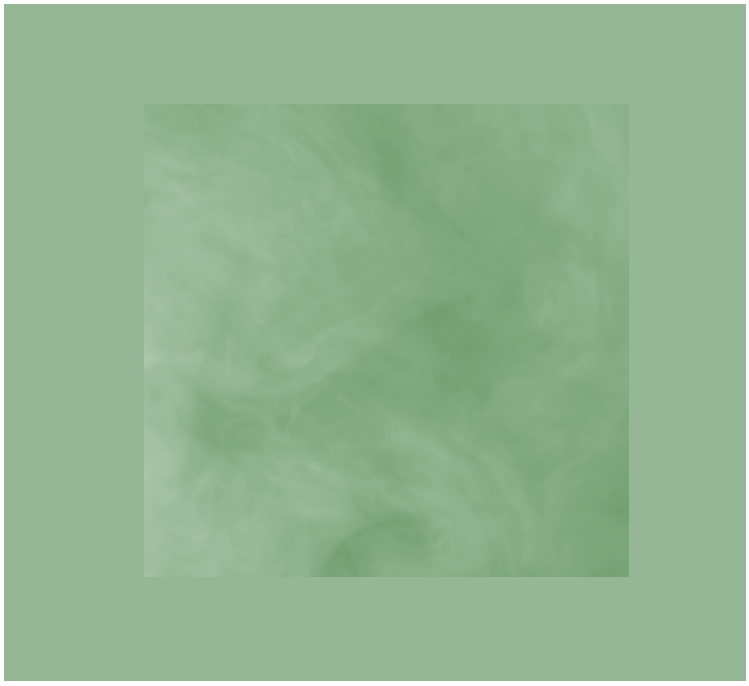
Source: Demographic and health survey 2023, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Egypt Pre-University Education Sector Analysis 2021

Notes: Recent SLE and/or education expenditure data were not readily available for other countries in the Mashreq and Maghreb regions, these being Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, and the Syrian Arab Republic. While education expenditure data were gathered from the UIS database for Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and the State of Palestine, such data were collected from the Egyptian Pre-University Education Sector Analysis 2021. For all countries, SLE is calculated across primary and secondary education cycles (ISCED 1, 2 and 3), with all countries also having a theoretical duration of 12 years for such cycles in total. Countries are ordered by their ratio of SLE to education expenditure, from highest (first row) to lowest (last row).

Jordan is one of the more efficient of the countries included in this international comparison. Only Egypt and Jordan have a SLE to education expenditure ratio above 3, at 4.3 and 3.4 respectively, demonstrating greater efficiency in the use of financial resources for education outcomes. All other countries with available data had ratios between 1.5 and 2.5, demonstrating less returns on their education spending, at least in terms of SLE.

The external efficiency of Jordan's education system – how schooling influences employment, productivity and economic outcomes – is discussed at length in Chapter 9.

This chapter has highlighted significant concerns regarding the internal efficiency of the general education system, which negatively affects both individual households and government operations. These inefficiencies increase financial burdens for families and waste public resources, ultimately hindering economic growth and social development. Tackling them would help to achieve more equitable outcomes and higher returns on education investments. The cost and financing of education are examined in the next chapter.



KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

Driven by growth in the school-age population, all levels of education saw increases in total numbers of students and schools between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023. For general education, secondary education experienced the greatest rise in enrolments over the period. While around 55% of general education schools are public institutions, around 42% are private. However, the proportion of students attending private schools decreased slightly between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023, suggesting that the public sector was able to absorb the steady increases in enrolments. Around 14% of schools operate on the double-shift system.

Household surveys confirm high school coverage at lower basic, upper basic and secondary education, with kindergarten lagging behind. The proportion of under- and over-age students increased over the last decade, most notably at the secondary level. Coverage at the primary stage is comparable to most other countries in the region, but upper basic and secondary coverage remains among the lowest.

Enrolment in lower basic is almost universal, with most students entering and completing this cycle. However, completion rates decline from upper basic onwards, with the greatest losses of students at the transition to and within the secondary cycle. Over one-third of students who begin formal schooling do not complete secondary education.

As of 2023, 2.6% of lower basic-aged children (6–11 years) and 5.0% of upper basic-aged children (12–15 years) were out of school. OOS rates are much higher at the non-compulsory levels of kindergarten (27.6%) and secondary (12.7%), although both improved over the period of analysis. Only 2% of children are estimated never to have entered the formal education system. Regional disparities persist, with Mafraq and Amman showing the highest OOS rates at both the lower and upper basic levels. In 2022/2023, over 90,000 students (around 4.5%) were at risk of dropping out across all general education levels, with the greatest risk at upper basic.

The global IEC is high, at 0.95 across basic and secondary education, reflecting low levels of repetition and dropout.

SLE is 11.8 years from lower basic to the end of secondary (12.9 years including kindergarten), the third highest in the Mashreq and Maghreb regions.

CHAPTER 3:
Cost and Financing

INTRODUCTION

Cost and financing are fundamental pillars for advancing education development, as they determine the resources available to expand access, improve quality and ensure equity in learning opportunities. This chapter examines the cost and financing of education in Jordan during the analysed period of 2016–2023. It presents the resources that are funding education service delivery in Jordan, looking at public spending, external support and household contributions. Achieving sustainable education outcomes requires predictable and effective allocation and management of domestic, external and private financial resources. While salaries typically take up a sizeable part of education budgets, well-managed sectoral funding also needs to allow the fiscal space that is crucial to supporting quality investments in teachers, infrastructure, learning materials and other critical components that directly influence education outcomes for all children.

In Jordan, the Ministry of Education (MoE) is the main education provider, managing the third-largest budget within the Government and over 90% of education sector expenditure. In recent years, significant progress has been made in strengthening education financing as a whole, with public education expenditure increasing by 103 million Jordanian dinars (JOD) in real terms between 2016 and 2023, reflecting an increase of 9%[26] and including a rebound in capital investments following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. While the total volume of aid to Jordan has decreased over the analysed period, the share of aid directed to education has increased.

However, challenges persist. The education sector's share relative to gross domestic product (GDP) and total public expenditure has declined, falling short of international benchmarks. With the bulk of the education budget consumed by recurring costs, especially staff salaries, the limited funding available for capital expenditure hampers infrastructure development and constrains financial allocations to early childhood education and development (ECED), non-formal education (NFE), and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Budget approvals and public procurement processes create additional systemic barriers to effective budget execution. External funding plays a vital yet complex role, with extrabudgetary contributions complicating financial oversight. Additionally, households bear a significant share of education costs, especially for private schooling and higher education, further highlighting equity concerns. Financing is not a neutral factor but rather a key mechanism for promoting and achieving equity in educational outcomes. The way in which education is financed is pivotal to reducing gender disparities; however, without a gender-responsive approach, these financial investments may unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities.[27] A stronger integration of gender into education budget programming and execution can enhance the role of financing as a key mechanism for advancing gender equality in and through education. Over the past decade, Jordan has made significant progress in integrating gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) into its public finance management system.[28,29] The MoE[30] participated in a GRB pilot project, initiated in 2022, as part of its broader Gender Equality Action Plan 2023–2025 (GEAP+). This project included a gender audit and a gender-responsive budget analysis of the vocational education programme, resulting in recommendations to the MoE and an action plan for improving GRB practices.

26 This increase should be viewed in the context of population growth, as well as the presence of refugees, which can put additional pressure on public resources.

27 It is important to note that conducting a gender-disaggregated analysis of education spending was not possible due to a lack of gender-disaggregated data.

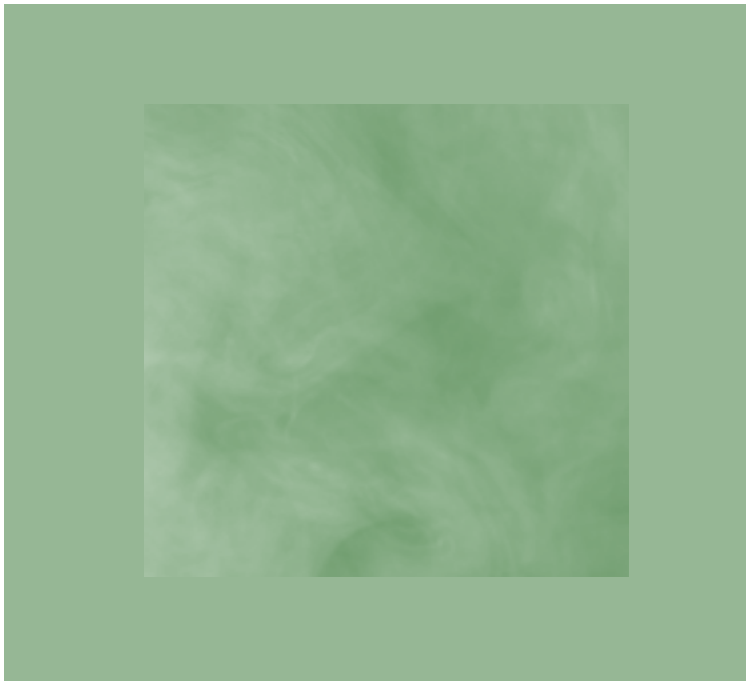
28 For more details, see https://jordan.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/past-initiatives/increasing-accountability-in-financing-gender-equality/initiative1/success-stories/advancing-gender-responsive-budgeting-in-jordan

29 For more details, see https://www.afd.fr/en/carte-des-projets/gender-equality-budgeting-jordan-afd#:~:text=Over%20a%20decade%20ago%2C%20Jordan,finance%20management%20and%20budget%20transparency

30 Alongside other ministries: Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Labour (MoL) and Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs (MoPPA).

Data for this chapter's analysis of public financing for education, including both government and budgetary donor funding, are sourced from general government budget statistics between 2016 and 2023.[31] For external education financing, extrabudgetary spending for the period 2016–2022 is comprehensively captured by the Creditor Reporting System (CRS), a database from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[32] Household contributions to education expenditure are analysed using data from the country's 2017–2018 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES).[33] As the raw data have not been published, this analysis is based only on the summary statistics tables released by the Jordanian Department of Statistics (DoS). While the survey data were weighted to provide a nationally representative sample, they are now somewhat dated and may not necessarily reflect current household spending patterns. Findings should therefore be interpreted with these limitations in mind.

This chapter is divided into three key sections: (1) **Public spending on education**; (2) **External funding for education**, exploring the trends and evolution of external funding to the education sector over the period 2016–2022; and (3) **Private spending**, focusing on the contribution of households to education expenditure, examining household spending by level of education and institution type, and household spending on school-related supplies and expenses.



31 Actual spending data drawn from government budget laws on public education financing from the Public Treasury Directorate of the Jordanian Ministry of Finance (MoF), donor sector budget support (SBS) and specific loans. It should be noted that donor SBS was included within the treasury funding without differentiation of sources, making it challenging to disaggregate.

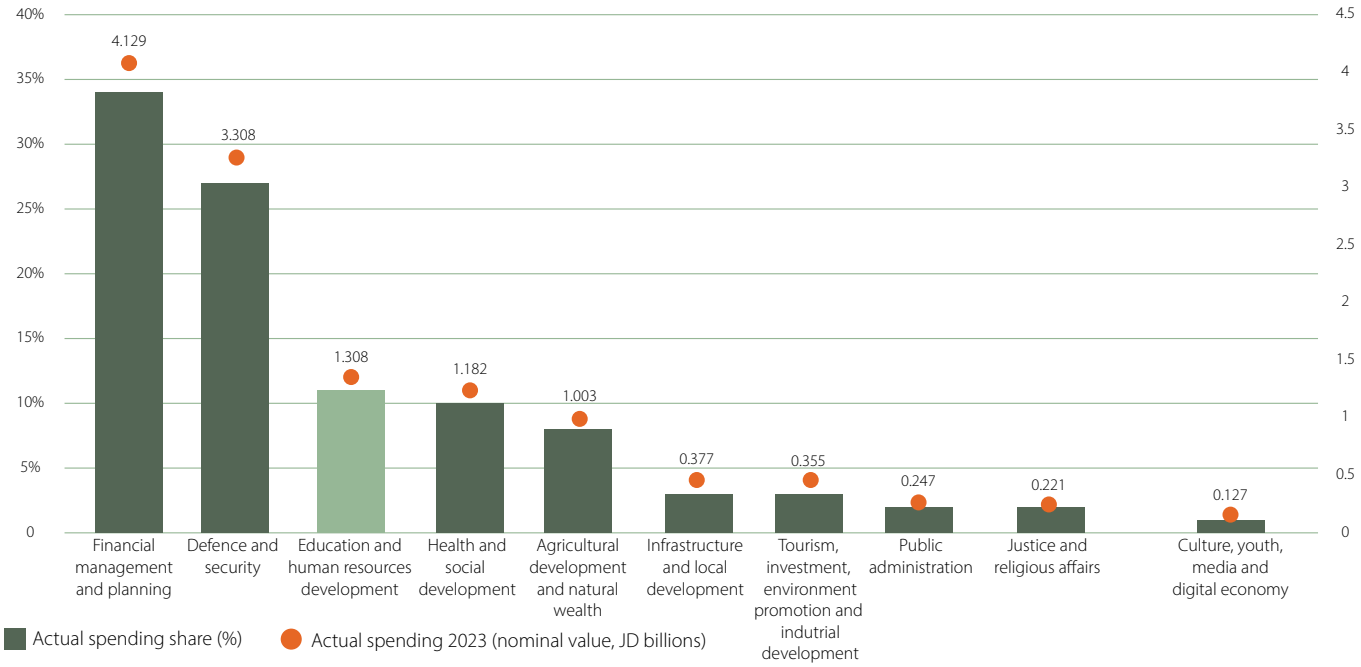
32 Sectoral-level data through 2022 are available in the OECD CRS database. As at January 2025, reporting of donor aid disbursements to the education sector for 2023 was still minimal in the database.

33 The latest HIES in Jordan from 2021–2022 is not yet publicly available.

3.1. Public spending on education

The Jordanian education sector ranked third in public spending in 2023, representing 11% of total public expenditure (JOD 1.308 billion),[34] which is well below the financial management and planning sector[35] (34%, JOD 4.129 billion) and the defence and security sector (27%, JOD 3.308 billion), as shown in **Figure 3.1**. Within the service sector, education spending narrowly exceeded that of health and social development, which represented JOD 1.182 billion (10%) in 2023.

Figure 3.1. Government expenditure by sector in 2023: breakdown of amounts and shares



Source: General Budget Law for fiscal year 2023, General Budget Department (GBD)

3.1.1. Budget entities in public sector education

Following reforms adopted by the Government of Jordan in 2023, line ministries, and government departments and units, are now classified into 10 sectors, with education-related spending executed through the "education and human resources development" sector[36] (Jordan, MoE, 2024).

Key sector entities with budget responsibilities relevant to this chapter include the MoE, Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR). Collectively, they manage service delivery and budget execution for the various levels, subsectors and aspects of education. Regulation and quality assurance is carried out by bodies, such as the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC), Jordan Academy of Arabic (JAA) and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions

34 This sectoral-level comparison reflects the actual expenditures as reported in the annual General Budget Law, without removing non-education spending by the MoL or double-counted subsidies from the MoE to Jordan Academy of Arabic (JAA), and from the MoL to the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC).

35 For details about this sector and its constituent entities, see https://www.gbd.gov.jo/en/releases/law-min/2024?sector=03. Among this sector's many expenditures are: debt service (internal and external loans), retirement and compensation allowances, and general tax reimbursements, which could explain why it is ranked first in terms of public spending.

36 Hereinafter, the "education and human resources development" sector will be referred to as the "education" sector for simplicity.

(AQACHEI). Further details on each of these entities are provided in the relevant chapters, namely: Chapter 2 (access, efficiency and out-of-school children), Chapter 5 (inclusion and diversity), Chapter 6 (ECED), Chapter 7 (TVET) and Chapter 8 (higher education).

In addition to regulating the labour market, the Ministry of Labour (MoL)[37] supports education through training and employment programmes. To avoid falsely inflating the volume of resources allocated to education, the analysis in this chapter includes only education-related expenditures by the MoL, not its labour market activities and other non-educational programmes. The MoL spending reported in this chapter relates to institutional capacity-building projects for human resources development within the Ministry, as well as expenditures related to providing other training and employment services for Jordanians.

The Development and Employment Fund (DEF)[38] also supports education by financing new projects and developing existing ones to provide training courses that improve the beneficiaries' qualifications and skills.

3.1.2. Evolution of public education spending

Public spending on education in Jordan grew considerably over the analysed period (2016–2023).[39] In those seven years, actual public education spending[40] increased by more than JOD 103 million (in constant 2023 prices),[41] representing an overall growth rate of 9%, with an average annual increase of 1%, as shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1. Actual[42] public education sector spending in 2016, 2020 and 2023, excluding debt service

Entity	2016 Actual spending (JOD billions)	2016 Share (%)	2020 Actual spending (JOD billions)	2020 Share (%)	2023 Actual spending (JOD billions)	2023 Share (%)
MoE*	1.0004	84.9%	1.0528	88.2%	1.1616	90.7%
JAA	0.0008	0.1%	0.0007	0.1%	0.0008	0.1%
MoHESR	0.1334	11.3%	0.1121	9.4%	0.0941	7.3%
AQACHEI	0.0014	0.1%	0.0013	0.1%	0.0016	0.1%
MoL**,+	0.0021	0.2%	0.001	0.1%	0.0011	0.1%
VTC	0.0129	1.1%	0.012	1.0%	0.0162	1.3%
TVSDC	0.0241	2.0%	0.0113	0.9%	0.003	0.2%
DEF	0.0028	0.2%	0.0021	0.2%	0.0024	0.2%
Total	**1.1778**	**100.0%**	**1.1933**	**100.0%**	**1.2808**	**100.0%**

37 For more details, see https://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/law-min/2024/en/2901.pdf

38 For more details, see https://www.gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/gbd/law-min/2024/en/8122.pdf

39 Due to resource and time constraints, this section focuses on three specific periods 2016, 2020 and 2023. This represents a limitation in conducting a full trend analysis of the 2016–2023 period.

40 Retrieved from the budget laws published annually by the GBD. For details, see https://www.gbd.gov.jo/en/releases/law-min/2024?sector=02

41 Real values calculated by adjusting for inflation using the GDP deflator. The deflator is derived from nominal GDP at market prices and real GDP at constant prices, as published in the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) statistical database. For further details, see https://statisticaldb.cbj.gov.jo/?node=RGdVT3ZNUk5wUTlOdjlhVmlCYnBqQT09

42 Outturn data from the GBD (not budgeted).

Source: Author's calculations based on the GBD budget laws for fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023. Actual spending figures expressed in constant 2023 JOD billions.

*Notes: *Subsidies to JAA were removed to avoid double counting. ** Only selected education-related expenditures were considered in order to avoid overestimating government allocations to education. These education-related expenditures by the MoL are related to Programme 4801 (Administrative and Support Services, Project 001: Institutional capacity-building) and Programme 4810 (Training and Employment, Activity 601: Providing training and employment services to Jordanians). +Subsidies from the MoL to the VTC were removed to avoid double counting.*

The MoE accounts for a dominant and growing share of public education spending. Its share rose from approximately 85% in 2016 to approximately 91% in 2023, commensurate with its role as the main provider of basic and secondary education, which together form the bulk of services in the sector.

The MoHESR shows a declining share of education sector expenditure, though this does not capture the full picture of higher education financing. These figures exclude the total expenditures of public universities, which operate with a degree of financial and administrative autonomy. The share of the MoHESR decreased from 11.3% in 2016 to 7.3% in 2023.[43]

Spending on vocational training and skills development remains low and fragmented, despite national commitments to promote TVET. The VTC increased its spending modestly from JOD 12.9 million in 2016 (constant 2023 prices) to JOD 16.2 million in 2023, accounting for only 1.3% of total education expenditure that year. By contrast, the TVSDC saw a sharp decline in spending, dropping from JOD 24.1 million (constant 2023 prices) in 2016 to a mere JOD 3 million in 2023, amounting to a striking 87% reduction over a seven-year period. This drop coincides with the planned merger of the TVSDC with the AQACHEI, and it reflects the fragmented nature of TVET financing and structures in Jordan (UNESCO, 2023b). Despite commitments made to the TVET subsector by the Government of Jordan and articulated in the TVET Reform Plan ("Jordan 888"),[44] national funding remains insufficient for meeting the sector's goals and needs (UNESCO, 2023b).

Education-related expenditures by the MoL have dropped by half overall, though with some fluctuation. Spending on education by the MoL declined during the analysed period (UNESCO, 2023b), decreasing from JOD 2.1 million in 2016 (constant 2023 prices) to JOD 1 million in 2020 (constant 2023 prices), before rising again slightly to JOD 1.1 million in 2023. This represents a net decline of 50% over the analysed period.

Other entities within the education sector account for smaller proportions of spending, focusing instead on legislative and regulatory support. Institutions in the education sector such as JAA, the AQACHEI and the DEF play complementary roles. Their combined expenditures are minimal compared to that of the MoE and other main education providers managing subsectors or educational cycles in Jordan.

43 Actual expenditure by the MoHESR decreased during this period, largely as a result of a reduction in the allocation for grant-funded public university development projects.

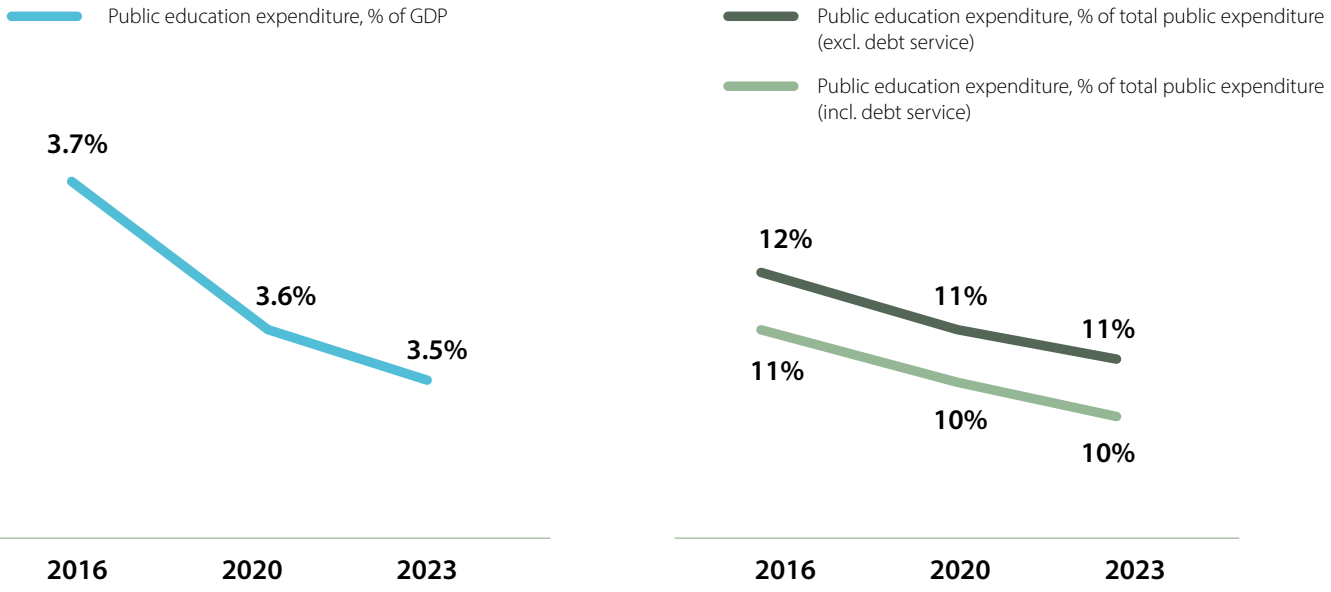
44 For further details, see https://articles.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2024/06/TVET%20Review%20Report%202023_EN_20240225%20Web%201.pdf#page=100

3.1.3. Priority of the education sector within public spending

Public spending on education as a share of GDP has declined slightly, reflecting challenges in meeting international benchmarks. In 2023, spending amounted to approximately JOD 1.281 billion (see **Table 3.1**), accounting for 3.5% of GDP. This marks a continuing decline from 3.7% in 2016, and to 3.6% in 2020, as shown in **Figure 3.2,** reflecting the difficulty Jordan is facing in aligning itself with the recommendation of the Incheon Declaration to allocate at least 4% to 6% of GDP to education (UNESCO, 2015).[45]

Public education spending in Jordan as a share of total public expenditure also saw a slight decline over the seven-year analysed period. Its share dropped from 12% of total public expenditure (excluding debt service) to 11%, marking a 1% decrease. This downward trend again falls short of the recommended minimum range of 15% to 20% in the Incheon Declaration, highlighting a growing gap between national education funding in Jordan and global benchmarks.

Figure 3.2. Public education expenditure as a share of GDP and of total public expenditure (2016, 2020 and 2023)



Source: Public education spending calculated by the author using data from GBD budget laws for fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023. GDP data provided by the CBJ.[46] Data on public expenditures and debt service (interest payments) drawn from government financial bulletins from the Ministry of Finance (MoF).[47]

Note: Total public expenditure in 2023 is preliminary, covering the period from January to November 2023.

Jordan spends slightly more on education than what is average for lower-middle-income countries but less than what is spent by neighbouring countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In 2023, education spending in Jordan stood at 3.5% of GDP, ahead of Lebanon (1.7%) and Mauritania (2.3%), and slightly above the 3.4% average in lower-middle-income countries (see **Figure 3.3**). However, Jordan has lagged significantly behind its neighbouring

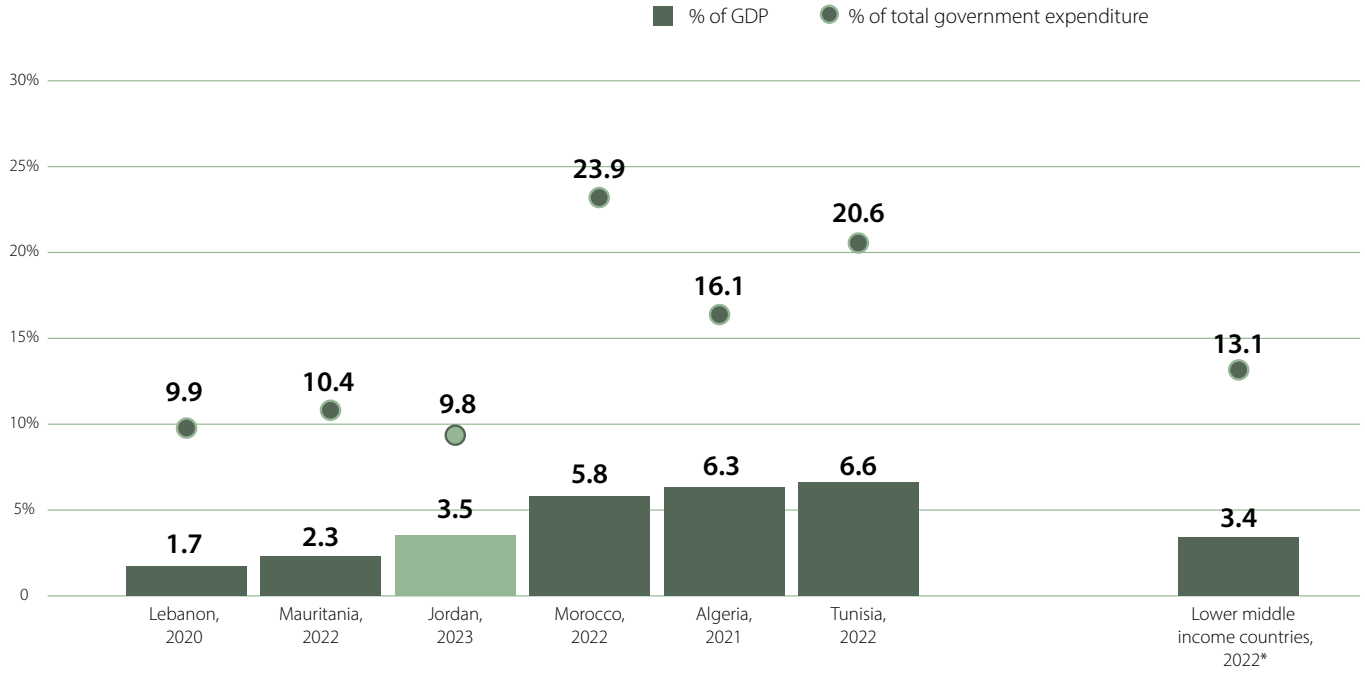
45 The Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, adopted at the 2015 World Education Forum (WEF) in Incheon, Republic of Korea, outlines a global, 15-year vision for education, encouraging countries to increase public education spending. For more details, see https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf

46 See https://statisticaldb.cbj.gov.jo/?node=RGdVT3ZNUk5wUTlOdjlhVmlCYnBqQT09

47 For 2020 and 2023, see https://mof.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/en/eb_list_page/english_nov__compressed-1.pdf
For 2016, see https://www.mof.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/en/eb_list_page/english_pdf_december2-2021_-_copy.pdf

countries, with Morocco allocating 5.8% of GDP, Algeria 6.3% and Tunisia 6.6%. Additionally, when education spending is examined as a share of total government expenditure, Jordan spent only 9.8%[48] in 2023, which is far below the average of 13.1% for lower-middle-income countries. This divergence is more pronounced when compared to, for example, Mauritania (10.4%), Algeria (16.1%), Tunisia (20.6%) and Morocco (23.9%), which further underlines the fact that education investment in Jordan is relatively low compared to regional and global contexts.

Figure 3.3. International comparative analysis of public education spending as a share of GDP and of total public expenditure: Jordan versus peer countries



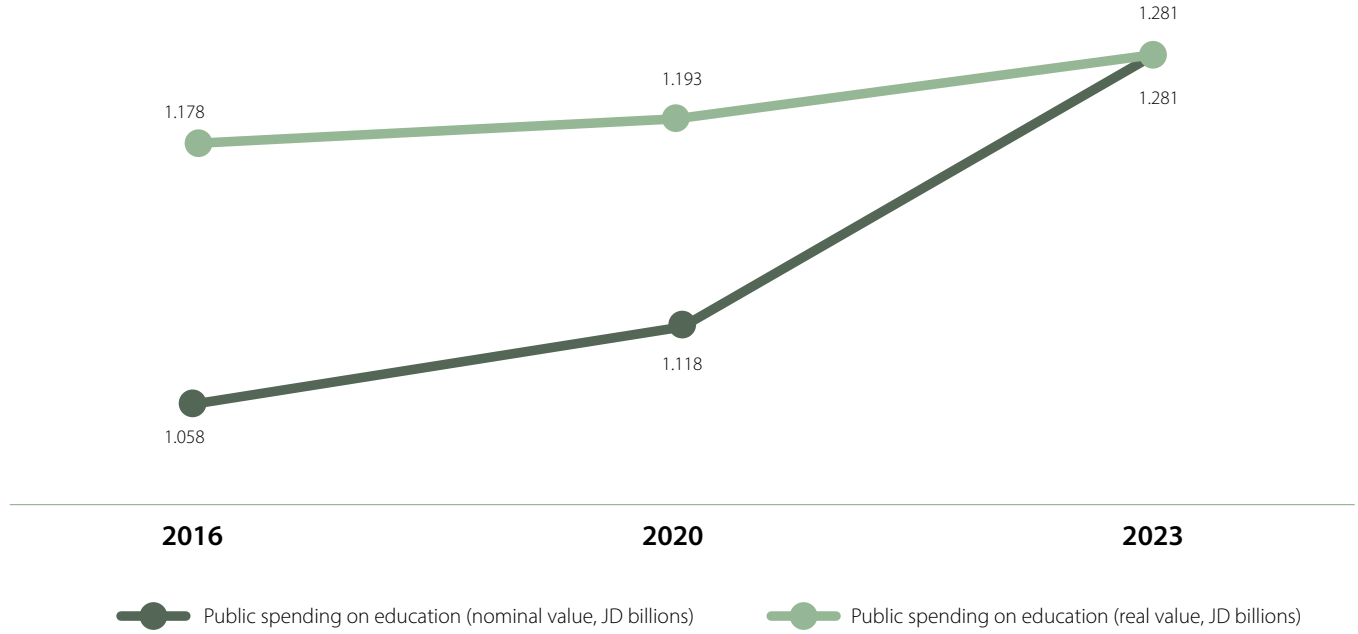
Source: Calculations by the author. For Jordan, public education expenditure calculated using GBD data from budget laws and the CBJ. Data on Jordanian public expenditure and debt service (interest payments) accessed via government financial bulletins from the MoF. Comparators drawn from the 2024 Education Finance Watch (EFW) report on actual education spending.[49]

*Note: * Data sourced from the World Development Indicators collection of the World Bank.*[50,51]

Nominal growth in public education spending diverges significantly from real growth when adjusted for inflation. While total public spending on education rose by more than JOD 222 million (a 21% increase) between 2016 and 2023 in nominal terms, this growth does not reflect changes in real terms or in purchasing power. After accounting for inflation, the real increase over this period is significantly less, amounting to only JOD 103 million (in constant 2023 prices),[52] which represents an overall growth rate of just 9%, as shown in **Figure 3.4**. This modest growth highlights the constrained fiscal space for the education sector amid economic challenges and competing national budget priorities.

48 Including debt service for comparability with other countries.
49 See 2024 EFW report here https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/2024efw
50 See https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS&country=
51 See https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=SE.XPD.TOTL.GB.ZS&country=#
52 Real values calculated by adjusting for inflation using the GDP deflator, which is derived from nominal GDP at market prices and real GDP at constant prices, as published in the CBJ statistical database. For further details, see https://statisticaldb.cbj.gov.jo/?node=RGdVT3ZNUk5wUTlOdjlhVmlCYnBqQT09

Figure 3.4. Public spending on education in 2016, 2020 and 2023: nominal versus real values



Source: Author's calculations based on GBD budget laws for fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023, and CBJ data for the 2016–2023 GDP deflators (base year 2023).

3.1.4. Trends in public education spending by expenditure type

This section provides a detailed analysis of the evolution of public education spending in 2016, 2020 and 2023, categorized by expenditure type and budget classification. The analysis is based on a methodology introduced by UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) as part of a financial diagnosis project[53] conducted by the MoE and the UNESCO Office in Amman since 2023. The aim of this project is to strengthen results-oriented budgeting at the MoE in line with international best practices, as explained in **Box 3.1**.

Comparison of recurrent and capital public education expenditure

Recurrent expenditure has consistently dominated the education sector's actual spending, limiting capital investment and infrastructure development during the 2016–2023 period. In 2023, 91% (JOD 1.166 billion) of total education expenditure (JOD 1.281 billion) was disbursed to cover recurrent expenditure, primarily wages, while only 9% (JOD 115 million) was directed towards capital expenditure (see **Figure 3.5).** Over the 2016–2023 period, recurrent expenditures on education averaged 92% of the total education sector expenditure. This imbalance was partly due to insufficient financial ceilings for a more equitable distribution between recurrent and capital expenditures, resulting in chronically low funding of infrastructure development (Jordan, MoE, 2024).

53 Publication from the UNESCO Office in Amman, forthcoming in 2025. Diagnosis for Strengthening Results-Oriented Budgeting and Planning in the Jordanian Ministry of Education.

Box 3.1 Breaking down the budget: reclassification and data processing methodology

The data processing methodology involved a rigorous reclassification of budget lines by spending type. This involved various steps, starting with interpreting the budget codes based on manuals issued by the GBD in 2015 for the chart of accounts (COA) and for expenditure and revenue (Jordan, GBD, 2015). The methodology also adhered to recent GBD guidelines (Jordan, Prime Ministry, 2023) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) guidelines from the Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014 (IMF, 2014). These resources were used to address discrepancies[54] and ensure accurate, consistent classification in line with international best practices. This included distinguishing between recurrent and capital expenditures and their subcategories before proceeding with the analysis.

Budget expenditures were classified into two main categories: recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure, each with specific subcategories.

Recurrent expenditures: This category includes the following subcategories: (a) gross workforce compensation; (b) goods and services (excluding teaching and learning materials (TLM)); (c) other goods and services; and (d) transfers, subsidies and interest payments.

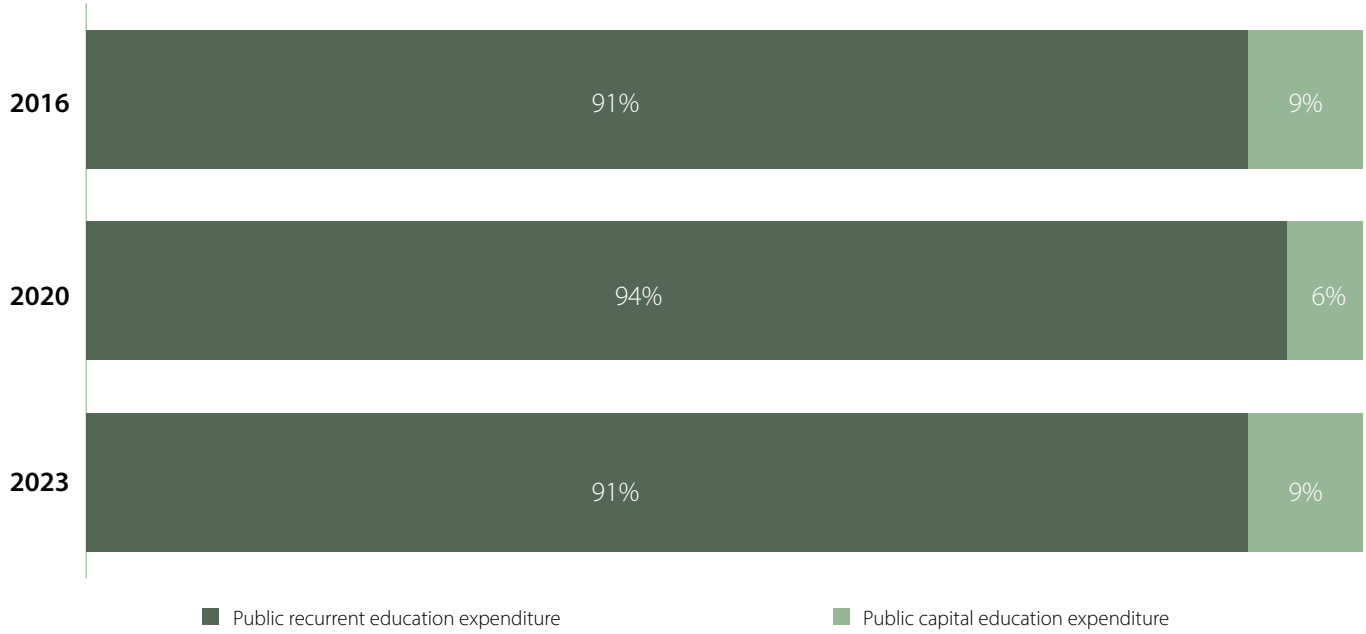
- **Gross workforce compensation:** includes salaries, wages, allowances and pension contributions, all of which are vital elements for maintaining the labour force.
- **Goods and services (excluding TLM):** covers a wide range of operational expenses, such as utilities, regular maintenance costs and administrative fees (e.g. subsistence, cleaning services, insurance and licenses), which are essential for the smooth functioning of educational institutions.
- **Other goods and services:** includes various miscellaneous expenses (e.g. contributions, scholarships, bonuses, capacity-building for teaching and non-teaching staff, and various other costs related to promotion, advertising, for awareness campaigns, conferences, school festivals, workshop facilities and subscriptions) aimed at supporting educational initiatives and ensuring efficient administrative operations within the MoE.
- **Transfers, subsidies and interest payments:** represents the financial assistance provided to non-financial public corporations, with subsidies allocated to specific initiatives or organizations (e.g. the school athletics union and access to education for students with disabilities) which are considered essential.

Capital expenditures: This category includes the following subcategories: (a) subsidies and grants; (b) construction, land and building purchases, and engineering studies; (c) equipment (including information technology (IT) and excluding TLM); (d) rehabilitation and maintenance; and (e) TLM.

- **Subsidies and grants:** includes allocations to non-financial public corporations, such as the National Centre for Curriculum Development (NCCD) and the Royal Benefaction (makruma) to teachers' children.
- **Construction, land and building purchases, and engineering studies:** covers expenses related to infrastructure development (e.g. building construction, extensions and renovations, studies, research, engineering design consultation, and land expropriation and purchases).
- **Equipment (including IT and excluding TLM):** covers a wide range of items, from IT infrastructure (e.g. operating systems and software, computerization and automation efforts) to furnishing and fitting out buildings and facilities (e.g. public safety devices, sports gear, air conditioning and solar panels).
- **Rehabilitation and maintenance:** involves all maintenance activities unrelated to IT infrastructure, such as building and facilities maintenance, school building maintenance, and building repair and renovation.
- **TLM:** includes school supplies, educational devices and equipment, and school textbooks.

54 For instance, certain expenditures initially classified as capital expenditures related to capital projects were more consistent in nature with recurrent expenditures. These were reclassified to align with IMF guidelines from 2014 and the latest GBD guidelines.

Figure 3.5. Trends in the distribution of public education spending by recurrent and capital expenditure (2016, 2020 and 2023)



Source: Author's calculations based on GBD budget laws for fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023.

*Note: The note accompanying **Table 3.1** is also applicable here. Expenditures on nurseries affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) were not taken into consideration.*

The increase in recurrent expenditure leaves little margin for improving long-term investment. Recurrent expenditure rose from JOD 1.125 billion (constant 2023 prices) in 2020 to JOD 1.166 billion in 2023, which represents a real growth of 4% over that period. This increase was driven in part by new teacher appointments, increased allowances for double-shift schools and the phased implementation of a new government salary scale (Jordan, MoE, 2023). These adjustments were deemed necessary to address the influx of students transitioning from private to public schools during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The commensurate increase in teacher recruitment has further heightened the focus on addressing operational demands, thus limiting long-term capital investments (Jordan, MoE, 2023, 2024).

COVID-19 pandemic-related disruptions and post-pandemic recovery reforms have shaped recent spending patterns. Capital expenditure, expressed in constant 2023 prices, declined from JOD 103 million (9%) in 2016 to JOD 69 million (6%) in 2020, as several capital projects were suspended during the pandemic. By 2023, capital expenditure had recovered to JOD 115 million (9%), reflecting the post-pandemic economic recovery, public financial management reforms, and efforts in Jordan to accommodate the influx of students transitioning from private to public schools.

Despite improvements in 2023, systemic challenges continue to hinder capital expenditure. While it rose by 67% between 2020 and 2023, it remains constrained by insufficient national funding, liquidity issues when disbursing claims, and cumbersome procurement procedures. Recent changes in procurement regulations, including the shift from a special procurement committee for textbook purchases (run by the MoE) to an external centralized purchasing committee, has added complexity, limiting the ability of the MoE to expedite procurement. In addition, coordination difficulties across MoE directorates further exacerbate delays. These issues, combined with global instability and declining revenue forecasts, continue to delay the timely implementation of capital projects and limit progress thereon (Jordan, MoE, 2024).

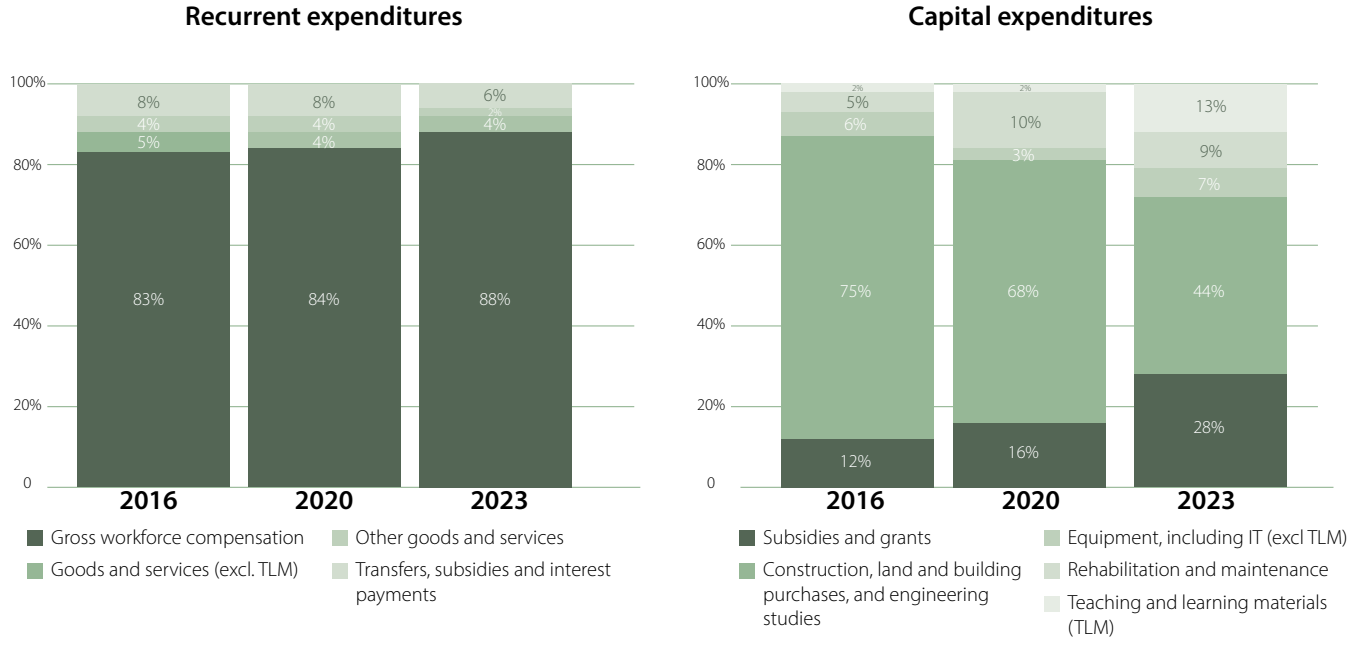
Evolution of public recurrent and capital expenditure in the education sector by budget classification

Recurrent expenditure

Between 2016 and 2023, the wage bill dominated recurrent expenditure in the education sector, limiting allocations for other essential operational needs. During that time, 83% to 88% of recurrent expenditure in the education sector was consistently directed to gross workforce compensation, reflecting the prioritization of salaries[55] (Jordan, MoE, 2023). In 2023, spending on gross workforce compensation, including salaries, wages, allowances, employee bonuses and social security contributions, reached JOD 1.024 billion, accounting for 88% of recurrent education expenditure, as shown in **Figure 3.6**. This represents a significant increase of JOD 133 million (a 15% real growth rate) compared to 2016, when adjusted to constant 2023 prices, which further highlights the financial burden of the wage bill.

Although there are financial safeguards for salaries, delays in budget approval affect other financial operations.[56] In Jordan, the delayed approval of the General Budget Law at the start of the fiscal year does not disrupt the payment of salaries because they are safeguarded by law under Article 113 of the Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This legal provision ensures that public servants' salaries and urgent recurrent or capital expenditures are executed monthly, based on one-twelfth of the previous fiscal year's budget until the new General Budget Law is approved (Jordan, GBD, 2023). In contrast, other MoE directorates managing capital projects face challenges during the first quarter of the fiscal year, as their operations are usually constrained until the new budget has been approved. While Article 113 effectively prioritizes salary expenditures, delays in the budget approval process limit financial flexibility and lead to a systemic imbalance affecting other recurrent and capital expenditures.

Figure 3.6. Composition of public recurrent and capital education expenditures by budget classification (2016, 2020 and 2023)



Source: Author's calculations based on GBD budget laws for fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023.
*Note: The note accompanying **Table 3.2** is also applicable here. Expenditures on nurseries affiliated with the MoSD were not taken into consideration.*

55 For more details in Arabic, see https://gbd.gov.jo/uploads/files/legislation/ar/organic-budget-law-2023-13-2021.pdf
56 Publication from the UNESCO Office in Amman, forthcoming in 2025. Diagnosis for Strengthening Results-Oriented Budgeting and Planning in the Jordanian Ministry of Education.

Operational spending on budget lines other than the wage bill has stagnated, with important subcategories experiencing declines. Spending in the subcategory of goods and services (excl. TLM), which supports vital operational expenditures such as utilities, capacity-building, technical support and administrative functions, has stagnated over time. Spending in the subcategory of other goods and services declined sharply, dropping from JOD 47 million (4% of recurrent expenditure) in 2016, when adjusted to constant 2023 prices, to JOD 25 million (2% of recurrent expenditure) in 2023, marking a steep decline of 47%. Similarly, spending related to transfers, subsidies and interest payments decreased from JOD 81 million (8% of recurrent expenditure) in 2016, when adjusted to constant 2023 prices, to JOD 71 million ([x]% of recurrent expenditure) in 2023. These trends highlight the limited allocation of resources towards operational needs that are critical for improving educational quality and system effectiveness (Jordan, MoE, 2023).

Capital expenditure

Shifting priorities within capital expenditure reflect evolving challenges and shifts in strategic direction within the education sector. In 2023, spending on construction of additional classrooms, school building extensions, and land and building purchases accounted for 44% of total capital expenditure, which is a significant decline from 75% in 2016. This could be explained by construction-specific challenges within the MoE, including its reliance on and difficulties in coordinating with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MPWH).[57] Under current regulations, the MPWH manages project studies, conceptualization and construction, but it uses budget resources from the MoE.[58] This often leads to extended delays in initiating projects. Additionally, the lack of a formally approved construction and licensing system for kindergarten classrooms has further hindered progress (Jordan, MoE, 2023).

On the other hand, expenditure in the subsidies and grants subcategory has increased significantly. It swelled by 162% in real terms over the analysed period, with an average annual real growth rate of 15%. This reflects the introduction of new items of expenditure, such as funding for the NCCD and tuition subsidies for children of MoE employees to attend public universities. As shown in **Figure 3.6**, these new items have redirected the limited financial resources away from educational infrastructure development.

The TLM subcategory[59] has witnessed significant growth, aligning with the sector's emphasis on vocational education and improved learning environments. In 2023, spending on TLM represented 13% of total capital expenditure, a huge increase from 2% in 2016. This growth was driven largely by efforts on the part of the MoE to equip workshops and laboratories for its new Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) vocational education programme (as detailed in Chapter 7). Spending on educational devices and equipment for vocational education programmes rose from JOD 0.1 million in 2016 (constant 2023 prices) to JOD 0.6 million in 2023. Additionally, the VTC increased its capital expenditure on educational devices and equipment from JOD 0.2 million in 2016 (constant 2023 prices) to JOD 0.8 million in 2023, marking a striking overall real growth rate of 304%.

Spending changes in the subcategories of rehabilitation and maintenance, and

57 Publication from the UNESCO Office in Amman, forthcoming in 2025. "Diagnosis for Strengthening Results-Oriented Budgeting and Planning in the Jordanian Ministry of Education".

58 The MoE is authorized to issue calls for tender independently for up to JOD 500,000, unless otherwise specified by the donor or the decentralization council of the Governorate, in which case the MPWH handles the bidding process. For projects exceeding JOD 500,000, calls for tender are automatically managed by the MPWH.

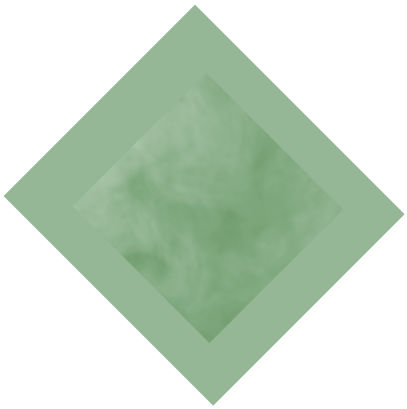
59 Classifying TLM as capital expenditure aligns with consumption of fixed capital, particularly when materials such as durable school supplies, educational devices and equipment, or textbook inventories are intended for use over multiple years. Purchases that are considered to be investments contributing to long-term service delivery are categorized as fixed capital (IMF, 2014). However, in some national contexts, TLM may be classified under recurrent expenditure if they require annual updates or replacement.

equipment (including IT and excluding TLM) highlight shifting priorities within the education sector amidst post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts. Rehabilitation and maintenance spending increased steadily, doubling from 5% of capital expenditure in 2016 (5 million in constant 2023 JOD) to 10% in 2020, before declining slightly to 9% in 2023 (JOD 10 million). However, spending in the subcategory of equipment (including IT and excluding TLM), which accounted for 6% of capital expenditure in 2016, fell to 3% in 2020, most likely due to increased reporting activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. By 2023, this subcategory had rebounded to 9% of capital expenditure, reflecting resumed operations and post-pandemic recovery efforts.

The MoE has faced persistent systemic and procedural challenges in its execution of capital expenditures.[60] It struggles with timely and effective capital budget execution due to a number of obstacles, including insufficient financial ceilings, procedural and procurement delays, and belated approval of the General Budget Law, which is typically finalized between late February and early March. This delay shortens the actual fiscal year to 8–9 months, reducing implementation time. Furthermore, procurement regulations prohibit tendering activities from November to February, resulting in additional delays. These constraints not only hinder timely project implementation but also exacerbate inefficiencies in the allocation of capital resources.

Evolution of the distribution of public education funding by subsector

Basic education is the largest recipient of public funding, receiving approximately 75% of education expenditure in 2023 (see **Table 3.2**). As the compulsory level of education in Jordan, it is central to government priorities, and its institutions serve the largest student population. Secondary education is the second-largest recipient, with approximately 13% of education expenditure, and higher education accounts for approximately 8%. These patterns demonstrate a focus on providing education to the largest target group in accordance with the mandate of the MoE and the country's demographic profile.



60 Publication from the UNESCO Office in Amman, forthcoming in 2025. Diagnosis for Strengthening Results-Oriented Budgeting and Planning in the Jordanian Ministry of Education.

Table 3.2. Public expenditure by level of education[61] in 2016, 2020 and 2023

Education level	2016		2020		2023	
	Actual spending (JOD billions)	Share (%)	Actual spending (JOD billions)	Share (%)	Actual spending (JOD billions)	Share (%)
Pre-school education*	0.0061	0.5%	0.0055	0.5%	0.0108	0.8%
Basic education	0.842	71.5%	0.8777	73.6%	0.9566	74.7%
Secondary education	0.1221	10.4%	0.1359	9.4%	0.1638	12.8%
TVET**	0.0712	6.0%	0.0595	5.0%	0.0515	4.0%
Adult literacy and education	0.0008	0.07%	0.0005	0.04%	0.0015	0.12%
Higher education***	0.1355	11.5%	0.1142	9.6%	0.0965	7.5%
Total	**1.178**	**100.0%**	**1.193**	**100.0%**	**1.281**	**100.0%**

Source: Author's calculations based on the GBD budget laws for fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023. Actual spending figures are expressed in constant 2023 prices.

*Note: (1) The note accompanying **Table 3.1**. is also applicable here. (2) **Pre-school*:** The reported actual spending includes only kindergarten expenditures by the MoE. Expenditures on nurseries affiliated with the MoSD were not taken into consideration. **TVET**:** The reported actual spending includes vocational education by the MoE, vocational training by the MoL, vocational training programmes by the VTC, vocational education and training support by the TVSDC, training courses and awareness sessions for self-employed individuals, and financial and non-financial services by the DEF. **Higher education***:** The reported actual spending includes: expenditures by the MoHESR and JAA; accreditation, quality assurance and classification programmes for higher education institutions; and technical assistance and training programmes by the AQACHEI for national examinations staff to enhance academic programme quality at universities.*

Although public funding for pre-school education remains low, despite its recognized importance by the Government of Jordan, actual expenditure may be underestimated. In 2023, spending on both years of kindergarten (KG1 and KG2) accounted for 0.8% of education sector expenditure, which is a notable increase from 0.5% in 2020. This low funding is linked to the current non-compulsory status of ECED, making it a lower priority in the national budget. However, these figures do not include allocations provided through extrabudgetary grants from external

61 Administrative and multilevel education expenditures were distributed across the various education cycles using a breakdown formula presented in Annex 3.3, pp. 350–359 of UNESCO, IIEP Dakar; World Bank, Africa Office; and UNICEF, Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines (see Ch. 3 references).

development partners, which cover many of the costs for constructing and equipping kindergarten classrooms. Furthermore, expenditures related to these construction projects are often recorded under the budgets for basic or secondary education because kindergarten classrooms are often built as extensions to basic or secondary schools, so they are not included in the separate kindergarten budget.

Funding for TVET has declined, despite its strategic importance. It decreased by 28%, from JOD 71 million in 2016 (constant 2023 prices) to JOD 52 million in 2023, representing only 4% of education sector expenditure in 2023. This trend runs counter to the Government's commitment to enhancing TVET, as outlined in its recently launched national strategy to develop the subsector. The strategy was, however, not introduced until the second half of 2023, after the General Budget Law for that year had already been approved. While some progress has been made in equipping workshops and laboratories, the overall slow pace reflects the need for more consistent and sustainable support for TVET in Jordan (UNESCO, 2023b).

Adult literacy and education relies heavily on external funding. Public spending data shows minimal government allocations for this education subsector, amounting to only JOD 1.5 million in 2023 (0.12% of total education expenditure), though that represents an increase from JOD 0.8 million in 2016 (constant 2023 prices). Most expenditures for adult literacy and education are covered by extrabudgetary grants, highlighting the significant reliance on external funding and the lack of government financial contributions to this subsector.

Overall, public funding for education in Jordan demonstrates an imbalance across subsectors, with key areas, such as ECED and TVET, requiring more consistent investment. While prioritizing compulsory education is essential, allocating scant public resources for ECED, TVET and NFE limits the sector's ability to achieve the national development goals of improved quality of learning and youth employment (Jordan, MoE, 2023) and to uphold its commitments related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.1.5. Public recurrent education expenditure for the most recent year: a snapshot

Public recurrent expenditure by education level

Basic education dominates public recurrent education expenditure, consuming the majority of the budget. In 2023, the total recurrent education expenditure in Jordan was JOD 1.166 billion, with basic education receiving JOD 908.4 million or 77.9% (see **Table 3.3**). Secondary education received the second-largest share at JOD 125.4 million (10.8%), followed by higher education with JOD 79.8 million (6.8%). TVET received JOD 46.1 million (4%), while pre-school education and adult literacy and education received the smallest shares, accounting for 0.4% (JOD 4.7 million) and 0.13% (JOD 1.5 million), respectively. Recurrent expenditure for basic education was nearly seven times higher than it was for secondary education. This is due to the fact that basic education has the highest enrolment numbers and plays a foundational role as the primary focus of public education support.

Table 3.3. Distribution of public recurrent expenditure by education level, 2023

	Public recurrent expenditure (JOD billions)	Public recurrent expenditure share (%)
Pre-school education*	0.0047	0.4%
Basic education	0.9084	77.9%
Secondary education	0.1254	10.8%
TVET**	0.0461	4.0%
Adult literacy and education	0.0015	0.13%
Higher education***	0.0798	6.8%
Total	**1.166**	**100.0%**

Source: Author's calculations based on the General Budget Law for fiscal year 2023.

*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.2** are also applicable here.*

Public recurrent education expenditure by subsector and budget classification

Recurrent education expenditure is concentrated overwhelmingly on gross workforce compensation, with limited allocations for non-salary needs. Out of the total of JOD 1.166 billion in recurrent education expenditure, 88% (JOD 1.024 billion) went towards gross workforce compensation, leaving only 12% for non-salary expenditures, which amounted to JOD 142 million and included: goods and services (JOD 46 million); other goods and services (JOD 25 million); and transfers, subsidies and interest payments (JOD 71 million). This pattern highlights the constraints faced by the education sector in meeting all operational needs that are crucial for enhancing the quality of learning (Jordan, MoE, 2023).

Secondary education leads in non-salary expenditure, reflecting the subsector's high operating costs. It surpassed basic education for the highest share of non-salary expenditure, accounting for JOD 23.4 million spent on goods and services (e.g. wages for general secondary school examination staff, electricity and water bills, stationery and other office supplies) and JOD 4.2 million spent on so-called other goods and services (e.g. costs related to insurance and capacity-building). Basic education followed, with JOD 18.3 million spent on goods and services (e.g. electricity and water bills, everyday supplies and school activities) and JOD 5.9 million spent on other goods and services (e.g. capacity-building, scientific scholarships and training courses). These expenditures illustrate the higher operational demands of secondary education, where additional financial resources are required to support learning, particularly science programmes and extracurricular activities.

TVET also indicates high operating costs, which are necessary to support its specialized education and training programmes. A notable JOD 8.7 million in TVET expenditures were classified in the subcategory of other goods and services. This represents the highest expenditure in this budget subcategory across all education levels, reflecting the more specific requirements of TVET, such as specialized equipment, technical devices and workshop facilities.

Higher education in Jordan relies on transfers and subsidies to support public universities. The MoHESR distributed JOD 70.3 million in transfers and subsidies, primarily to support Jordanian public universities. In contrast, a minimal amount (JOD 1 million) was spent on goods and services, covering various operating expenses, such

as electricity, rent, cleaning services and supplies, and building repair and maintenance. A similarly small amount (JOD 4.3 million) was spent on other goods and services, mainly covering costs related to scientific scholarships and cultural exchanges. This reveals a spending pattern that differs from those of other education levels.

Pre-school education receives minimal funding, as does adult literacy and education. Pre-school education accounted for only JOD 4.7 million in recurrent expenditure, with 88% thereof going towards salaries. Adult literacy and education received even less, with a total allocation of only JOD 1.3 million, of which JOD 1.2 million went towards other goods and services. This highlights the subsector's focus on financing operational activities rather than staff costs, which are funded mainly by external resources.

Table 3.4. Distribution of public recurrent education expenditure by education level and budget classification, 2023

	Salary expenditure (JOD billions)	Non-salary expenditure (JOD billions)		
	Gross workforce compensation	Goods and services (excl. TLM)	Other goods and services	Transfers, subsidies and interest payments
Pre-school education*	0.0042	0.0002	0.0004	–
Basic education	0.8811	0.0183	0.0059	0.0006
Secondary education	0.0996	0.0234	0.0042	–
TVET**	0.0342	0.0033	0.0087	0.0004
Adult literacy and education	0.0004	0.0001	0.0012	–
Higher education***	0.0042	0.0010	0.0043	0.0704
Total	**1.024**	**0.046**	**0.025**	**0.071**

Source: Author's calculations based on the General Budget Law for fiscal year 2023.

*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.2.** are also applicable here.*

Public expenditure by staffing levels and salary costs

Non-teaching staff play a significant role at every education level. Of the 114,466 permanent staff employed by the MoE, non-teaching staff made up 27% in 2023 (30,846 staff members) as shown in **Table 3.5**. However, the distribution of non-teaching staff varies across education levels. Secondary education has the highest proportion of non-teaching staff, constituting 55% of all permanent staff at this level. Vocational education also shows a notable reliance on non-teaching staff (29%), followed by basic education (26%) and pre-school education (24%).

Basic education dominates the wage bill. The majority of the MoE wage bill is taken up by basic education staff salaries, with JOD 791.2

million spent thereon in 2023. That fact that basic education accounts for 93% of the total MoE wage bill illustrates the scale of this subsector in Jordan. Within basic education, JOD 588.5 million went to in-class teachers and JOD 202.7 million to non-teaching staff, reflecting the dual importance of teaching and administrative support.

Secondary education shows a more balanced distribution of payroll expenditure across job functions. In 2023, its total payroll was JOD 37.9 million, split relatively evenly between in-class teachers (JOD 19.4 million) and non-teaching staff (JOD 18.5 million).

The total payroll for vocational education at the secondary level in 2023 was JOD 16.1 million, with JOD 11.1 million thereof spent on salaries for in-class teachers and JOD 5 million on non-teaching staff.

Pre-school education represents a small proportion of total payroll expenditure. It accounts for the smallest share of the wage bill, with a total payroll of only JOD 2.3 million, of which JOD 1.7 million was spent on in-class teachers' salaries and JOD 0.6 million on the salaries of non-teaching staff.

Table 3.5. MoE staffing levels and related salary expenditure, 2023

	MoE staffing levels (permanent staff)			Payroll (in current JOD millions)		
	In-class teachers	Non-teaching staff	Total	In-class teachers	Non-teaching staff	Total
Pre-school education	203	63	266	1.7	0.6	2.3
Basic education	80,047	27,671	107,718	588.5	202.7	791.2
Secondary education	2,114	2,610	4,724	19.4	18.5	37.9
TVET	1,256	502	1,758	11.1	5.0	16.1
Total	**83,620**	**30,846**	**114,466**	**620.7**	**226.8**	**847.4**

Source: Author's calculations based on MoE staff salary data, 2023.
Note: For this analysis, all teachers and staff categorized under the education sector's administrative budget as carrying out administrative or support duties were reclassified as 'non-teaching staff' to clearly distinguish them from 'in-class teachers also called "chalk in hand" teachers,' who are responsible for teaching activities. (UNESCO, IIEP Dakar; World Bank, Africa Office; and UNICEF, 2014). The reclassification was derived by cross-tabulating staff functions with programmes in the budget of the MoE.

Public recurrent unit costs by education level

Public expenditure per student increases with education level, adult literacy and education being the costliest. In 2023, Jordan spent JOD 896 per student enrolled in adult literacy and education, which is 1.3 times the cost of educating a basic education student, as shown in **Table 3.6.** The high unit cost reflects the relatively small number of students (1,896) in adult literacy and education, which amplifies the average expenditure per student. Similarly, TVET also incurs significant costs

per capita, with an annual expenditure of JOD 833 per student,[62] amounting to 1.2 times the unit cost of basic education.

Basic education accounts for the largest share of overall public education expenditure, with its unit cost also exceeding that of other levels. The annual cost of educating a basic education student in 2023 was JOD 705, which serves as the benchmark for comparison in this analysis. Secondary education has the second-highest unit cost, with an average of JOD 617 spent per student (0.9 times the unit cost of basic education). In contrast, pre-school education remains significantly underfunded, with average expenditure per student at JOD 73,[63] which is only one-tenth the unit cost of a basic education. Higher education also lags behind in funding, with an annual cost of JOD 322 per student, which is half the unit cost of basic education.

Table 3.6. Average expenditure per student by education level, 2023

	Unit cost (JOD)	Share of GDP per capita (%)	As a multiple of basic education unit cost
Pre-school education*	73	2%	0.1
Basic education	705	22%	1.0
Secondary education	617	20%	0.9
TVET**	833	27%	1.2
Adult literacy and education	896	29%	1.3
Higher education***	322	10%	0.5

Source: Author's calculations based on the General Budget Law for fiscal year 2023, educational management information system (EMIS) enrolment figures for 2022–2023, and the MoF government financial bulletin of August 2024.

Note: (1) The notes for the asterisks accompanying ***Table 3.2.*** *are also applicable here. (2) Enrolments in public institutions only were used.*

In Jordan, public spending on education relative to GDP per capita indicates a mixed outlook. Jordan spends 22% of GDP per capita on each basic education student, exceeding neighbouring countries such as Egypt (7%), Tunisia (17%) and Morocco (19%). However, for secondary education, Jordan allocates 20% of GDP per capita, which is lower than Morocco (36%) but much higher than Egypt, which is at 14% (Egypt, Ministry of Education and Technical Education, 2021).

62 TVET is more expensive owing to the small number of TVET students. In addition, the costs of establishing vocational schools and purchasing the additional equipment required are higher than those of academic schools, as are the costs of operating vocational workshops.
63 It is important to note that some kindergarten-related items of expenditure (e.g. teacher training and qualification fees, and maintenance costs) overlap with those involved in basic education and other programmes.

3.2. External funding for education: trends and analysis

3.2.1. External funding streams to education: modalities, challenges and alignment with national systems

External financial contributions play a vital role in complementing the Jordanian national education budget in order to meet growing sectoral needs and support strategic priorities, such as the Economic Modernisation Vision and the Education Strategic Plan (Jordan, MoE, 2024). The MoE uses its Education Strategic Plan as a guiding framework for donor partnerships and to ensure alignment with national priorities.

External funding streams are vital but present challenges in providing a complete and transparent view of education financing in Jordan. Budgetary support—including the general budget support (GBS) and sector budget support (SBS) schemes—is fully integrated into the Government Financial Management Information System (GFMIS) and follows national financial procedures. In contrast, extrabudgetary support, often managed directly by donors or external implementing partners, operates outside of this framework, which complicates the process of establishing a comprehensive, transparent view of education financing and aligning it with the national system (Jordan, MoE, 2023, 2024).[64]

The MoE receives external funding through various modalities with different levels of traceability and management. These include grants, loans and technical support, delivered through both budgetary and extrabudgetary channels. Budgetary support is managed within the GFMIS, while extrabudgetary support remains disconnected from national systems, limiting financial oversight. **Box 3.2.** provides an overview of these modalities and their traceability levels (Jordan, MoE, 2024).

Box 3.2. Overview of external funding modalities related to the MoE

Budgetary support

1. **Loans (MoE, specific):** Loans supporting the budget of the MoE directly through specific budget lines that reference the loan name

   a. Captured in the GFMIS

2. **Loans (MoE, general):** Loans supporting the budget of the MoE in general, without indicating a specific budget item in the name of the loan

   a. Captured in the GFMIS

3. **Loans (MoF):** Loans supporting the national budget of Jordan, with the MoE responsible for meeting specific loan indicators but not receiving financial support from the loan in its budget

   a. Not captured in the GFMIS

4. **Grants (MoE, specific):** Grants supporting the budget of the MoE directly through specific budget lines that reference the grant name

   a. Captured in the GFMIS

64 Extrabudgetary flows are neither executed through the Public Treasury Directorate of the MoF nor reported in alignment with national systems through the MoF.

5. **Grants (MoE, general):** Grants supporting the budget of the MoE in general, without indicating a specific budget item in the name of the grant

   a. Captured in the GFMIS

6. **Grants (MoF):** Grants supporting the national budget of Jordan, with the MoE responsible for meeting specific loan indicators but not receiving financial support from the loan in its budget

   a. Not captured in the GFMIS

Extrabudgetary support

1. **Grants (special account):** Grants channeled by donors through a special account at the CBJ. These are then managed and implemented by the MoE.

   a. Tracked by the MoE (Development Coordination Unit)

2. **Grants (external management or technical assistance):** Grants indirectly supporting the MoE, with funds managed by donors or external implementing partners, often for technical assistance or projects implemented on behalf of the MoE

   a. Not traceable

3. **Loans (MoE):** Loans supporting specific MoE activities, such as school construction projects

   a. Tracked by the MoE (Development Coordination Unit)

3.2.2. Evolution of external funding to the education sector

Incomplete data coverage limits the ability to fully analyse external funding flows. The partial integration of external funds into the GFMIS and limited access to data on extrabudgetary donor contributions means that only partial funding information is available from national sources. To fill this gap, the OECD CRS database[65] was used in this section to provide a more comprehensive analysis of external funding to the Jordanian education sector.

Total aid to education[66,67]

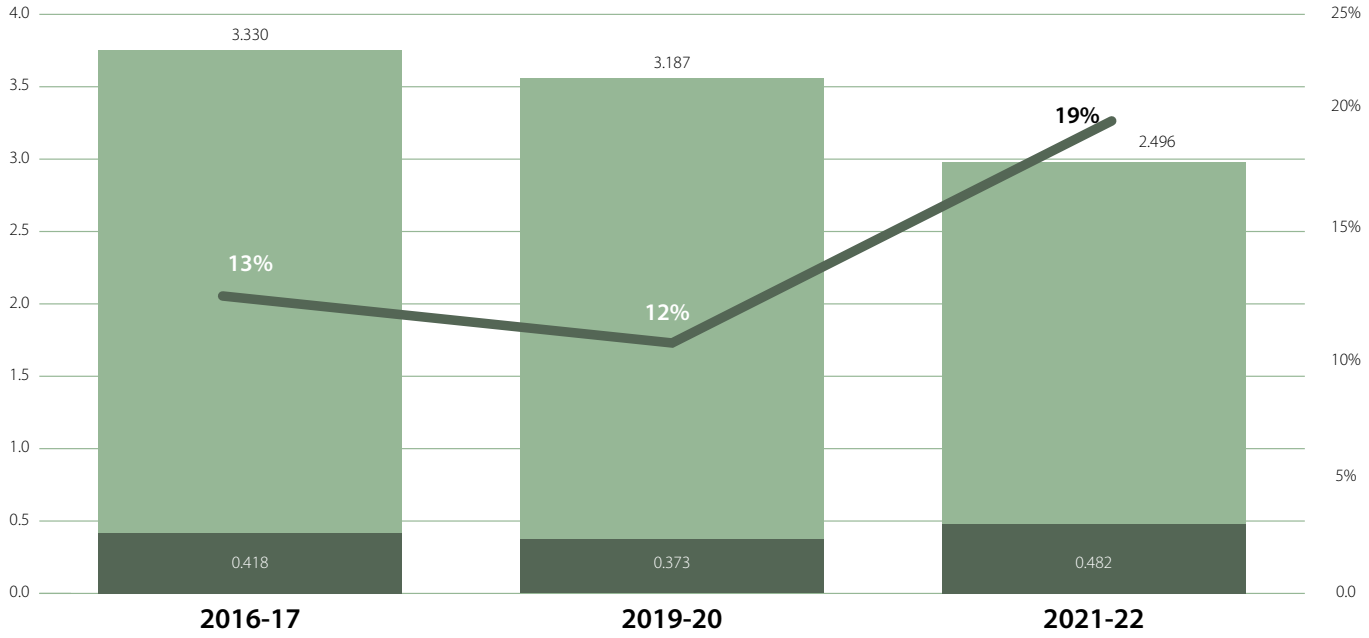
Official development assistance (ODA) for education in Jordan has increased in net amounts and gained in relative sectoral importance. Between 2016 and 2022, the total amount of aid disbursed to the education sector increased from a two-year average of US $418 million in the 2016–2017 period to an average of $482 million in 2021–2022 (constant 2022 prices), representing an overall increase of 15% and an average annual growth of 2%, as shown in **Figure 3.7.** However, the total amount of aid disbursed to Jordan during this time decreased. As a result, the total share of aid to education out of the overall ODA to Jordan had increased notably by the 2021–22 period, rising from 12% in 2019–2020 to 19% in 2021–2022, which reflects a 65% growth rate.

65 For details, see https://data-explorer.oecd.org/?fs[0]=Topic%2C1%7CDevelopment%23DEV%23%7COfficial%20Development%20Assistance%20%28ODA%29%23DEV_ODA%23&pg=0&fc=Topic&bp=true&snb=25

66 Modalities included in the analysis are limited to the following: Budget support (General Budget Support (GBS) and Sector Budget Support (SBS)), Core contributions and pooled programmes and funds, Project-type interventions and Other technical assistance.

67 Channels considered in the analysis include: public sector entities, non-governmental organizations and civil society, private institutions, public-private partnerships, multilateral organizations, teaching institutions, research institutes and think-tanks.

Figure 3.7. Trends in total aid to education between 2016 and 2022



Source: Author's calculations based on the OECD CRS database. Figures are expressed in USD billion (constant 2022 prices) on the left axis, and in percentages on the right axis.

*Note: (1) * Includes the following modalities: budgetary support (SBS and a component of GBS)[68] and extrabudgetary support (core contributions and pooled programmes and funds, other technical assistance, and project-type interventions). (2) A two-year average was used for each of the periods analysed.*

Jordan ranks as the largest recipient of education aid in the MENA region.[69] In 2021–2022, it received the highest level of education aid, amounting to an average of $482 million (19% of total national aid received). Morocco followed as the second-largest recipient in the region, with an average of $371 million, accounting for 11% of the country's total aid. Tunisia ranked third, receiving an average of $196 million (8% of total aid), followed by the Syrian Arab Republic with $166 million (1%), Iraq with $64 million (2%), Mauritania with $52 million (7%) and Algeria with $20 million (10%).

In Jordan, reliance on external funding for education appears to be relatively modest compared to its own national funding. In 2022, external funding for education represented 12% of total public education expenditure and only 0.4% of GDP.[70] However, given that 91% of public education expenditure is disbursed to cover recurrent costs (primarily salaries), external funding plays a critical role in supporting key non-salary needs in education. Much of this funding is directed towards capital expenditures (e.g. school construction or renovation), textbooks and teacher training. Across the MENA region, the contribution of external funding to education expenditure varied:[71] Morocco relied on education aid for 5% of its total public education expenditure (0.1% of GDP), Tunisia for 6% (0.2% of GDP) and Mauritania for 23% (0.2% of GDP).

68 In accordance with internationally recognized methodologies, total aid to education includes both targeted aid (sector allocable aid) and non-targeted aid (GBS), which is not earmarked for specific projects or sectors (UNESCO, 2024). The share of GBS allocated to education is based on the national percentage of public education spending relative to total public expenditure (excl. debt service). For this analysis, it was assumed that the GBS share of 11% in 2023 was also applicable in 2021–2022.

69 Based on available regional data.

70 The 2022 GDP was sourced from the CBJ statistical database and deflated by the author using the GDP deflator formula. For more details, see https://statisticaldb.cbj.gov.jo/?node=RGdVT3ZNUk5wUTlOdjlhVmlCYnBqQT09.
The 2022 implied purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion rate is from IMF data available at https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPEX@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD/JOR.

71 Public education expenditure and GDP (in purchasing power) for neighbouring MENA countries relied on data from the Education Finance Watch report. For more details, see https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/2024efw.

Aid by donor

More than 30 donors have supported the Jordanian education sector over the years, contributing to various aspects and levels of education. However, the size of the contributions varies significantly among the donors. The United Nations stands out as the largest, providing a total of $751 million (in constant 2022 prices) over the analysed period. This is followed by the United States with $660 million, Germany with $504 million and Canada with $156 million. Other significant contributors include the United Kingdom ($117 million), the United Arab Emirates ($116 million) and the European Union ($111 million).[72] These top seven donors collectively demonstrate the diverse sources of international support for the education sector in Jordan.

The United Nations, mainly through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), was consistently the largest donor to the education sector between 2016 and 2022. While funding for education from UNRWA remained relatively stable during this period, there was a gradual decline, from an average of $121 million in 2016–2017, to an average of $103 million in 2019–2020 and further to an average of $99 million in 2021–2022. These contributions represented 99%, 99.9% and 99.9% of total United Nations disbursements to Jordan in 2016–2017, 2019–2020, and 2021–2022, respectively. UNRWA primarily supports basic education, particularly the lower basic grades, and has a focus on education policy and administrative management as well.

The United States follows as the second-largest donor to the education sector, with a significant focus on basic education. Over the analysed period (2016-2023), contributions from the United States were relatively consistent, with an initial average of $84 million in 2016–2017 and an increase to an average of $93 million in 2019–2020. Support decreased to an average of $90 million in 2021–2022, as shown in **Figure 3.8**. Funding from the United States has bolstered various aspects of Jordanian education, including basic quality in formal and non-formal settings, school expansion projects to absorb overcrowding and double shifts, school management and teacher training.[73]

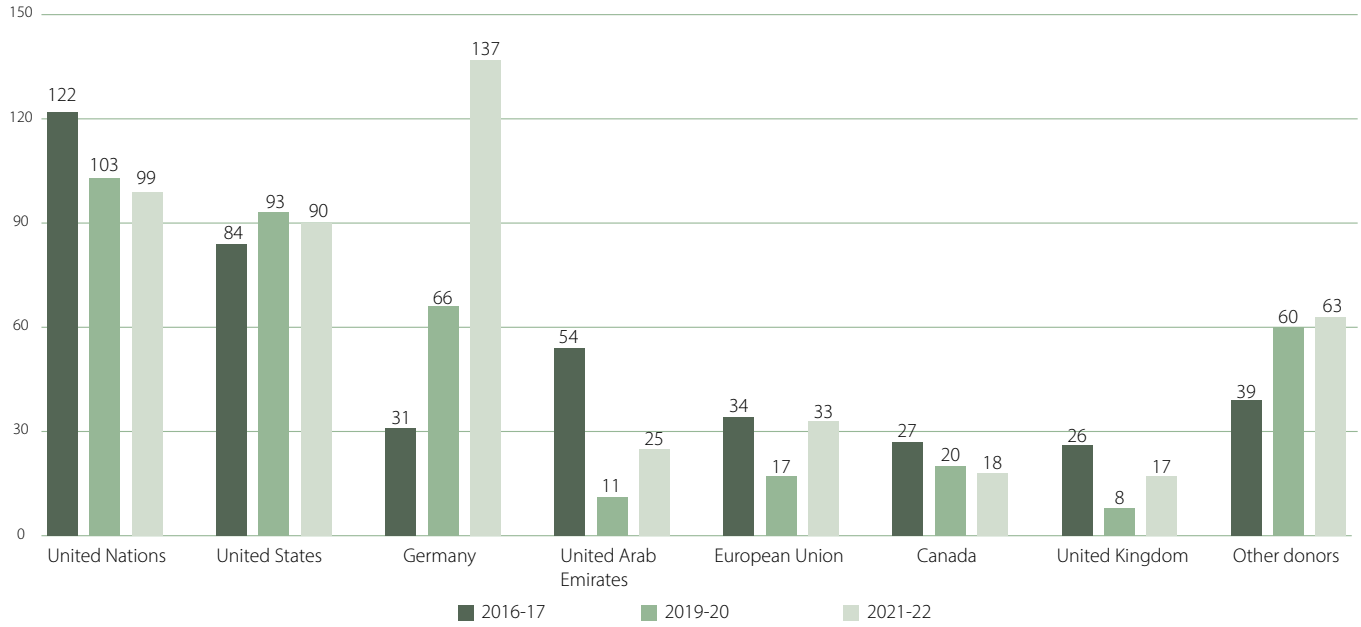
Germany has greatly increased its contributions to the education sector over the years, reflecting growing engagement. German support rose significantly from an average of $31 million in 2016–2017 to $66 million in 2019–2020 before exceeding $135 million in 2021–2022 to support development in the education sector in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the funding from Germany was directed towards basic education, covering school construction projects, salary support to hire Jordanian teachers and administrative staff, and initiatives to strengthen the resilience and social cohesion of vulnerable Jordanian and refugee children. Germany has also provided support to higher education.

The European Union has consistently supported the education sector in Jordan, with a primary focus on strengthening TVET. Total education aid from the European Union amounted to an average of $34 million in 2016–2017, $17 million in 2019–2020, and $33 million in 2021–2022. The European Union disbursed approximately $22 million in 2021 and $11 million in 2022 to support quality education and TVET in Jordan, aligning with the sector's increasing prioritization of vocational education and training.

72 Values reported here do not include the GBS share.

73 The potential impacts that recent policy shifts in the United States administration may have on education aid to Jordan are unclear at the time of writing. Given that the United States has historically been one of the largest bilateral donors to the Jordanian education sector, any reductions or pauses in funding could have significant implications for ongoing and planned education programmes.

Figure 3.8. Trends in total aid to education by donor between 2016 and 2022



Source: Author's calculations based on the OECD CRS database. Figures expressed in constant 2022 $millions.

Note: A two-year average was used for each of the periods analysed.

Aid by education level

Over the years, external funding has played an important role in supporting various education levels in Jordan and has reflected evolutions in donor priorities. While basic education has continued to receive the largest share of ODA, other levels, such as higher education and TVET, have experienced shifts in focus.

Basic education has consistently received the largest share of ODA. Between 2016 and 2022, the share of ODA directed to basic education grew from 79% to 81% (see **Figure 3.9**), underscoring the importance of basic education as a foundational subsector and a priority for donor investment.

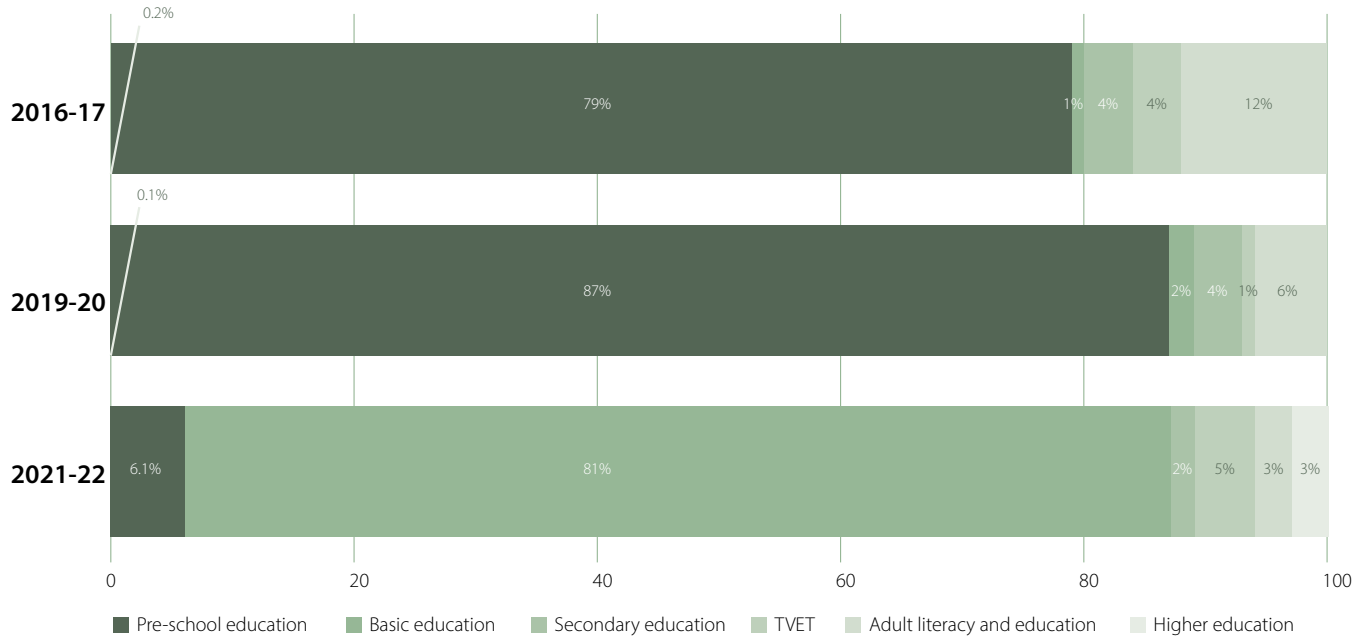
The share of ODA for pre-school education increased significantly over the analysed period, reflecting a growing interest from donors in the subsector. Between 2016 and 2020, pre-school education accounted for a marginal share of total ODA, representing only 0.2% ($1 million on average) in 2016–2017 and 0.1% ($1 million on average) in 2019–2020. However, donor funding for pre-school education surged in 2021–2022, reaching 6.1% of total ODA or an average of $29 million. This sharp increase suggests a heightened awareness of the importance of early childhood education among development partners in recent years.

Higher education's share of ODA has declined sharply, reflecting a shift in donor priorities. In the 2016 –2017 period, higher education accounted for 12% of total ODA, making it the second-largest subsector in terms of external support received. However, this share dropped significantly to 6% in 2019–2020 and then to only 3% in 2021–2022. This signals a significant redirection of donor focus.

TVET has gained increasing external support, with its net ODA rising substantially over time. The share of ODA disbursed to TVET programmes remained relatively stable at 4% in 2016–2017 and 5% in 2021–2022, with funding increasing from an average of $15 million in constant 2022 prices to an average of $24 million in constant 2022 prices, achieving an overall growth rate of 61%. This is in line with the growing priority attached to TVET by the Government of Jordan.

Other education subsectors have seen declines or stagnation in their share of ODA. Adult literacy and education's share fell from an already low average of 4% ($15 million in constant 2022 prices) in 2016–2017 to a meagre average of 1% ($5 million) in 2019–2020 before rebounding to a 3% average ($15 million) in 2021–2022.

Figure 3.9. Trends in total aid to education by level[74]



Source: Author's calculation based on the OECD CRS database. Figures are expressed in percentages.

Notes: (1) ***Pre-school*** *represents the ECED category only.* ***Basic education*** *includes primary education, lower secondary education, school feeding and basic life skills for youth.* ***Secondary education*** *represents upper secondary education.* ***TVET*** *includes vocational training, and advanced technical and managerial training.* ***Adult literacy and education*** *includes basic life skills for adults.* ***Higher Education*** *represents the higher education category only. (2) A two-year average was used for each of the periods analysed.*

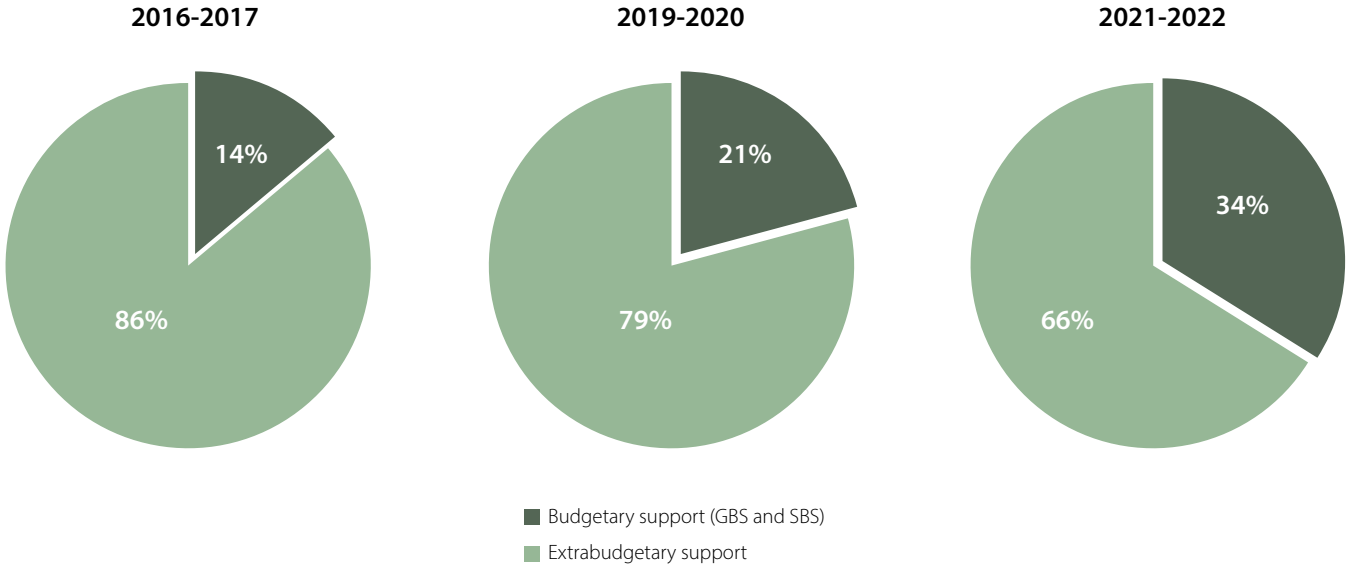
Aid by funding modality and type

Total aid to education in Jordan continues to come predominantly from extrabudgetary support, although budgetary support has increased in recent years. In 2021–2022, an average of $320 million (66% of total aid to education) was channelled through extrabudgetary mechanisms, marking a decrease from an average of $359 million (in constant 2022 prices) or 86% of total education aid in 2016–2017, as shown in **Figure 3.10**. On the other hand, budgetary support grew from an average of $59 million (in constant 2022 prices) or 14% of total education aid in 2016–2017 to an average of $162 million (34% of total aid) in 2021–2022, reflecting an overall growth of 176%. This slow but steady policy shift aligns with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which encourages donors to utilize national systems and processes to improve indicators related to aid alignment and national ownership (OECD, 2005) for a more effective and efficient use of resources. Despite this progress, extrabudgetary support continues to predominate, indicating a need for further alignment with national systems, and more comprehensive, transparent financial management. It also highlights the importance of strengthening

74 Administrative and multilevel education expenditures were distributed across the various education cycles using a breakdown formula presented in Annex 3.3, pp. 350–359 of UNESCO, IIEP Dakar; World Bank, Africa Office; and UNICEF, Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines (see Ch. 3 references).

national systems to build donor trust and instill confidence that the systems are sufficiently robust to enable transparent tracking.

Figure 3.10. Evolution of external funding modalities in Jordan between 2016 and 2022



Source: Author's calculations based on the OECD CRS database. Figures are expressed in percentages.

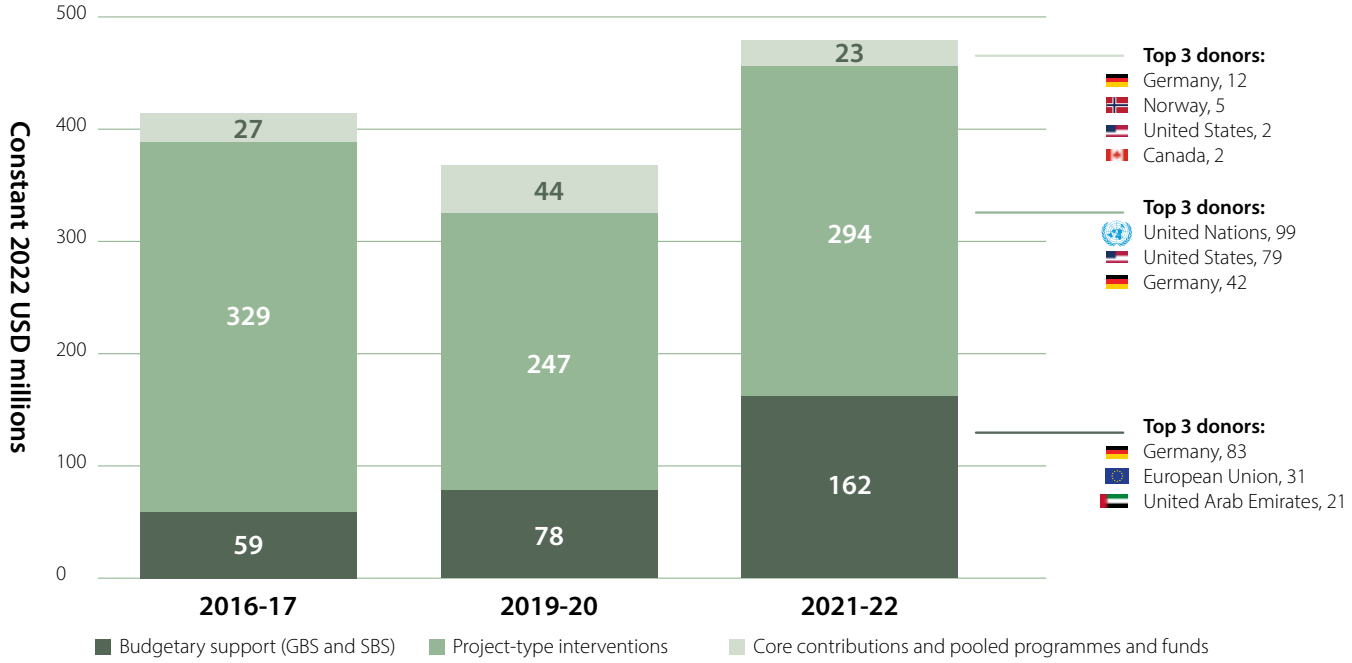
*Note: (1) The note accompanying **Figure 3.7** is also applicable here. (2) A two-year average is used for each of the periods analysed.*

Project-type interventions have continued to dominate overall aid to education. In 2021–2022, they represented 61% of total average education aid, which was a decrease from 79% in 2016–2017 (see **Figure 3. 11**). This aid modality accounted for an average of $294 million in 2021–2022 compared to an average of $329 million in 2016–2017 (in constant 2022 prices). The top three donors in 2021–2022 were the United Nations, contributing an average of $99 million mainly through UNRWA, followed by the United States ($79 million) and Germany ($42 million).

Core contributions and pooled programmes and funds saw a significant decline, with aid disbursements dropping from an average of $44 million (constant 2022 prices) in 2019–2020 to an average of $23 million in 2021–2022.

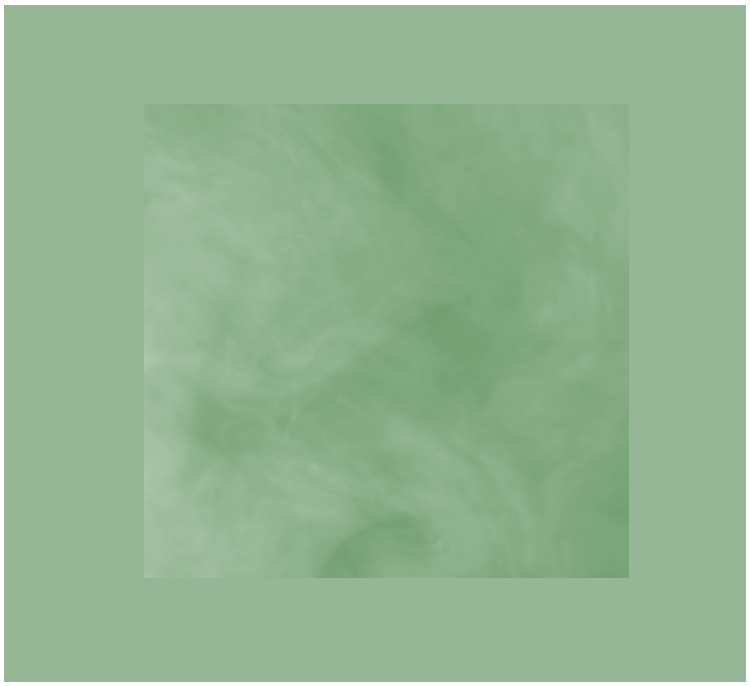
Budgetary support witnessed a significant spike in 2021–2022, reaching an average of $162 million compared to an average of $59 million in 2016–2017 (both in constant 2022 prices). The top three donors using this modality in 2021–2022 were Germany, the European Union and the United Arab Emirates, contributing an average of $83 million, $31 million and $21 million, respectively.

Figure 3.11. Evolution of aid modalities[75] to the education sector between 2016 and 2022, with the top 3 donors in 2022



Source: Author's calculations based on the OECD CRS database. Figures are in constant 2022 USD millions.

Note: For readability, the technical assistance modality was not included in this graph.



75 For details on aid modality definitions, see the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) CRS codebook https://webfs.oecd.org/oda/DataCollection/Resources/DAC-CRS-CODES.xls.

3.3. Private spending: household contributions to education expenditure

As the Government continues to position education as a national strategic priority, households in Jordan also play a key role in this shared vision for education. This section presents findings regarding household contributions to education in Jordan, based on data from the 2017–2018 HIES.[76] A key caveat is that the analysis is based only on the summary statistics tables published by the DoS because the raw HIES data was not publicly available. This was a limitation in the analysis.

Additionally, the data dates back to 2017, so it may not fully reflect the household spending patterns in Jordan today. Readers are encouraged interpret the findings with these limitations in mind.[77]

3.3.1. Household expenditure by level of education and type of institution

Households in Jordan contribute significantly to overall education expenditure, spending an estimated total of JOD 828.302 million (constant 2023 prices) in 2017. This figure represented 5% of total household expenditure on goods and services or JOD 17.756147 billion (constant 2023 prices).

Basic and higher education received the highest household expenditure, while TVET received minimal investment. The bulk of household spending was directed towards basic education (JOD 328.562 million or 39.7% of total household education expenditure) and higher education (JOD 385.398 million or 46.4% of total household education expenditure), reflecting the education priorities of families in Jordan. On the other hand, TVET received the lowest amount with JOD 226,000 or 0.03% of total household education expenditure. This highlights the marginal role of households in funding TVET, even though a higher family investment therein could potentially pay dividends in the form of increased employment and earning potential for the household.

Private schooling places a much larger financial burden on households compared to public schooling. The cost of private institutions far exceeds that of public institutions across most education levels. At the pre-school level, households spent an estimated JOD 52.223 million on private kindergarten education, which is 39 times higher than the cost of public pre-school education. For basic education, private school spending reached JOD 327.774 million, which is 416 times higher than the cost of public basic education. Similarly, spending on private secondary education reached an estimated JOD 55.855 million, which is 12 times the cost of public secondary education (see **Table 3.7**).

76 For more details on the HIES, see https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/economic/expenditures-income/expend_tables/

77 Data from the most recent HIES in 2021–2022 is not yet publicly available, which prevents a more comprehensive analysis of recent trends in household education expenditure.

Table 3.7. Household contributions to education in Jordan, 2017[78]

	Pre-school education	Basic education	Secondary education*	TVET	Higher education**
Household education expenditure (JOD millions)					
Public	1.334	0.788	4.704	0.226	192.297
Private	52.223	327.774	55.855	–	151.100
Outside Jordan	–	–	–	–	42.002
Total	**53.557**	**328.562**	**60.559**	**0.226**	**385.398**
Other levels as a multiple of basic education household expenditure					
Public	1.7	1.0	6.0	0.3	244.0
Private	0.2	1.0	0.2	–	0.5
Total	**0.2**	**1.0**	**0.2**	**0.001**	**1.2**

Source: Author's calculations based on the 2017–2018 HIES. Household expenditure figures expressed in constant 2023 JOD millions.

*Notes: (1) * Public secondary education expenditure includes tutoring to repeat the tawjihi examination. ** Public higher education expenditure includes public technical colleges, while private higher education expenditure includes private technical colleges. (2) Expenditures on items not explicitly assigned to a specific level of education were distributed as follows: (a) school and university textbooks costs were distributed between basic, secondary, TVET and higher education; (b) stationery costs were distributed between pre-school, basic, secondary, TVET and higher education; (c) private tuition fees were distributed between basic and secondary education; and (d) other educational costs were distributed between pre-school, basic, secondary, TVET and higher education.*

3.3.2. Household expenditure on school-related expenses

Fees and tuition constitute the largest share of household education spending, with higher education absorbing the highest amounts. Households allocated JOD 743.376 million to fees and tuition for higher education, which represents 89.7% of total household education expenditure. This trend of high investment was present across all education levels, with the highest percentage in pre-school (97.1%), followed by basic (95.7%) and secondary education (95.7%). Higher education accounted for the highest total expenditure on fees and tuition at JOD 318.879 million, which is equal to 82.7% of total household expenditure at this level.

Spending on learning materials remained modest and consistent across education levels. Textbooks, stationery and other learning materials accounted for only 4% of total household expenditure on education, with the highest amounts going to higher education (JOD 16.386 million) and basic education (JOD 12.925 million).

Other educational costs were concentrated mainly in higher education due to its specialized financial demands. These costs represented 6.3% of total household expenditure and were most significant in higher education, where they accounted for 13% of total household expenditure. This reflects additional costs that are unique to higher education, such as studying abroad and university housing. In contrast, the share of other educational costs was minimal (0.4%) for pre-school, basic, secondary and vocational education (see **Table 3.8.**).

78 To enable the redistribution of other expenditure items across institution types (public and private), it was assumed that the percentage of fees per institution type reflected the proportional distribution of these other expenditures as well.

Table 3.8. Household spending by item of expenditure and education level, 2017

	Pre-school education	Basic education	Secondary education	TVET	Higher Education	Total
Expenditure amounts by item (JOD millions)						
Fees and tuition	52.006	314.339	57.937	0.216	318.879	743.376
Learning materials	1.318	12.925	2.382	0.010	16.386	33.020
Other educational costs	0.233	1.299	0.239	0.001	50.133	51.905
Total	**53.557**	**328.562**	**60.559**	**0.226**	**385.398**	**828.302**
Share of total household expenditure (%)						
Fees and tuition	97.1%	95.7%	95.7%	95.3%	82.7%	89.7%
Learning materials	2.5%	3.9%	3.9%	4.3%	4.3%	4.0%
Other educational costs	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	13.0%	6.3%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Author's calculations based on the 2017–2018 HIES. Expenditure item amounts expressed in constant 2023 JOD millions.

*Note: The note accompanying **Table 3.7.** is also applicable here.*

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

Public education spending in Jordan grew by over JOD 103 million (in constant 2023 prices) between 2016 and 2023, constituting a 9% increase. However, it remains below international benchmarks. In 2023, education spending accounted for 3.5% of GDP (a decrease from 3.7% in 2016), which is below the Incheon Declaration target of 4% to 6%. Over the same period, education spending as a share of total public expenditure also declined from 12% to 11%, falling short of the 15% to 20% target recommended in the Incheon Declaration.

Recurrent spending has consistently dominated the national education budget, with wages accounting for 88% in 2023. This leaves limited margin for capital investment and other needs. Between 2020 and 2023, recurrent spending rose by 4% (from JOD 1.125 billion to JOD 1.166 billion), driven by increased teacher hiring, larger allowances for double-shift schools, and a new salary scale. While these measures were essential to meeting rising enrolment, the resulting costs have constrained investment in infrastructure and education quality. Despite a 67% increase in capital expenditure over the same period, persistent challenges (e.g. limited funding, procurement delays and coordination issues) continue to slow the implementation of capital projects.

In 2023, public education spending was heavily concentrated at the basic education level, which received 75% of total education expenditure, followed by secondary (13%) and higher education (8%). Despite their recognized importance, pre-school education and TVET represented a small share of overall education expenditure, with pre-school accounting for only 0.8% in 2023. Adult literacy and education was supported largely through extrabudgetary grants, indicating a heavy reliance on external funding. Spending per student varied significantly across education levels, with the highest costs being in adult literacy and education (JOD 896) and TVET (JOD 833) followed by basic education (JOD 705). Secondary education cost JOD 617 per student, higher education JOD 322, and pre-school education JOD 73.

ODA for education in Jordan rose from an average of $418 million in 2016–2017 to an average of $482 million in 2021–2022 (in constant 2022 prices), thus increasing its share of the overall ODA to Jordan from 13% to 19%. While external funding represented only 12% of total education expenditure and 0.4% of GDP in 2022, it remains essential for covering non-salary expenditures related to infrastructure, textbooks, teacher training and more. While basic education consistently receives the largest share of ODA, there is growing support for pre-school education and TVET, reflecting shifting donor priorities and national strategies.

Households make significant contributions to education expenditure, with basic and higher education receiving the largest shares of household spending. Across most education levels, private schooling places a much heavier financial burden on households compared to public schooling. The cost of private schooling at the pre-school level is 39 times higher than that of a public pre-school education, and at the basic education level, private schooling is 416 times more expensive than public schooling.

CHAPTER 4:

Education System Quality and Teacher Management

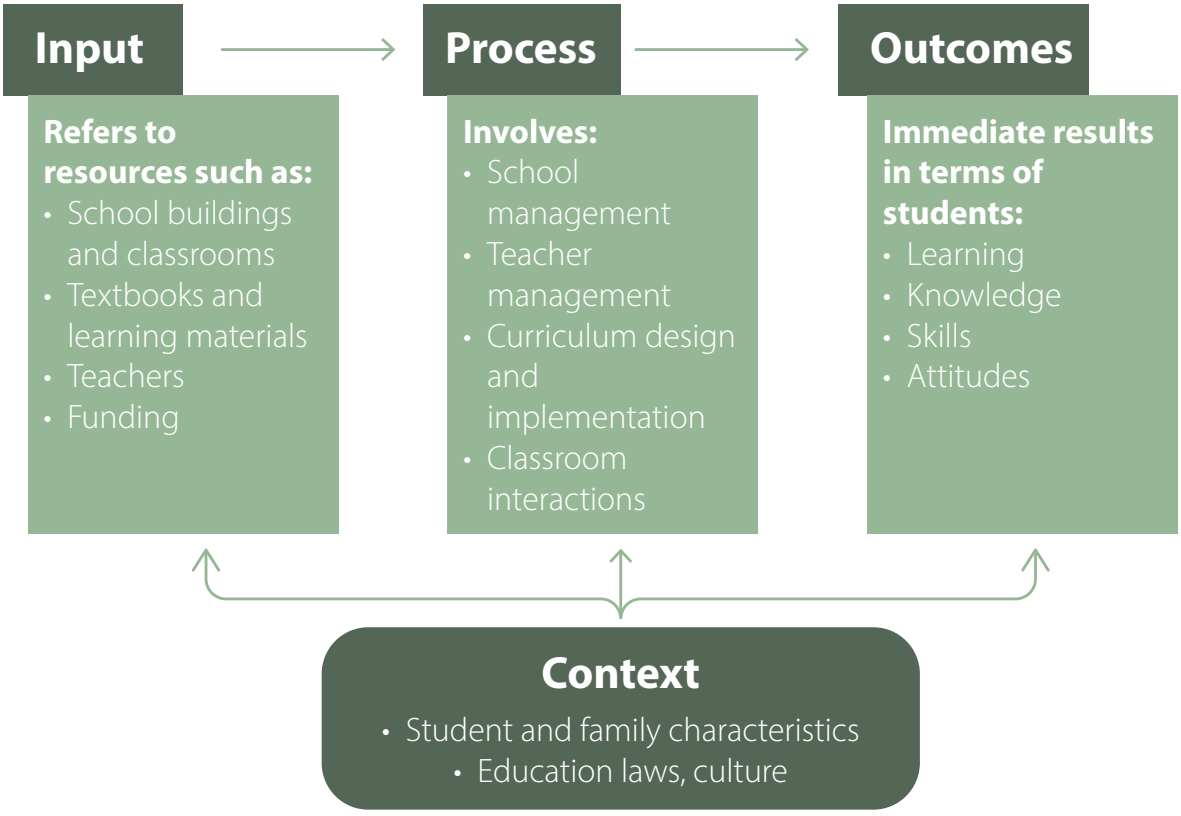
INTRODUCTION

While access to education lays the foundation for the fulfilment of education rights, it is the quality of education that shapes how much children learn, how well they learn and how fully their education delivers on its potential to drive personal growth, social progress and national development.

In Jordan, significant strides in the expansion of access to education have not yet been matched by commensurate improvements in education quality, leading to poor learning outcomes and disaffection among students, parents and teachers, which combine to undermine the impact of investments in coverage. Assessments of student performance, at both the national and international levels, have revealed persistently low achievement levels, accompanied by a worrying downward trend in recent years.

The conceptual framework used to structure the analysis of education quality in this chapter (**Figure 4.1**) links the key role of inputs, processes and contextual factors to the delivery of positive learning outcomes.[79] Input resources, such as classrooms and facilities, learning materials and competent teachers, create positive conditions for learning. Translating these inputs into learning outcomes requires effective processes, including pedagogy, curriculum implementation, structures for feedback, support and supervision for students and teachers, school leadership and professional development for teachers. Contextual factors – such as family background, culture and the enabling legal environment – interact with the other components to influence education quality.

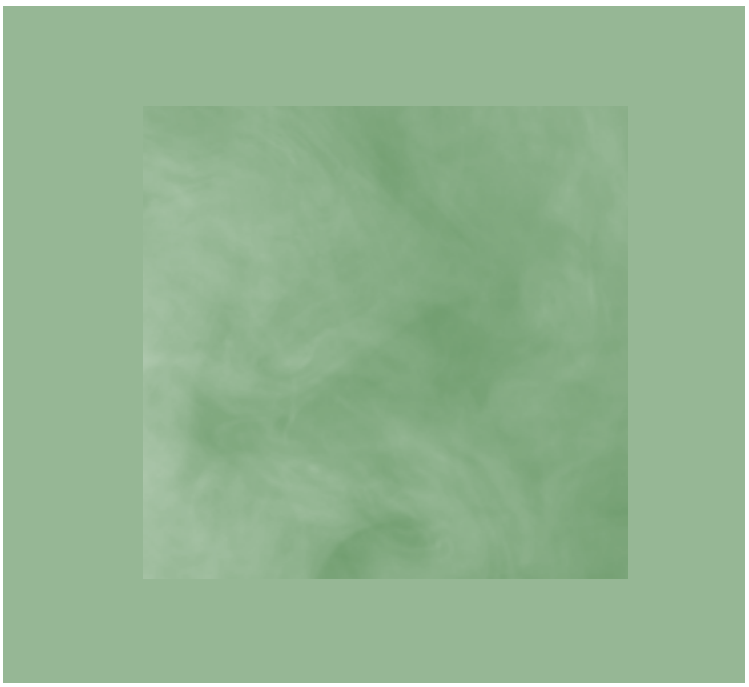
Figure 4.1. Framework for quality education



Source: International Institute for Educational Planning of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2024. Adapted from: Global Education Monitoring Report Team, Education for all: the quality imperative; EFA global monitoring report, 2005 (Paris, UNESCO, 2005).

79 The same conceptual framework is also used as the structure for analysis in Chapter 6 (Early childhood education and development), Chapter 7 (Technical and vocational education and training), and Chapter 8 (Higher education)

Based on this framework, the first section of this chapter begins by examining the quality of learning outcomes in the Jordanian education system, analysing student achievement in national and international assessments at different levels. It then dives deeper into the assessment data to explore key factors associated with learning outcomes across school years and at critical stages in the education cycle. Given the pivotal role played by teachers in shaping learning outcomes, the second section is focused on issues relating to the quality of teacher management.



4.1. Education System Quality

4.1.1. Student learning outcomes

International and national assessments are a key tool for measuring student learning outcomes, and, by extension, a key indicator of the quality of the education system. Viewed together, these assessments provide a comprehensive picture of student performance and allow for comparative analysis of trends over time, as well as comparisons with other countries, shedding light on how input and process ensure the quality of education and the delivery of results.

This section contains analysis of student performance results as a measure of learning outcomes at the national and international level, based on a range of learning assessment tools implemented at different stages of the school cycle.

At the national level, the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) and the Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) assessment measure results for all Grade 2 and 3 students to provide learning data at the foundational level of schooling. Jordan also organizes an annual end-of-secondary-education examination at Grade 12, the tawjihi, which measures outcomes upon completion of the school cycle.

At the international level, results are analysed for three assessment tools: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) for Grade 4 students; the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) for Grade 8 students; and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for 15-year-old students, which corresponds to Grade 10 in Jordan.

The data show that Jordanian students perform below the standards of international learning assessments, while national assessments show low performance at early primary grades and moderate pass rates in examinations at the end of secondary education.

Performance of Grade 2 and 3 students in national EGRAs and EGMAs

The EGRA and EGMA surveys are aimed at assessing students' skills in reading and mathematics in Grades 2 and 3 by administering a set of specific subtasks in the two subjects.

Student performance in reading and mathematics in Grades 2 and 3 declined between 2019 and 2021, with a significant drop in mathematics. National EGRAs and EGMAs were conducted in 2019 and 2021. The key indicators of the performance of Jordanian students in the 2019 and 2021 EGRAs and EGMAs are summarized in **Table 4.1**.

Overall, it is suggested that protracted school closures related to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) were a key factor in learning loss and partially explain the decline in scores between 2019 and 2021. The 2021 EGRA and EGMA national reports highlighted the decline in scores for most skills for most Grade 2 and Grade 3 students between 2019 and 2021; this was partially attributed to the cessation of face-to-face learning in schools and the transition to distance learning owing to COVID-19, a learning mode that was unfamiliar and not accessible to all learners. A teachers' strike that lasted a full month in the first semester of the 2020/2021 academic year also affected learning.

Table 4.1. Percentage of Grade 2 and Grade 3 students who achieved the indicated proficiency, 2019 and 2021

Indicator	Indicator definition	Grade 2						Grade 3					
		2019			2021			2019			2021		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Reading proficiency	Percentage of students who can answer at least 80% of the reading comprehension questions correctly when reading a paragraph orally	12.2	16.9	14.4	9.1	12.2	10.7	30.9	37.2	34.1	32.8	44.8	39.4
Zero scores in oral reading fluency (ORF)	Percentage of students achieved zero score in ORF	24.8	18.7	21.8	23.1	19.5	21.3	7.1	7.8	7.5	6.8	8.2	7.5
Silent reading	Percentage of students who can answer correctly at least 80% of the reading comprehension questions in the silent reading task	41.5	48.8	45.1	9.9	15.9	12.9	72.6	81	76.9	38.3	48.2	43.8
Mathematics proficiency	Percentage of students who can answer at least 80% of the addition and subtraction level 2 questions and at least 70% of the missing number questions	20.8	17.8	19.3	10.1	2.3	6.1	36.4	25.2	30.7	21.2	16.2	18.4

Source: Report on the findings of the Jordan 2020–2021 national survey (EGRA and EGMA).

In reading, the data show that students perform better in Grade 3 than in Grade 2, but the results are low for all indicators in both grades, apart from an outlying high of 76.9% for silent reading at Grade 3 in 2019.

Comparing results for 2019 and 2021 by grade, however, show a mixed picture, with drops in two indicators for Grade 2, and one slight increase and one drop in Grade 3, with one indicator showing little or no change for both grades. Given the critical importance of early reading as a foundational skill for later learning, a more nuanced understanding of the reasons for these mixed results will need to be explored.

Overall, results show that girls outperform boys in reading, while the roles are reversed for mathematics. In 2021 and 2019, female students performed better in reading in both Grade 2 and Grade 3. The 2019 assessment results showed that girls in Grade 2 (16.9%) had a better reading performance than boys (12.2%), as well as in Grade 3, where the reading performance of girls (37.2%) was higher than that of boys (30.9%). In 2021, the reading performance of girls in year 2 (12.2%) was still better than that of boys (9.1%). In Grade 3, the gap had further widened, with 44.8% of female pupils achieving reading proficiency compared to 32.8% of male pupils. In mathematics, on the other hand, in the 2019 round, boys performed slightly better than girls (2% higher) in Grade 2, while the gender gap reached 11.2 percentage points in favour of boys in Grade 3. A similar trend was observed in 2021, with boys outperforming girls in mathematics in both Grade 2 and Grade 3.

By indicator, the results can be summarized as follows:

- **Performance in reading proficiency is low.** In both 2019 and 2021, the figures show that the percentage of students achieving reading proficiency is low in both Grades 2 and 3, decreasing from 14.4% to 10.7% in Grade 2, but increasing slightly in Grade 3, from 34.1% to 39.4% in Grade 3.
- **Oral reading fluency results remain virtually unchanged.** There has been a very slight drop in the zero score and no improvement at Grade 3.
- **For silent reading, however, steep drops were observed between 2019 and 2021 for both Grades 2 and 3,** plummeting from 45.1% to 12.9% in Grade 2, and from 76.9% to 43.8% in Grade 3.
- **There are also statistically significant decreases between 2019 and 2021 in most of the reading fluency tasks at Grade 2** (number of correct items per minute), especially in letter sounds (from 49.4% to 38%), syllable sounds (from 29.7 to 23.4%) and invented words (from 13.1% to 10.1%). For Grade 3, however, this decrease was only observed in letter sounds in Grade 3 (from 55.6 to 48.2).
- **On the other hand, reading accuracy results improved substantially in both grades.** The percentage of correct items attempted in reading comprehension increased from 41.1% to 50.6% in Grade 2 and from 60.5% to 70.6% in Grade 3 between 2019 and 2021.

In mathematics, by contrast, the results are more striking, with only a small proportion of students demonstrating minimum proficiency in both the 2019 and 2021 assessments, and a significant decline observed in both grades over this period. In Grade 2, students' performance sank from an already low 19.3% in 2019 to just 6.1% in 2021, and from 30.7% to only 18.4% in Grade 3.

- **For mathematical proficiency, students seem to struggle more with addition and subtraction than with number identification.** In 2021, only 7% of Grade 2 students achieved proficiency in subtraction tasks and 10.2% in addition tasks, compared to 29.7% who achieved proficiency in number identification.
- **For mathematical accuracy, addition and subtraction remain the most challenging tasks** for students in Grades 2 and 3, with only 29% achieving proficiency in Grade 2 and 46.9% in Grade 3.

Performance of Grade 2 and 3 students in the LQAS assessment

The LQAS national assessment, introduced in 2016, is aimed at measuring the progress of students in Grades 2 and 3 in reading and mathematics. Four assessments have already been conducted since 2016, with the most recent assessment carried out in 2022. The results are designed to monitor four key indicators: reading proficiency; silent reading comprehension; oral reading fluency (ORF) zero scores; and mathematics with understanding. While the indicators used for LQAS are the same as for EGRA and EGMA in both grades, the key difference is that LQAS is focused exclusively on Ministry of Education (MoE) public schools.

Student performance remains low in the 2022 LQAS assessment, although it showed slight improvements compared to the 2021 EGRA and EGMA results in the same areas, suggesting some post-COVID-19 learning recovery. For reading, the ORF zero scores for Grade 2 show that as many as 8% of children were unable to read even a single word at that level **(Table 4.2),** but by Grade 3, the percentage decreases to 4.5%. The percentage of students who demonstrate reading proficiency at Grade 2 is also low (24%), but at Grade 3, this percentage climbs to slightly above 50%, indicating that learning has improved, but still falls below the benchmark of 55%. In mathematics, on the other hand, the proportion of students demonstrating proficiency is low in both Grades 2 and 3. As with EGRA and EGMA, the gender pattern is repeated, with girls performing better than boys in reading proficiency, while boys outperform girls in mathematics.

Table 4.2. Percentage of students in Grades 2 and 3 meeting benchmarks for key indicators in reading and mathematics in 2022

Indicator	Indicator definition	Grade 2			Grade 3		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Reading proficiency	Percentage of learners who demonstrate proficiency in reading and comprehension —i.e. ≥ 80% correct answers to the comprehension questions about reading passage	23.2	24.8	24.0	49.8	55.1	52.5
Silent reading comprehension	Percentage of learners who demonstrate silent reading comprehension proficiency —i.e. ≥ 80% correct answers to the comprehension questions in the silent reading comprehension task	-	-	34.8	-	-	62.0
Oral reading fluency (ORF) zero Scores	Percentage of learners who are unable to read at least one word from the ORF passage —i.e. a zero score in ORF	10.2	6.4	8.2	5.3	3.8	4.5

Indicator	Indicator definition	Grade 2			Grade 3		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Mathematics with understanding	Percentage of learners who demonstrate proficiency in mathematics —i.e. ≥ 80% correct answers to the level-two addition/subtraction task, plus ≥ 70% correct answers in the missing number task	13.8	11.4	12.6	38.4	32.9	35.2

Source: 2022 LQAS Assessment Findings, Jordan (RTI, 2023).

Some improvements in indicators for reading are seen for both grades between 2019 and 2022. Overall reading proficiency at Grade 2 improved significantly by 2022, following a dip in 2020. For Grade 3, a small improvement was seen between 2019 and 2020, followed by a 10-point rise in 2022. Silent reading comprehension dropped slightly for Grade 2 in 2020, but increased steadily at Grade 3, with both grades showing improvement by 2022. The percentage of zero scores in ORF also decreased at both levels, a positive trend.

Conversely, proficiency in mathematics was lower in 2022 than in 2019 for both grades, but had recovered significantly from the decline seen in 2021 following the COVID-19-related disruption of schooling.

Figure 4.2. LQAS Grade 2 results from 2019 to 2022 (%)

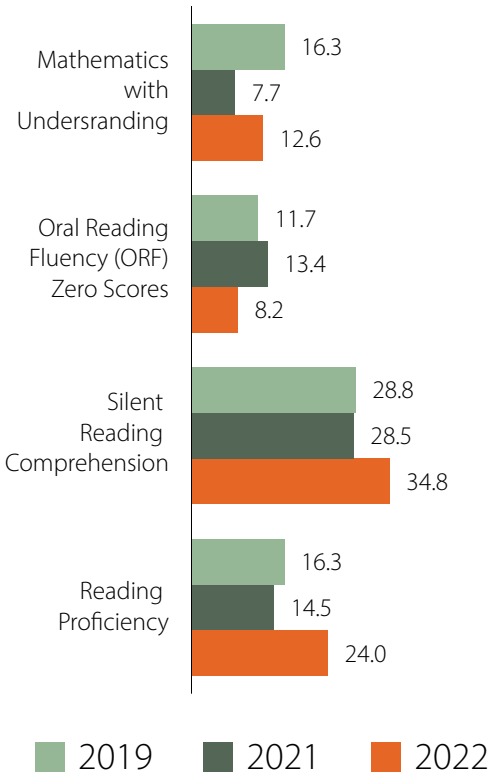
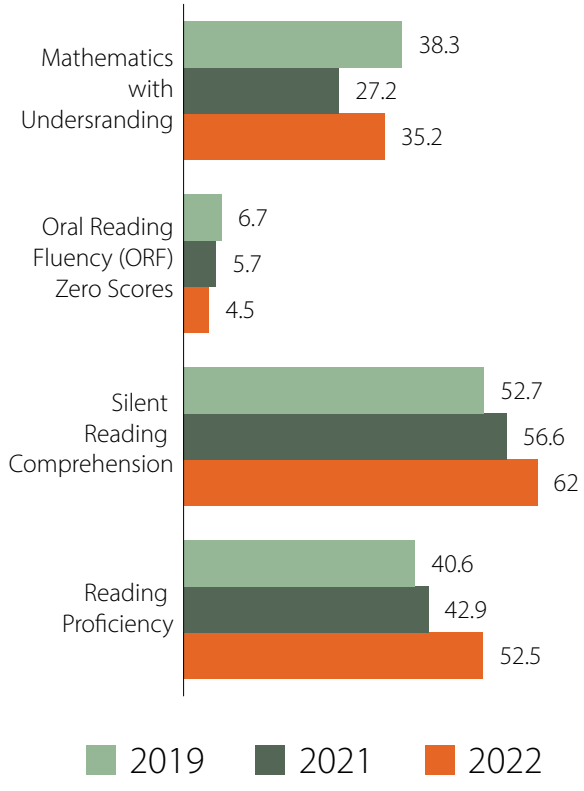


Figure 4.3. LQAS Grade 3 results from 2019 to 2022 (%)



Source: 2022 LQAS Assessment Findings, Jordan (RTI, 2023).

Relatedly, LQAS scores for 2022 show significant improvement compared to the 2021 EGRA and EGMA assessments for the common subjects, as shown in **Table 4.3**. As can be seen, after a decrease in all figures from 2019 to 2021, an improvement is noticeable in the reading and mathematics indicators. The zero scores in ORF have also decreased significantly, showing progress in reading after the reopening of schools following the COVID-19 period, although proficiency in silent reading has yet to recover to the pre-COVID-19 levels recorded in 2019.

Table 4.3. Comparison between 2021 EGRA and EGMA results and 2022 LQAS results

Indicator	Grade 2			Grade 3		
	EGRA/EGMA		LQAS	EGRA/EGMA		LQAS
	2019	2021	2022	2019	2021	2022
Reading proficiency	14.4	10.7	24.0	34.1	39.4	52.5
Oral reading fluency (ORF) zero scores	21.8	21.3	8.2	7.5	7.5	4.5
Silent reading comprehension	45.1	12.9	34.8	76.9	43.8	62.0
Mathematics with understanding	19.3	6.1	12.6	30.7	18.4	35.2

Source: Report on the findings of the Jordan 2020–2021 national survey (EGRA and EGMA).

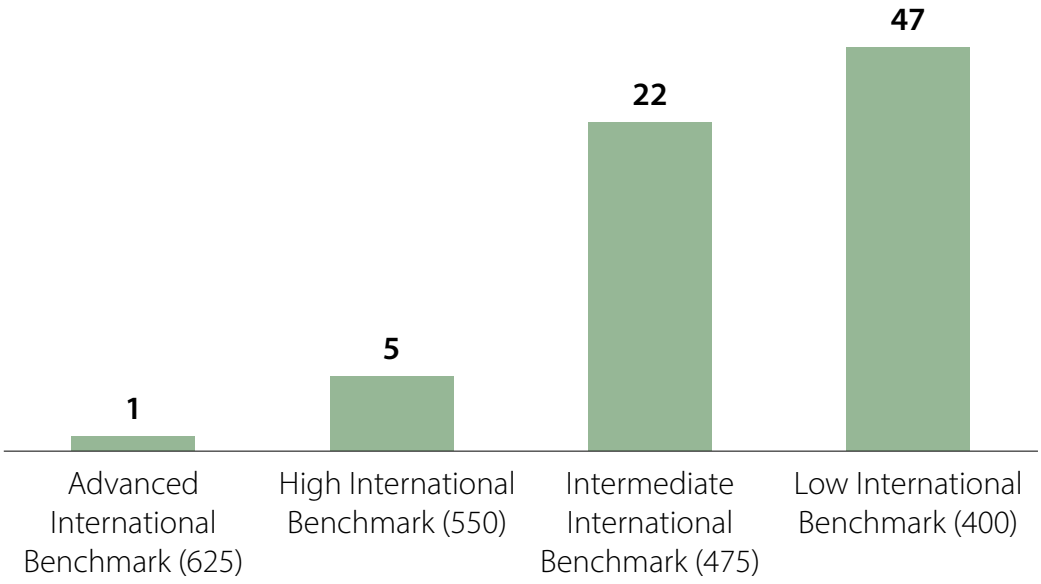
In addition to national assessments, Jordan has also participated in international assessments, which are presented in the following sections.

Performance of Grade 4 students in the PIRLS international assessment

A large-scale international assessment that takes place every five years, PIRLS is focused on the reading skills of Grade 4 students. Jordan participated in the most recent assessment in 2021, the results of which are analysed in subsequent paragraphs.

Only a negligible number of Jordanian students reached the advanced international benchmark in the PIRLS assessment, and the overall performance of Jordan ranked among the lowest of participating countries. The data show that, in the 2021 assessment, students in Jordan scored 381 points on average. Less than half of students attained the established Low International Benchmark of 400 points, with 53% of students scoring below this. Less than a quarter of students reached the Intermediate International Benchmark of 475 points and just 5% the High International Benchmark (550 points). Only 1% of Grade 4 students reached the Advanced International Benchmark (625) **(Figure 4.4).** The PIRLS assessments particularly measure students' ability to use the information they gain from reading. As this is an essential foundational skill to support more advanced learning at later grades, the low scores achieved by Jordanian students have serious implications for the quality of their learning as they progress through the school cycle.

Figure 4.4. Percentage of Jordanian students reaching PIRLS International Benchmarks,[80] 2021



Source: Authors' calculation based on the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement database for the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study.

The gender gap was striking, with an average score of 389 for girls and 362 for boys, a 27-point difference in favour of girls.

The performance of Jordan is among the lowest of Arab countries, as shown in **Figure 4.5**. The average score of Jordan (381) was well below the PIRLS average of 500.

80 The 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study report, available on the website of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (see references), provides the definition of each benchmark. Benchmark 2 is the only one used to measure Sustainable Development Goal target 4.1.1.

Figure 4.5. Average reading achievements, Grade 4, for Jordan and other Arab countries in 2021



Source: Authors' calculation, based on the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement database for the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study.

Performance of Grade 8 students in the TIMSS international assessment

Jordan has also regularly participated in the TIMSS assessments for Grade 8 students since 1999. TIMSS, conducted every five years, is a large-scale international assessment that evaluates the mathematics and science knowledge of students at Grade 8, and as with PIRLS, enables cross-comparison of the performance of Jordanian students with those of other countries.

In the latest assessment in 2023, students in Jordan obtained scores on average lower than the TIMSS score centre point (500)[81] in both mathematics and science.

Jordanian students' performances in mathematics and science at Grade 8 were among the lowest of Arab countries (Figures 4.8 and 4.9). Data and probability are the areas where Jordanian students struggle the most in mathematics, while Earth sciences seem to be the most difficult area of science for Grade 8 students.

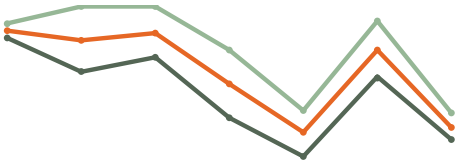
Jordanian students have never reached the TIMSS average in mathematics in any year (Figure 4.6). Their performance had varied from 428 in 1999 to 388 in 2023, while the lowest score was observed in 2015. Girls have outperformed boys during the same period, reaching a score differential of 11 points in 2023.[82]

Similarly, science scores have also never reached the TIMSS average, with girls consistently outperforming boys. The gender gap in 2023 was 21 points. The lowest score was observed in 2023 (**Figure 4.7**).

81 The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study score centre point of 500 represents the fixed international benchmark that remains constant across assessment cycles, providing a stable reference to measure and compare student achievement over time.

82 The 2023 gender gap is not statistically significant.

Figure 4.6. Jordanian average mathematics achievement (Grade 8) across years, 1999–2023



	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015	2019	2023
Total	428	424	427	406	386	420	388
Female	431	438	438	420	395	432	394
Male	425	411	417	392	376	409	383

Figure 4.7. Jordanian average science achievement (Grade 8) across years, 1999–2023



	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015	2019	2023
Total	450	475	482	449	426	452	413
Girls	460	489	499	471	447	480	424
Boys	442	462	466	428	405	427	403

Source: Authors' calculations, based on the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement database for the 2023 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

Almost no Jordanian students reached the Advanced International Benchmark[83] in mathematics in 2023, compared to 45% achieving the Low International Benchmark. The Advanced Level Benchmark is defined as the ability to apply and reason in a variety of problem situations, solve algebraic equations and linear equations and demonstrate an understanding of linear functions, integrate information across data displays to represent data and justify a conclusion, all of which are key operations essential to progressing further in mathematics and other science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. The low numbers of students reaching this level represent a serious constraint to the expansion of STEM specialization and excellence in the school system.

In science (biology, physics, chemistry and Earth science), only 1% of students reached the Advanced International Benchmark (625 points), compared to 55% achieving the Low International Benchmark (400 points), meaning that they lack basic competencies in these subjects. In comparison, almost 45% and 55% of students in mathematics and science respectively perform at the Low International Benchmark

Score levels vary across subject areas. For mathematics, **Table 4.4** shows that data and probability are the areas where Jordanian students struggle the most, followed by numbers and algebra. In science, Earth science seems to be the most difficult area for students.

Table 4.4. Average achievement in mathematics and science subject areas, Grade 8, 2023

Mathematics		Science	
Overall mathematics average scale score	388	Overall science average scale score	413
Average scale score (number)	392	Average scale score in biology	411
Average scale score (algebra)	405	Average scale score in chemistry	414
Average scale score (geometry and measurement)	373	Average scale score in physics	415
Average scale score (data and probability)	359	Average scale score in Earth science	406

Source: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement international report on the 2023 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

83 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2023 report available on the website of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (see references), provides the definition of each benchmark. Benchmark 2 is the only one used to measure Sustainable Development Goal target 4.1.1.

Compared to other Arab countries, Jordanian students' performance in mathematics and science at Grade 8 was among the lowest in the comparison list. In mathematics, the average score of Jordan was only 10 points above that of the lowest-scoring country, while the gap between Jordan and the top-scoring country is 101 points, a statistically significant difference (**Figure 4.8**). In science, the performance of Jordan was also low compared to other Arab countries, though the point difference from the highest performing country is narrower (73 points) (**Figure 4.9**).

Figure 4.8. Average mathematics achievements, Grade 8, for Jordan and other Arab countries in 2023

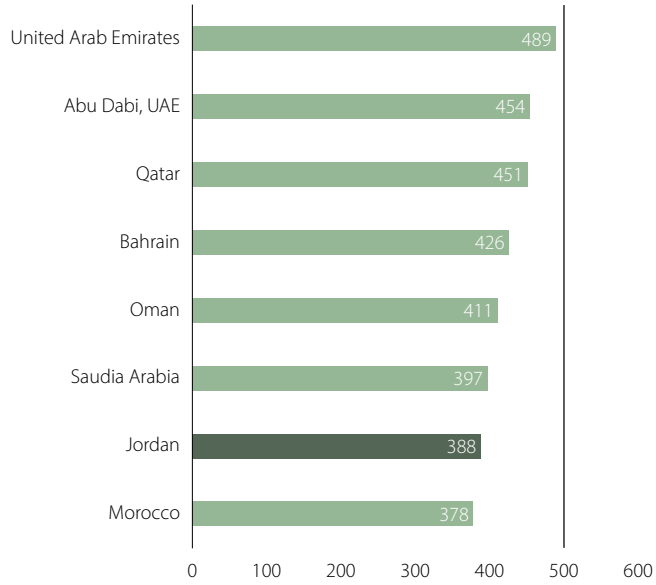
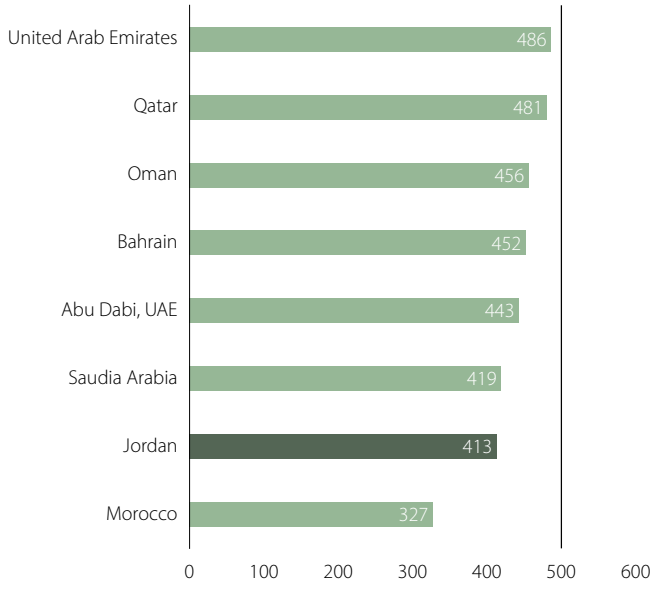


Figure 4.9. Average science achievements, Grade 8, for Jordan and other Arab countries in 2023



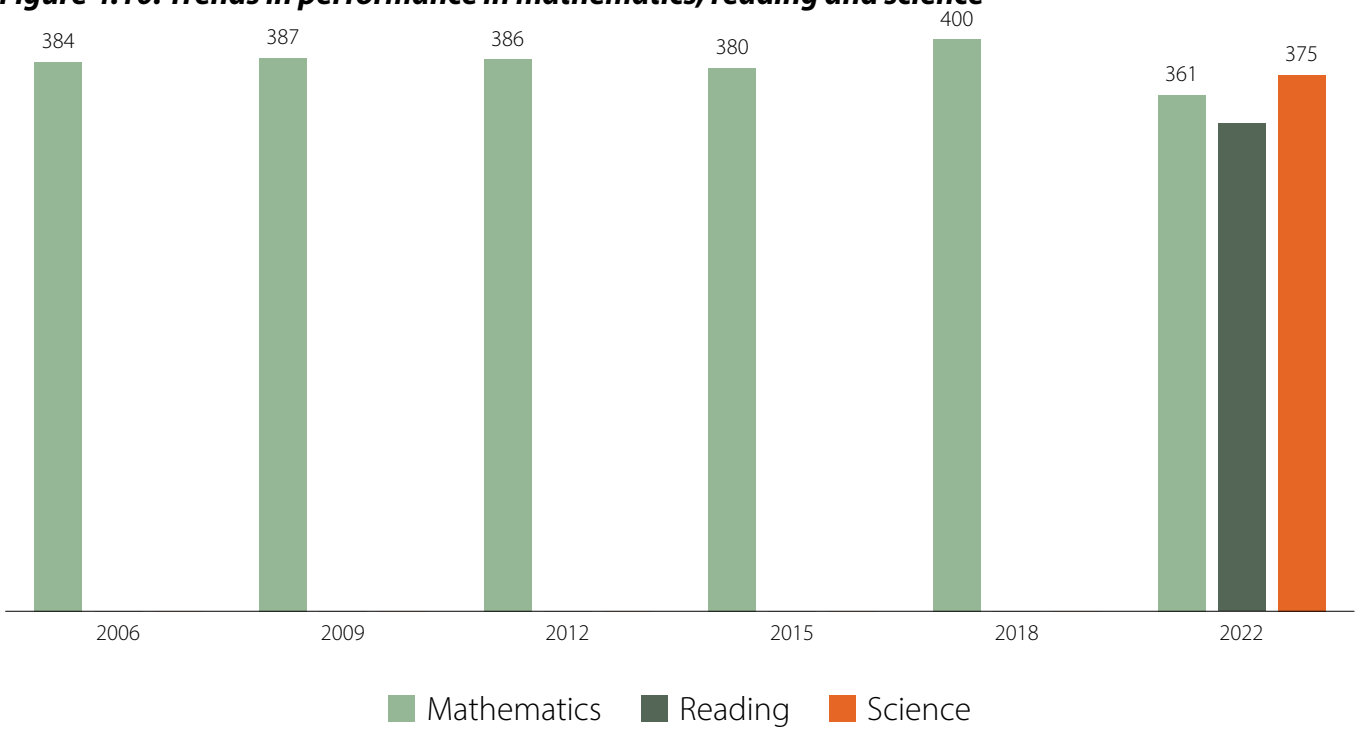
Source: Authors' calculation based on the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement database for the 2023 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

Performance of Grade 10 students in the PISA international assessment

Jordan has participated in many rounds of PISA, the assessment of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which measures the ability of 15-year-olds to use their knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges across three areas: reading, mathematics and science. In the Jordanian context, the 15-year-old age group is equivalent to Grade 10.

For the most recent round of PISA (2022), Jordan scored less than the OECD average in all three areas, with an average score lower than any achieved in previous assessments. The data for Jordan show average scores of 361 in mathematics, 342 in reading and 375 in science (**Figure 4.10**), well below the PISA average (500) in all three subjects. This also marks a significant drop from the previous round in 2018, when the average scores in Jordan reached an all-time peak of 400, with COVID-19-related disruption again likely a key contributing factor. The short-term drop in mean performance from 2018 to 2022 was most pronounced in mathematics (38.5 points), compared to the 10-year trend in mean performance from 2012 to 2022 (18.6 points below the mean). Girls outperformed boys in all three subjects, with wide gender gaps of 15 points in mathematics, 46 points in reading and 32 points in science.

Figure 4.10. Trends in performance in mathematics, reading and science[84]



Source: Authors' calculation based on the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment database.

Almost no students in Jordan reached the top performance levels (proficient at Level 5 or 6 of the PISA proficiency scale) in in any subject, while the vast majority were classified as low performers. Some 62.9% of students were low performers overall (below Level 2), with nearly 82.2% in mathematics, 79.5% in reading and 68.9% in science (**Table 4.5**). Compared to 2012, the share of students scoring below the baseline proficiency increased by 14% in mathematics but did not change significantly in reading and science.

Scores show limited levels of skills across all domains. Just 17.2% of students achieved Level 2 or above in mathematics, 20% in reading and around 31% in science, indicating that for the vast majority of students, the skills they have attained remain at a very basic level, even by Grade 8.

Table 4.5. Percentage of students at each proficiency level[85] in mathematics, reading and science

	Below level 1c	Level 1c	Level 1b	Level 1a	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
% of students achieving the level in mathematics	1.2	13.0	35.4	33.2	13.9	3.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
% of students achieving the level in reading	1.3	14.0	32.6	31.6	16.4	3.6	0.4	0.0	0.0
% of students achieving the level in science	5.3	25.9		37.7	23.3	6.8	0.9	0.0	0.0

Source: 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment international report.

84 In 2022, Jordan transitioned from paper-based to computer-based assessments. Previous reading and science scores were calculated using a scale that had only a weak connection to the international standard. As a result, the trend is only focused on mathematics

85 The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment report, available on the website of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (see references), provides the definition of the different proficiency level.

Comparing results at the international level, Jordanian students scored lower than the average for OECD countries in 2022 (472 in mathematics, 476 in reading and 485 in science), and the country's scores are among the lowest of participating countries.

Performance of Grade 12 students in national tawjihi examinations

The tawjihi, the general secondary education certification of Jordan, is the final secondary examination that grants access to higher education and determines the fields of study that Jordanian students are eligible to pursue at university. To pass the exam, a student must obtain a minimum cumulative score of 60% across all subjects, according to his or her chosen stream. In general, the number of candidates in the academic stream is much higher than in the vocational stream, though numbers are rising quickly for the latter. There is also a significant proportion of private candidates sitting the national examination.[86]

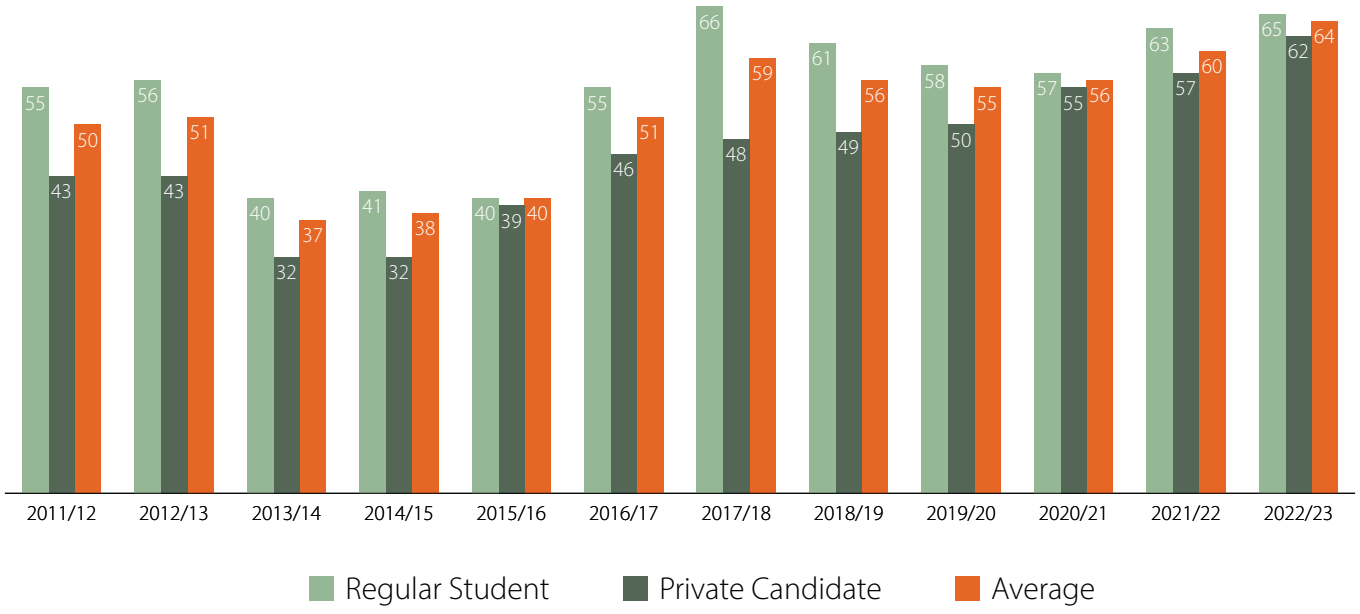
The average pass rate for the tawjihi has been modest over the years, masking some disparities between regions.

In the academic stream, the average pass rate shows an upward trend, after a decline between 2013 and 2015, and a slight dip during the years affected by COVID-19.

Average pass rates were highest in 2022 (65%) and 2023 (64%). As outlined previously, this temporary dip is partly owing to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which school closures had a negative impact on learning (**Figure 4.11**).

Pass rates for private candidates have consistently lagged behind those of school candidates, although the gap is gradually narrowing. In 2023, the pass rate for private candidates was 62%, compared to 65% for school candidates, as shown in **Figure 4.11**.

Figure 4.11. Tawjihi pass rates academic stream (%), by type of candidate, Jordan, 2012-2023

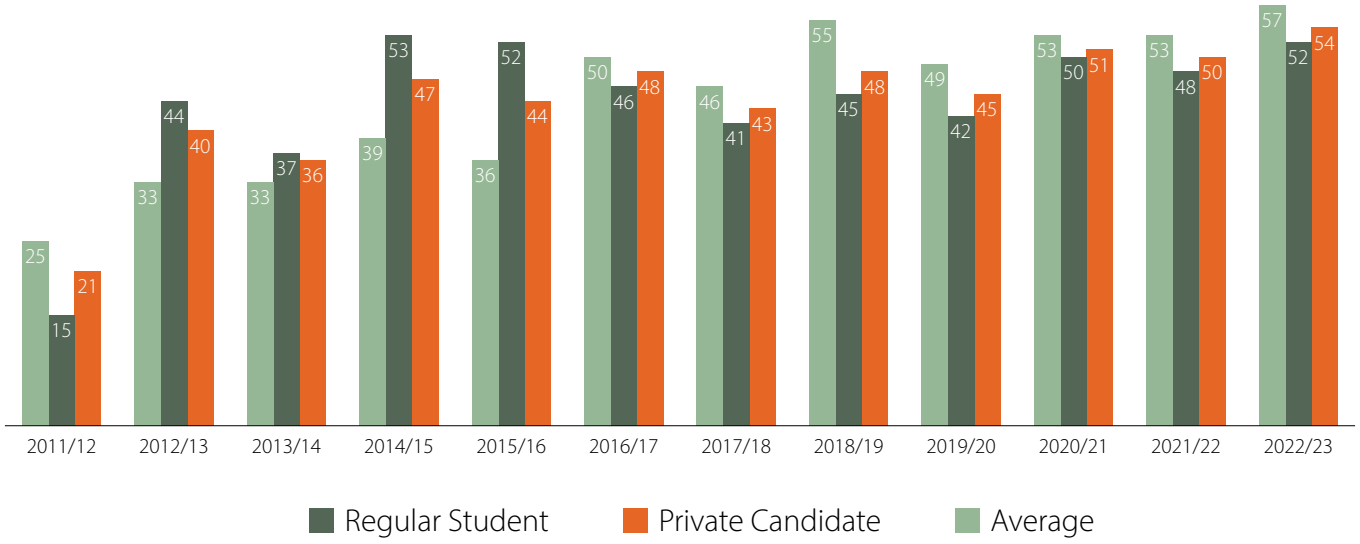


Source: Authors' calculation based on Jordanian examination data (2024).

86 Data for 2023 show that 4,582 students, representing 3.5% of students in all streams, did not sit the exam, either because they dropped out early in the school year or because their school did not register them for the national exam.

The average pass rate for the vocational stream is lower than for the academic stream, but has risen to 60% in 2023 from a low of 39% in 2012, again with a slight COVID-19-related dip (**Figure 4.11**). Unlike the academic stream, pass rates for private candidates were higher than those of school candidates between 2012/2013 and 2015/2016, but have remained slightly lower since then.

Figure 4.12. Tawjihi pass rates vocational stream, by type of candidate, Jordan, 2012-2023



Source: Authors' calculation based on Jordanian examination data (2024).

Noticeable disparities exist between governorates for both academic and vocational streams, with the highest scores in the capital (Figures 4.13 and 4.14). For the academic stream, in 2023, Amman achieved the highest success rate, with 68.8% of students passing the exam. Irbid and Balqa also exceeded the national average (63.9%), recording pass rates of 64.8% and 64.2% respectively. Conversely, the remaining governorates fell below the national average, with Karak and Mafraq reporting the lowest pass rates at 57.5% and 50.7%, respectively.

In the vocational stream, most governorates achieved pass rates above the national average (54.3%), with Zarqa leading at 66.4%, followed by Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, Balqa, Aqaba and Amman (59.5%). The poorest-performing governorate was Madaba, with a pass rate of just 43.9%, followed by Ma'an, Karak, Tafilah and Mafraq, all of which fell below the national average.

Figure 4.13. Share of passing students in the academic stream by governorate, 2023

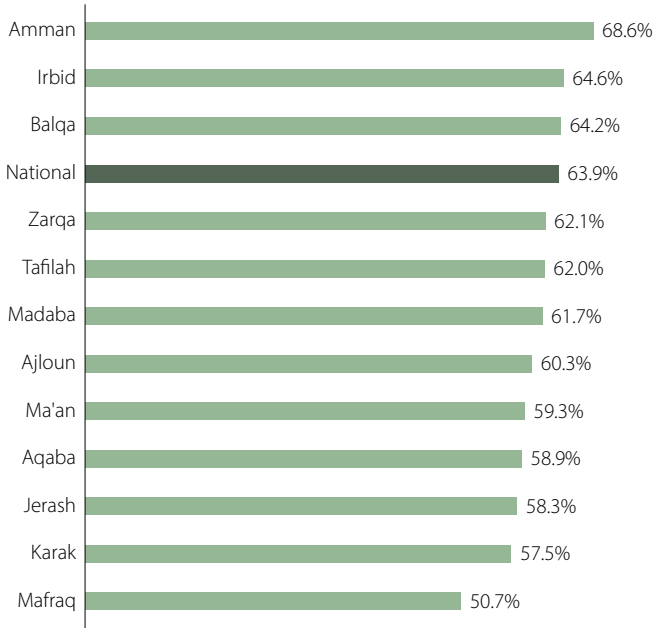
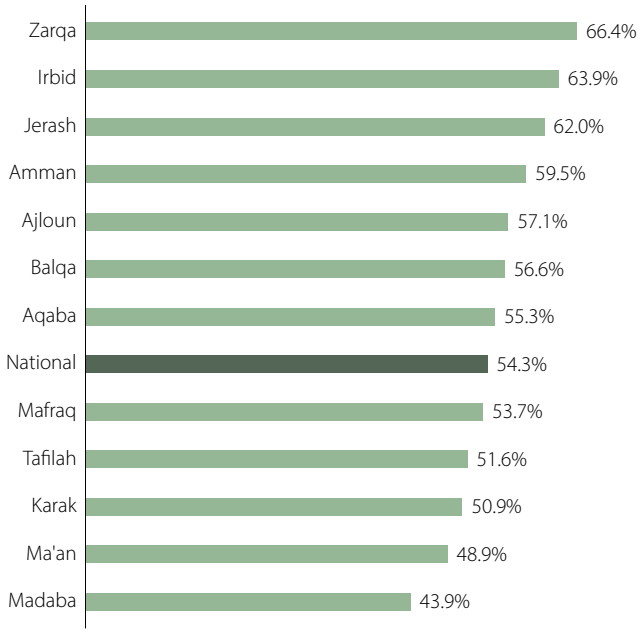


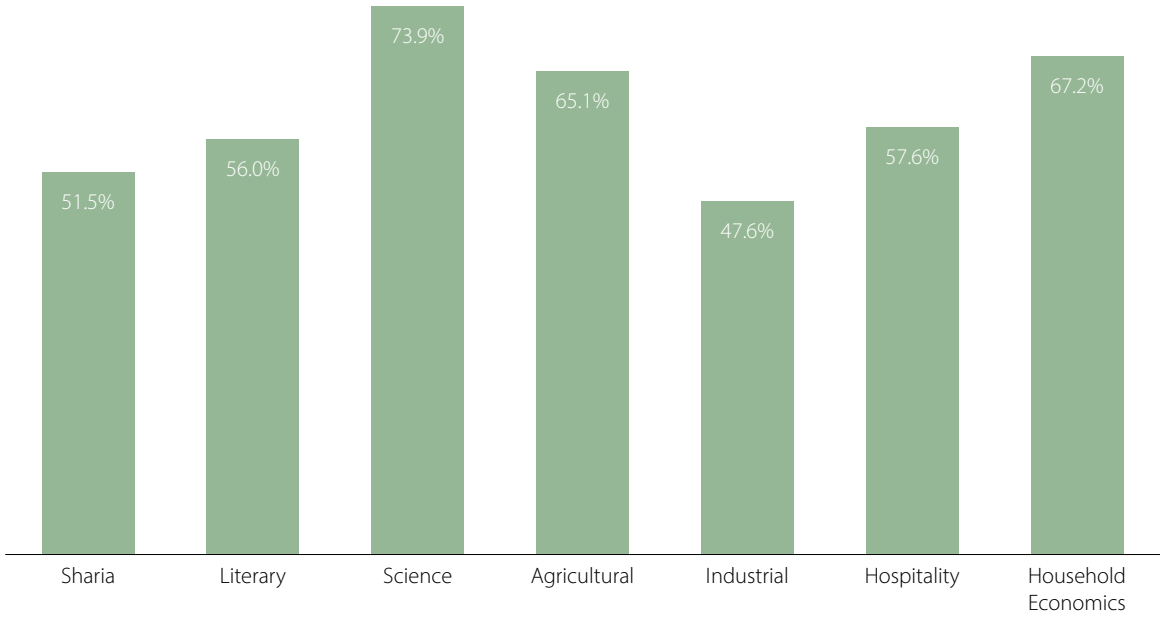
Figure 4.14. Share of passing students in the vocational stream by governorate, 2023



Source: Authors' calculation based on tawjihi data (2023).

Significant variation exists in performance in academic and vocational education across the seven subject streams (Figure 4.15). In terms of streams, the academic stream currently comprises three streams – Sharia, Literature and Science – while vocational education includes four streams – Agriculture, Industry, Hospitality and Household Economics. In 2023, the Science stream achieved the highest pass rate at 73.9%, followed by the Household Economics stream at 67.2%. The Industry stream recorded the lowest pass rate, with less than 50% of students passing the national exam. Targeted efforts are required to enhance performance, particularly in fields such as technical and vocational education and training, which holds significant potential for the development of the national labour market.

Figure 4.15. Pass rates by stream, 2023



Source: Tawjihi data (2023).

4.1.2. Key factors associated with learning outcomes

The poor learning outcomes detailed in previous sections, with low levels of achievement seen across all metrics, are an indication of severe education quality deficits across the board. This section examines the key factors that have influenced these results by analysing their association with international assessment data.

To identify the most salient factors associated with learning outcomes, a multivariate analysis[87] was employed, considering the wide range of contextual factors, resources and conditions that can have an impact on learning. This analysis dives more deeply into the quantitative assessment data detailed in previous sections by examining the more qualitative, student, teacher and school-level factors shaping the learning process, and, in this way, seeks to understand the specific influence of each factor on improving learning outcomes. Three studies are used for this analysis: the most recent TIMSS (2023), PISA (2022) and PIRLS (2021) assessments, looking firstly at the factors across the school years, followed by key salient factors at specific points in the cycle.

Key factors affecting learning across the school years

Across all school years, six key factors emerge as the most closely associated with learning outcomes, as summarized in Table 4.6:

- Student level: Student gender and socio-economic situation; access to early childhood education opportunities.
- Teacher level: Teachers' level of qualification and teaching approaches.
- School level: The school environment.

Table 4.6 summarizes the analysis, showing the level of impact of each of these factors at different points within the school cycle.

Table 4.6. Summary of key factors affecting learning outcomes at Grades 4, 8 and 10

Factors	Grade 4 students (score in reading, PIRLS 2021)	Grade 8 students (aggregated[88] score in mathematics and science, TIMSS 2023)	15-year-old student, Grade 10 (aggregated score in mathematics, reading and science, PISA 2022)
Student level			
Female student	(+++)		(+++)
Student attended kindergarten	(+++)		
Index of economic, social and cultural status	(+++)	(+++)	(+++)

87 The multivariate regression estimates standardized effects, showing the strength of the relationship between student learning outcomes and various contextual variables. It accounts for the weights assigned to each student; standard errors are clustered at the school level.

88 The aggregate score is constructed following a method described in Anderson (2008). The use of a summary index is common in educational research (Carneiro and others, 2020; Koussihouèdé, 2020) owing to several advantages over analysing individual outcomes. First, it mitigates the risk of false hypothesis rejection as more outcomes are included in its construction. Second, it captures the relationship between students' overall performance and various contextual variables. Third, it generally offers greater statistical power than individual outcome tests (O'Brien, 1984).

Factors	Grade 4 students (score in reading, PIRLS 2021)	Grade 8 students (aggregated[88] score in mathematics and science, TIMSS 2023)	15-year-old student, Grade 10 (aggregated score in mathematics, reading and science, PISA 2022)
Student has often participated in early literacy activities before school	(+++)		
Use of digital resources for more than two hours or up to three hours at school		(++)	
Teacher level			
Teacher provided incentives less than half of the time to integrate digital devices into teaching			(++)
Teacher has a master's degree or equivalent	(+)		(++)
Teachers monitored by the principal or senior staff a few times a year			(---)
Teacher continues teaching until students understand		(+++)	(++)
School level			
Public school			(---)
Parental involvement in school activities	(+++)		
Student does not feel safe at all at school			(----)

Source: Authors' calculations based on results of econometric models.

Note: (+++) Positive effect and statistically significant at 1% level; (++) positive effect and statistically significant at 5% level; (+) positive effect and statistically significant at 10% level; (---) negative effect and statistically significant at 1%; (--) negative effect and statistically significant at 5%; (-) negative effect and statistically significant at 10%.

Student level

Table 4.6 shows that kindergarten experience and early literacy experience are strongly associated with significant gains in student performance in reading for primary school students. However, data from the 2021 PIRLS assessment show that almost 21% of Jordanian Grade 4 students have not attended kindergarten and only 29% of them have often participated in early literacy activities before school. Kindergarten is also the only level of education where the share of students in public schools is lower than in the private sector, with 40.6% of kindergarten students enrolled in public institutions in 2022/2023. The implication is that expanding public pre-school provision, especially in rural areas, and the promotion of early learning activities would be a strategic measure to help to strengthen education quality at the primary level.

Teacher level

The effective use of digital resources in schools also plays a significant role in enhancing students' performance in mathematics, reading and science. However, PISA data indicate that only 10% of 15-year-old students (mainly in Grade 10) have access to digital resources at school for 2 to 3 hours per week. Furthermore, Education Management Information System (EMIS) data for 2022/2023 reveal that nearly 32% of schools lack computer labs. Motivating teachers to embrace digitalization has also been shown to improve student performance, yet PISA data for 2022 show that nearly 60% of teachers are still not receiving the necessary support or incentives to adopt these practices. This underscores the urgent need to enhance access to digital resources at lower levels of schooling and to provide adequate incentives for teachers to systematically integrate these resources into their teaching practices.

Teachers having a master's level qualification has a significant impact on learning outcomes at different levels. The data show that education quality would benefit from increasing the proportion of teachers with higher academic qualifications at all levels (discussed further in Section 4.2.2.1).

The modelling also reveals some mixed results relating to the effect of classroom practices on learning, including teachers' pedagogical approaches and pedagogical supervision. These results call for further analysis of current practices with a view to improving pedagogy and pedagogical supervision.

School level

Parental involvement in school life also seems to have a positive impact on learning outcomes. However, this result requires a deeper analysis of the underlying enabling factors promoting change, which could further inform the extension of good practices to most schools.

The "public" status of the school and high levels of pupils feeling unsafe are also associated with poor performance. There is a need for further analysis to better understand the specific factors within the public school system that have a negative impact on performance and to consider the feasibility of a "safe school" approach to improve the quality of the learning environment.

In addition to the common factors already highlighted that strongly influence learning at all ages and grades, the following section further analyses the grade-specific factors that have an impact on quality outcomes.

Factors associated with student learning outcomes at Grade 4

PIRLS data (2021) at Grade 4 indicate that kindergarten experience, early exposure to literacy activities, whether teachers have a master's degree and parental involvement in school activities are all associated with better learning outcomes. Data from the 2021 PIRLS

assessment on the reading achievement of Grade 4 students were analysed in relation to student characteristics, teaching conditions and the school environment.

The results of this analysis are presented by student, teacher and school levels.

Student level

The performance of girls and children with a high socio-economic status is higher than that of boys generally and of children from poor families. The PIRLS data indicate a gender balance at Grade 4 (nearly 51% of students are female), while just 4.5% of students, approximately, come from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

Kindergarten experience is strongly linked with reading performance in Grade 4. According to PIRLS data, only 32% of Grade 4 students attended kindergarten for two or more years. However, the analysis reveals that two years of kindergarten is associated with an increase of 0.424 standard deviation points in reading. Attending one or more years of kindergarten is thus positively associated with a good reading performance in Grade 4, with two years of kindergarten having a much stronger impact on reading, all other variables being equal.

Student age is associated with good reading performance, with an increase of 0.052 standard deviation points for each additional year of age.

Pupils who had been exposed to early literacy activities perform better, with an increase of 0.301 standard deviation points in reading. Nonetheless, only 29% of Grade 4 students had often participated in early literacy activities before starting school.

A parent with university education has a positive effect on the student's reading performance, while a parent with only lower secondary education or less is associated with a decrease in the student's reading performance. Notably, around 18% of Grade 4 students come from families where the parents have only an upper basic education level or less.

Teaching conditions

Academic training at the master's level for the teacher led to an increase of 0.158 standard deviation points in students' reading scores, with a moderate level of statistical significance. However, only 35% of Grade 4 teachers have a master's degree or higher, according to the 2021 PIRLS results.

School environment

Parental involvement in school activities, regardless of the level of involvement, seemed to have a positive effect on students' reading scores, with gains of up to 0.868 standard deviation points. It would therefore be important to analyse the extent to which best practices in parental involvement could be extended to more primary schools.

Factors associated with student learning outcomes at Grade 8

TIMSS data (2023) indicate that student performance at Grade 8 is positively influenced by socio-economic status and some teaching approaches. Grade 8 students' performances in mathematics and science in the 2023 TIMSS international assessment were analysed in relation to various student characteristics and teaching conditions to assess the factors that influence learning. To this end, three models were developed: the first for scores in mathematics, explaining 22.5% of the variability in performance; the second for scores in science, explaining 21.5% of the variability in performance; and the third for students' aggregate scores in mathematics and science, explaining 22.8% of the variability in performance.

The results of the models, presented fully in Annex 4.2 to this chapter, are detailed in the following sections.

Student level

Performance is strong among the most affluent students and those whose parents have a level of education beyond secondary school. The analysis indicates a 0.473 standard deviation point increase in aggregate mathematics and science scores, for students from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds and a 0.570 standard deviation point increase for students whose parents have post-secondary education.

Teacher level

Certain specific teaching approaches seem to have a positive effect on student performance. Notably, when the teacher explains the lesson again until the student understands, there is an increase of 0.404 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.292 in science and 0.373 in aggregate scores for both subjects. However, according to 2023 TIMSS data, almost 30% of students do not benefit from this teaching approach.

The use of digital resources at school during lessons is associated with higher performance in mathematics. For instance, using digital resources during mathematics lessons is associated with 0.278 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.266 in science and 0.272 in the aggregate scores for both subjects. However, 2023 TIMSS data show that only 17.43% of Grade 8 students have access to digital resources during mathematics lessons.

However, while more than 62% of Grade 10 mathematics teachers have a major in mathematics and no major in mathematics education, the model shows that having no major in mathematics education is associated with a drop of 0.049 standard deviation points in mathematics score.

School environment

Perhaps surprisingly, parental involvement did not appear to have a significant effect on learning in TIMSS models.

Factors associated with student learning outcomes at Grade 10

To assess the factors associated with student performance, scores in mathematics, reading and science, as well as the aggregate score across these three subjects, were analysed in relation to various personal characteristics of the students and their learning environments. The different models are detailed in Annex 4.3 to this chapter.

The first model, focused on students' mathematics scores, accounted for 25.8% of the variability in mathematics performance. The second model, addressing reading scores, explained 36.2% of the variability in reading performance. The third model accounted for 27.4% of the variability in performance in science, while the fourth model, encompassing the aggregate score across the three subjects, explained 32.9% of the variability in overall performance.

The results indicate that at the age of 15 (Grade 10) key factors associated with better learning outcomes include: the immigration/ refugee status of students, the high proportion of teachers in the school with at least a master's degree and the support given to teachers to integrate digitalization into their teaching process. Conversely, grade repetition, certain pedagogical approaches, public school status and school safety conditions seem to have a negative impact on performance, with results summarized in the following sections.

Student level

Girls outperform boys. Specifically, being female is associated with an increase of approximately 0.380 standard deviation points in reading, 0.232 standard deviation points in science and 0.216 standard deviation points in the aggregate score of the three subjects. However, no significant relationship was observed between gender and performance in mathematics. Girls make up slightly more than half (52%) of the Grade 10 student cohort.

Immigrant status was found to be significantly associated with higher performance across all subjects. While nearly 12% of Grade 10 students were reported to be immigrants, immigrant status is correlated with increases of 0.264 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.323 in reading, 0.254 in science and 0.300 in the aggregate score.

Students' socio-economic and cultural status was positively correlated with positive performance in all subjects with 0.144 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.198 in reading and 0.161 in science.

Grade repetition had a substantial negative impact on academic performance. Repeating a grade at least once resulted in decreases of approximately 0.700 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.837 in reading, 0.701 in science and 0.800 in all three subjects. Furthermore, 2022 PISA data indicate that approximately 12.6% of 15-year-old Jordanian students have repeated a grade at least once, highlighting the need for strategies to reduce grade repetition within the education system to improve learning outcomes.

The availability of books at home, regardless of quantity, is associated with better performance in several subjects. While 73% of Grade 10 students have fewer than 25 books at home, the model shows that having more than 25 books at home leads to an increase of 0.261 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.210 in reading, 0.194 in science and 0.241 standard deviation points in total score.

Having a mother with at least tertiary education was linked to better performance in mathematics and science. According to 2022 PISA data, nearly 68% of Grade 10 students have a mother with tertiary education, a strikingly high proportion.

Teaching level

An increase of one standard deviation point in the proportion of teachers with master's degrees is associated with an increase of 0.117 standard deviation points in pupils' scores in mathematics, 0.085 points in science and 0.091 points in the aggregate score. However, in Jordan, almost 10% of teachers teaching 15-year-olds students (Grade 10) do not have a master's degree.

Teachers' motivation to integrate digitalization has a positive impact on student performance, with an increase of 0.202 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.144 in reading, 0.179 in science and 0.184 on the overall score. Nonetheless, nearly one-fifth (19%) of teachers have reported that they have never, or almost never, been offered incentives to integrate digital devices into their teaching.

The pedagogical supervision of teachers by a school director or pedagogical staff, from which almost 98% of teachers benefit, is associated with a drop in performance of 0.382 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.284 in reading, 0.534 in science and 0.431 on the aggregate score.

Certain pedagogical approaches used by teachers also appear to be negatively associated with pupils' performances in different subjects, especially the organization by schools of one-day training sessions for mathematics teachers, and when teachers of Grade 10 students continue to teach until lessons are understood. This can raise questions about the quality of the pedagogical approaches used by teachers.

The overuse of digital resources before and after school is associated with lower performance. Specifically, while 1.2% of 15-year-olds reported engaging with digital resources for a number of hours before and after school, using digital resources for six or more hours before and after school resulted in a decline of 0.454 standard deviation points in reading, 0.352 in science and 0.344 in the aggregate score. These findings raise concerns about the content and relevance of the digital resources that students engage with outside the school environment.

School environment

Public schools are associated with a drop in performance of 0.529 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.450 in reading, 0.440 in science and 0.494 on the overall score, compared to private schools.

An increase of 1 standard deviation point in the school safety index is associated with a drop in performance of 0.527 standard deviation points in mathematics, 0.449 in reading, 0.438 in science and 0.492 on the aggregate score.

4.1.3. Additional input and process factors associated with learning outcomes

In addition to the key factors analysed in previous sections, which have been identified as particularly salient in association with data on learning outcomes, other contributory factors relating to the quality of inputs and processes can also affect learning. Specifically, this section analyses how the availability of learning facilities at school, the pupil-to-teacher ratio, instructional time and practices, and student well-being may be affecting learning.

Learning facilities

Data on learning facilities have been analysed from three sources: EMIS; the 2023 Facility Audit; and the Policy Guidance Report (2023–2024). The latter two reports provide a comprehensive evaluation of school infrastructure and facilities across Jordan, highlighting critical gaps and systemic challenges that have an impact on the quality of education[89] (United States Agency for International Development, 2023). These datasets are analysed in subsequent paragraphs.

Many schools lack facilities that enrich learning, such as libraries and computer and science laboratories, though provision varies between school levels, with secondary schools the best equipped (Table 4.7). EMIS data show, for example, that only 2.5% of secondary schools lack a computer laboratory, compared to 31.8% at the primary level and nearly 90% at the **kindergarten** level.

Table 4.7. Variability of learning facilities across levels, 2023

Facilities	Kindergarten		Primary (with or without kindergarten)		Secondary (with or without primary and kindergarten)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
School with no assembly hall	1,687	92.1	3,289	85.0	1,194	66.1
School with no library	1,671	91.2	2,249	58.1	305	16.9
School with no science laboratory	1,711	93.4	2,539	65.1		36.1
School with no computer laboratory	1,648	90.0	1,231	31.8	46	2.6

Source: Authors' calculations based on 2022/2023 Education Management Information System data.

Regarding science laboratories, most secondary schools have this provision, while the situation is reversed for primary schools. A total of 36% of secondary schools lack science laboratories to support practical science learning (2022/2023 data). At the primary level, however, almost 65% of primary schools lack these facilities, despite a curriculum requirement to provide hands-on learning in science from Year 8. This creates a significant gap in opportunities for practical experience and fulfilment of the curriculum content at this level.

Similarly, libraries are present in most secondary schools, but are lacking at the primary level. While secondary schools are mostly equipped with libraries, although they are nevertheless lacking in 17% of schools at this level. At the primary level, over half of schools (58%) lack a library, rising to 91% at the **kindergarten** level.

Most schools do not have an assembly hall. The percentage of schools without an assembly hall varies from 66% at the secondary level to 85% at the primary level, reaching 92% at the **kindergarten** level.

89 The Facility Audit assessed 3,557 schools nationwide, utilizing Open Data Kit technology and over 200 tablets for real-time data collection, enabling detailed evaluations of school conditions, including water, sanitation, digital infrastructure and physical safety. The Policy Guidance Report complements these findings, focused on 503 schools across the northern, central and southern regions of Jordan, providing insights into disparities in resource distribution and access to basic utilities. While the Facility Audit provides robust numerical data, the Policy Guidance Report relies heavily on qualitative assessments and lacks detailed quantitative insights for many dimensions (United States Agency for International Development, 2023).

The Facility Audit and the Policy Guidance Report

The Facility Audit identified severe shortcomings in water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Of the 7,077 indoor washrooms observed, 16% required maintenance, 3% were deemed irreparable and 5% lacked proper ventilation. Accessibility remains a significant issue, with 90% of washrooms unsuitable for individuals with disabilities, while 73% lacked hot water during winter. External drinking water fountains were absent in 33% of schools, with 22% requiring maintenance. Additionally, 147 schools (4%) lacked electricity metres and 3% faced insufficient power supply. Such inadequacies hinder both learning and administrative functions.[90]

The Audit also revealed pressing safety and sustainability concerns in physical infrastructure. Those include cracked walls in 25% of schools, inadequate emergency exits in 76% and poorly functioning solar panels in 13% of installations. Overcrowded classrooms, particularly in urban areas, exacerbate these challenges by placing strain on existing resources. Libraries, laboratories and classrooms were often inadequate or poorly maintained, limiting opportunities for experiential and research-based learning, as mentioned in previous sections.

Both the Audit and the Policy Guidance Report highlight that rural schools face pronounced deficiencies in basic utilities and learning spaces compared to urban counterparts. The central region shows a higher proportion of "flags"[91] relative to its share of schools, indicating a potential concentration of issues. In contrast, the northern and southern regions have fewer flags compared to their percentages of school, suggesting fewer concerns (**Table 4.8**).

Table 4.8. Proportion of infrastructure-related issues by region in 2023

Region	% of schools	% of students	% of flags
North	38	35	28
Central	42	52	59
South	20	13	13
Grand total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Adapted from the Facility Audit Report (United States Agency for International Development, 2023).

Access to information and communications technologies (ICT) is widespread, but integration remains uneven, especially in primary schools. In terms of ICT infrastructure, 95% of schools have internet connections, but of these, 8% reported slow and unreliable connectivity (United States Agency for International Development, 2023). As for the integration of digital tools into teaching, emphasized as a critical policy objective, utilization remains highly uneven, with only 30–40% of schools demonstrating strong ICT use, while 60–75% struggle with weak integration owing to limited access to equipment and inadequate teacher training. This issue is particularly acute in primary and mixed schools, where digital resources are less available.

90 The analysis could not be disaggregated by school level and type of school owing to the absence of the required data in the Education Management Information System dataset provided.

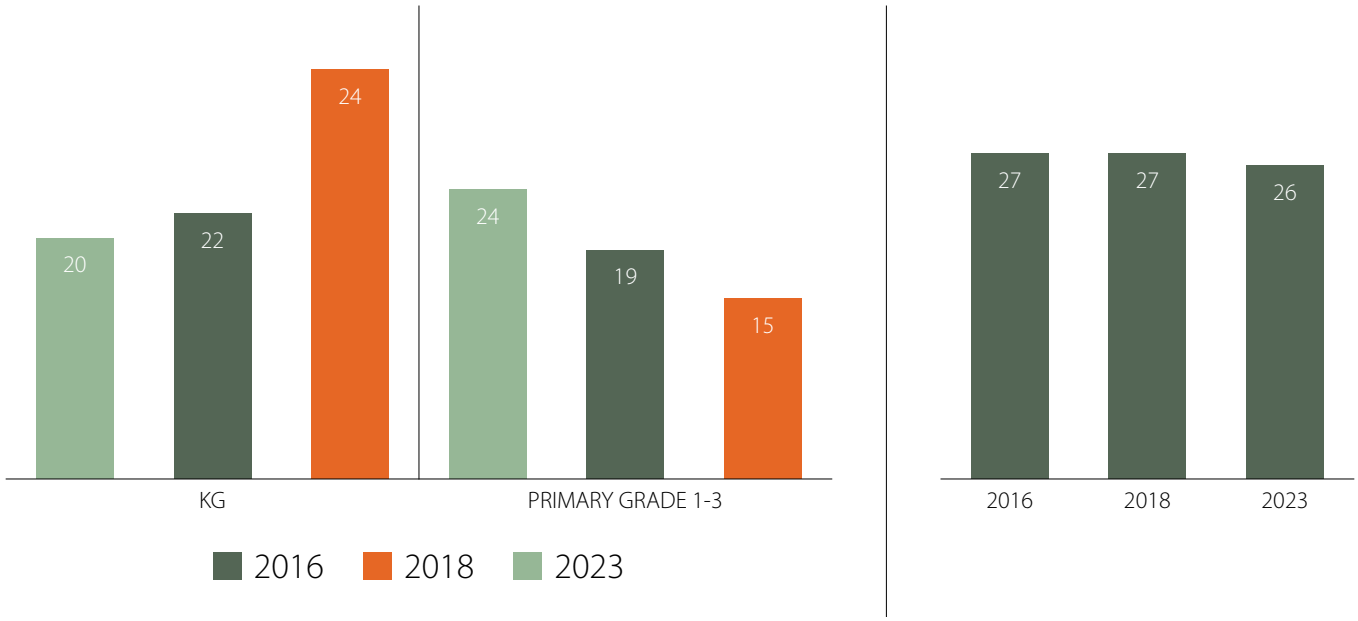
91 Flags represent assessed risk levels tied to facility issues, ranging from critical, immediate concerns (red flags) to lower-priority maintenance needs (green flags)

Pupil-to-teacher ratio and class size

To assess teaching and learning conditions in the classroom, this section contains analysis of the pupil-to-teacher ratio (PTR) at both the national and governorate levels, and class sizes at the national level. For this analysis, PTRs are calculated specifically for kindergarten and primary Grades 1 to 3, as these grades typically have a single main teacher assigned to each class.[92] Class sizes are calculated for the same school grades for comparison purposes.

Overall, teacher conditions are generally favourable, characterized by low PTRs and small class sizes. The pupil-to-teacher ratio in public schools is moderate but has increased significantly in kindergartens in previous years, while it has decreased at the primary level. As shown in **Figure 4.16**, the ratio in public kindergartens increased from 20 to 34 between 2016 and 2023. In contrast, the first grades (1–3) at public primary schools experienced the opposite trend, with the ratio decreasing from 24 to 15 during the same period. Class size has remained relatively stable over time, settling at an average of 26 in 2023.[93]

Figure 4.16. Pupil-to-teacher ratio in kindergarten and primary Grades 1-3 (left) and class size in primary Grades 1-3 (right) in public schools over time



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Education Management Information System and teacher database.

However, there are substantial disparities across school types and governorates. In 2023, the ratio in public kindergartens is lower at 35, compared to 50 in private kindergartens. However, in the first three grades of primary education, the ratio in public schools is higher, at 15, whereas in private schools it is just 10.

Among the governorates, Mafraq, Zarqa, Irbid and Aqaba have the highest PTR at the kindergarten level, above the national average of 34, while Ajiloun has the lowest PTR. In primary Grades 1 to 3, Zarqa reports the highest PTR, followed by Amman, Aqaba, Balqa and Irbid. All these governorates exhibit PTRs above the national average of 15 **(Figures 4.17 and 4.18).**

92 To calculate pupil-to-teacher ratios and class sizes for higher grades, typically starting from Grade 4 when subject teachers are assigned in Jordan, the number of pedagogical groups would have been required. Unfortunately, these data were unavailable.

93 In Grades 1–3, a single teacher typically covers all subjects, except for English, which is taught by a specialized teacher. Additionally, substitute teachers may be included in pupil-to-teacher ratios. These factors help to explain the differences between class size and pupil-to-teacher ratios, even at this level of education.

Regarding location, PTRs in rural areas vary by education level. In kindergartens, the average PTR in rural areas is 32, which is lower than in urban areas. In primary education (Grades 1-3), however, the average PTR in rural areas is 19, which is higher than the average PTR of 13 in urban areas in 2023.

Figure 4.17. Kindergarten pupil-to-teacher ratio by governorate, 2023

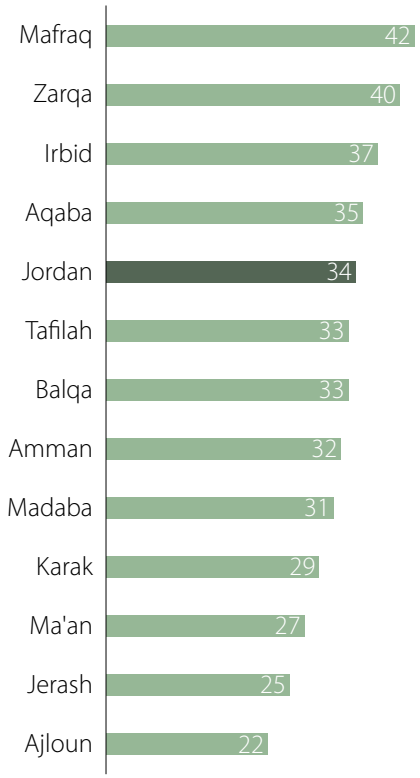
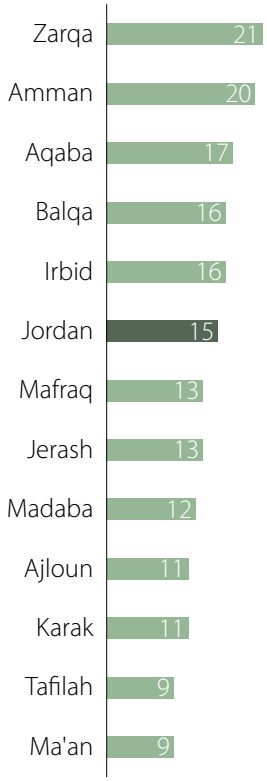


Figure 4.18. Primary Grade 1 to 3 pupil-to-teacher ratio by governorate, 2023



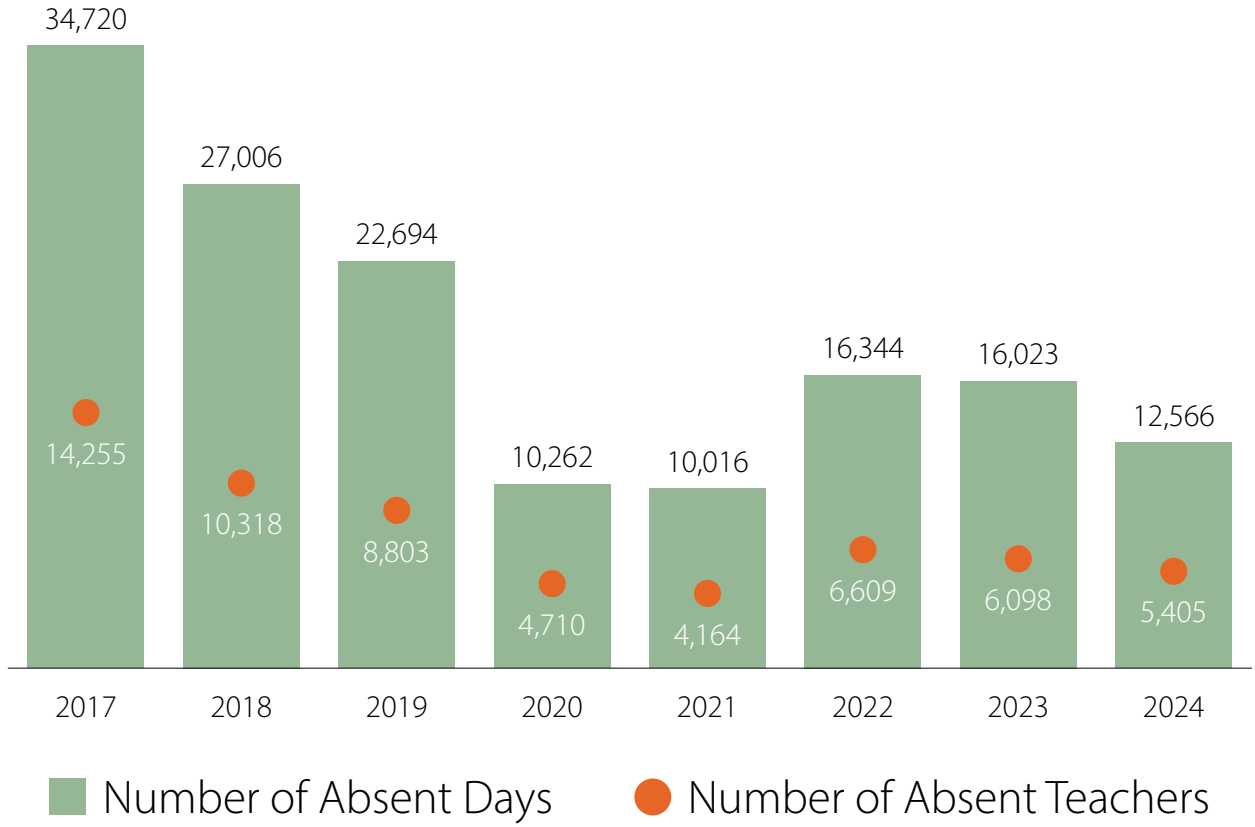
Source: Authors' calculations based on 2023 Education Management Information System data.

Teacher and student absenteeism

Teacher and student absenteeism, coupled with reduced instructional time in double-shift schools, present significant challenges to the effective delivery of quality education in Jordan. While there is no direct evidence linking reduced instructional time to student learning outcomes in the country, it is reasonable to assume that these factors disrupt lesson continuity, limit student engagement and prevent teachers from covering the whole curriculum, which together are likely to have an adverse impact on educational quality, particularly in underserved areas.

Teacher absenteeism has decreased over the years, but it remains a challenge to quality education. MoE data on teacher absenteeism show a sharp decline in absenteeism from 2017 to 2020, with the number of absent teachers decreasing steeply from over 14,000 to around 2,000, and the total days of absence dropping from approximately 38,000 to under 5,000 per year nationwide. This improvement coincided with the introduction of a fingerprint attendance monitoring system during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was aimed at enforcing stricter accountability. However, teacher absenteeism resurged from 2021 onward, peaking in 2022 with over 6,000 teachers having been absent for a total of 16,344 days, but with a further decrease after 2022 (**Figure 4.19**).

Figure 4.19. Teacher absence, 2017-2024



Source: Absence statistics for all teachers (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Student absenteeism further compounds this issue. While OECD data (2018) on youth well-being are somewhat outdated, they show that almost half of Jordanian students (43.4%) reported skipping at least one day of school without authorization in the previous two weeks, which is almost triple the OECD average of 14.5% (OECD Development Centre, 2018). However, the national School Feeding Programme had led to a reduction in student absenteeism. A recent study[94] found that the average number of days of absence decreased by about one school day in so-called "healthy-meal schools" in the academic year 2022/2023 compared to schools receiving the date-bar model. The study highlighted that, in the academic year 2022/2023, students in healthy-meal schools appear to be absent, on average, on one school day fewer than students in schools receiving date bars. In "date-bar schools", students are absent on approximately seven days during the school year, but in healthy-meal schools, students are absent on approximately six days per school year (Heirman and others, 2024).

Demographic pressures have led to a double-shift school system, which results in a reduction of instructional time.[95] Demographic pressures, particularly the large influx of refugees, have led to the widespread adoption of double-shift schooling, mainly at the basic education level (Grades 1–10). In the 2022/2023 school year, 22.3% of MoE schools operated two shifts, including 17.5% at the basic level, compared to 18.7% in 2016/2017 (15.8% at the basic level). While helping to expand access, the double-shift system entails reduced instructional time for both shifts, further straining the system's capacity to deliver quality education. In addition, a survey[96] conducted in 2020 revealed that teachers spend an average of 58% of class time on teaching and learning compared to the OECD figure of 78% (Ghawi and AlQbeilat, 2020).

94 Heirman, Jonas, and others (2024). Impact evaluation of the School Meal Programme in Jordan. Rome: World Food Programme.
95 Ministry of Education (2018). Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022. Amman, p. 7
96 Ghawi, Ghalia, and Najwa AlQbeilat (2020). Jordan's Teachers in a Global Landscape. Amman: Ministry of Education and Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development.

Student well-being

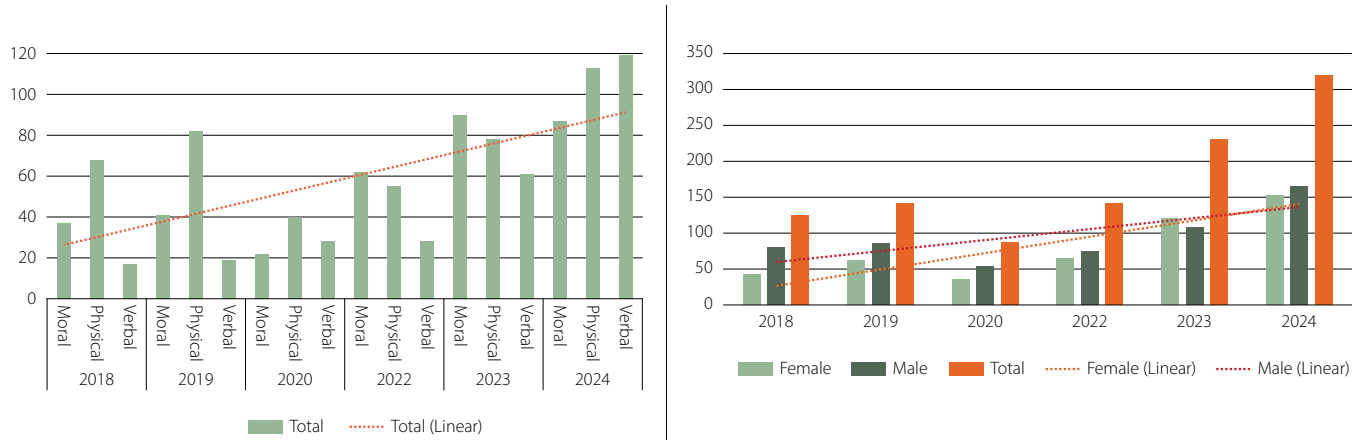
Ensuring student well-being is a critical aspect of fostering a supportive and effective educational environment, yet schools in Jordan face significant challenges in this regard.

The prevalence and reporting of school violence significantly increased between 2018 and 2024, with notable gender differences and shifts in the types of violence experienced. Based on annual MoE reports on student abuse and school violence, the incidence of violence in schools, encompassing physical, emotional and verbal abuse, experienced a notable increase between 2018 and 2024, as reflected in reported cases. While the number of reports initially decreased between 2018 and 2020, it subsequently surged, more than doubling from 120 in 2018 to 321 in 2024, a 2.6-fold increase. At this point, it is unclear whether the increase is owing to a rise in the actual number of cases, to better, safer reporting systems, or to some combination of both.

Boys consistently reported higher levels of violence than girls throughout this period, although the gap has now narrowed owing to a significant rise in reports from girls. Cases of reported violence more than tripled among girls (a 3.7-fold increase), compared to a 2.1-fold increase for boys. Furthermore, boys were more likely to experience physical violence, whereas girls faced higher levels of emotional and verbal violence, highlighting distinct patterns in the types of violence experienced by each gender (**Figure 4.20**).

Additionally, according to a 2021 study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),[97] 5.7% of children aged 8 to 17 years reported experiencing psychological violence from teachers, a figure that rises to 12.7% among refugee students in Syrian camps. For the latter group, threats of failure or grade deductions were the most common form of psychological violence, affecting 21% of respondents (UNICEF, 2021). Furthermore, the latest Demographic and Health Survey shows that 74.6% of children aged 10-14 years experienced psychological aggression in the month preceding the survey.[98]

Figure 4.20. Annual number of violence reports by type (left) and by gender (right)



Source: Authors' calculations based on reports on student abuse and school violence (Ministry of Education, 2024)

97 United Nations Children's Fund, National Study on Violence Against Children in Jordan, 2019–2020 (Amman, 2021).
98 Jordan, Department of Statistics, and Inner City Fund (ICF), Jordan Population and Family and Health Survey 2023 (Amman and Rockville, Maryland, 2024).

Safety concerns in and around school are also significant. OECD data, collected through the PISA survey,[99] show that, in 2022, 12% of students aged 15 years reported not feeling safe on their way to school, compared to an OECD average of 8%. Similarly, 11% of students reported feeling unsafe in their classrooms (OECD average: 7%) and 21% expressed concerns about safety in other school areas, such as hallways, cafeterias or restrooms, more than double the OECD average of 10%. Bullying is another pressing issue, with 25% of girls and 37% of boys reporting being victims of acts of bullying at least a few times a month. These rates are significantly higher than the OECD averages of 20% for girls and 21% for boys (OECD, 2023).

The combined prevalence of physical, mental and verbal violence and safety concerns paints a concerning picture of student well-being in Jordanian schools. These challenges not only affect students' emotional and physical safety but can also have long-term consequences for their academic engagement and success in life.

4.2. Teacher Management

Teachers, collectively, are the education system's most valuable resource. According to the Teacher Policy Development Guide (UNESCO and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2019) "teachers are the single biggest in-school influence on student achievement", and "teacher effectiveness is the most important school-based predictor of student learning", often playing its most important role in overcoming the learning deficits of disadvantaged students". At the same time, teachers represent the largest investment in the education system, with salaries accounting for the largest share of the education budget. It follows, therefore, that effective teacher management is an essential component of educational planning that directly influences both the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system as a whole (OECD, 2005; World Bank, 2023).

Jordan recognizes the pivotal role of teachers as a key lever for enhancing the overall quality of education. In recent years, MoE has prioritized improving teacher recruitment, training and career development pathways. The Ministry's first Education Strategic Plan 2018–2025 places teacher management at the centre of its reform agenda under Domain 5: Human Resources, with the overarching goal of providing, developing, and sustaining qualified human resources for the education system. Similarly, the Economic Modernization Vision of Jordan underscores the pivotal role of qualified, well-trained teachers in equipping students with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for lifelong learning. Moreover, ensuring a well-qualified and highly trained teaching workforce is seen as essential not only for achieving quality education, but also for advancing the nation's vision of a "smarter Jordan", ultimately serving as a driver of long-term national growth.

These initiatives reflect the commitment of MoE to elevating the status of the teaching profession and aligning teacher management policies with the broader goal of improving education quality.

Teacher management encompasses the policies, processes and practices governing the recruitment, deployment, training, professional development, evaluation and retention of teachers. Effective teacher management ensures that all schools are staffed with the right amount of qualified, motivated and well-supported educators, directly influencing the quality of teaching and learning outcomes. It also plays a crucial role in addressing equity issues, ensuring that all students, regardless of their location or background, have access to skilled teachers.

This section takes note of the key role teachers play in delivering quality education for students and

99 The Programme for International Student Assessment survey assesses various dimensions of safety as perceived by students, including safety on the way to school, in classrooms and in other school areas, as well as incidents of bullying.

examines key aspects of teacher management in Jordan, starting with an overview of the teaching workforce, followed by an analysis of teacher qualifications, recruitment dynamics and deployment challenges. It also explores issues related to teacher training, professional development and career pathways, highlighting pressing concerns around teacher retention, satisfaction and supervision. Finally, the section considers how issues of teacher well-being affect the quality of teaching and learning.

4.2.1. Overview of the teaching workforce

While the majority of teachers are MoE staff, with women particularly overrepresented at the lower grades, contract teachers also make up a sizeable proportion of the total cohort, especially for early grades. With an expanding school population, about one-fifth of teachers are working in double-shift schools, increasing access, but compromising quality.

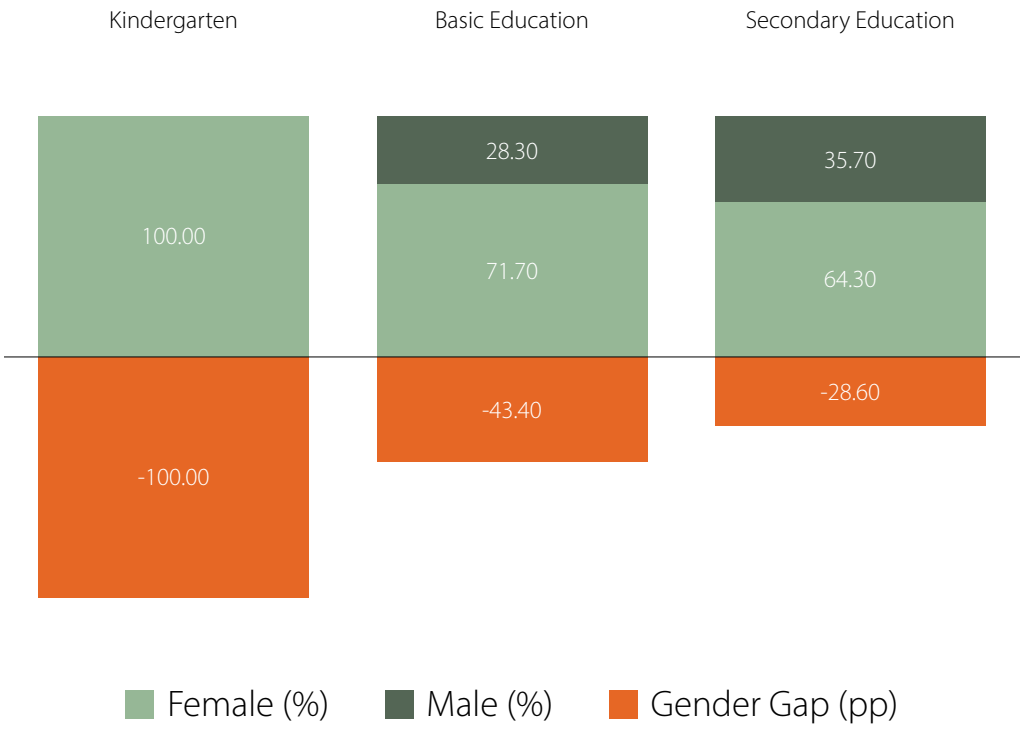
Most teachers work in public schools as permanent staff. In 2022/2023, a total of 145,393 teachers were registered in Jordan, compared to 121,018 in 2016/2017, with two-thirds employed by MoE as permanent teachers (these numbers exclude contract teachers). At the same time, private schools play a significant role, employing 29.5% of the overall teaching workforce in 2022/2023, a share that has been largely constant since 2016/2017. The other teacher categories are less populated in comparison: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which operates schools for Palestinian refugees, employs 2.9% of the teaching workforce (3.6% in 2016/2017), while "Other government entities" represent 1.4%, likely catering to niche or specialized education services (2.2% in 2016/2017) (**Table 4.9**).

Although most teachers are still deployed in basic education, their share has considerably decreased over time, while maintaining PTRs, to meet the rise in enrolment in secondary education. Just over half (51.2%) of teachers were allocated to the basic education level in 2022/2023 (Grades 1 to 10), compared to 78.8% in 2016/2017. In contrast, the share of teachers working at the secondary level has nearly tripled to 44.4% from 15.6% in 2016/2017. Meanwhile, the share of teachers at the kindergarten level has slightly decreased to 4.4% in 2022/2023 from 5.6% in 2016/2017, as seen in **Table 4.9**.

The teaching workforce of Jordan is predominantly female; however, the share of female teachers decreases as one moves up the education ladder. At the kindergarten level, all teachers are female. This proportion declines at higher grade levels, but women still accounted for nearly two-thirds of the workforce (64.3%) at the secondary level in 2022/2023. While women can teach in boys' schools (less than 1% at all levels), male teachers are grouped together in boys' schools. Overall, female teachers largely dominate in mixed schools (97.8% and 90.4% respectively at the basic and secondary levels). This distribution reflects cultural norms that view teaching as a predominantly female profession (Bengtsson and others, 2021; Qarmout and others, 2020), resulting in a significant gender imbalance disadvantaging male teachers (**Figure 4.21**). The 2018 National Teacher Survey on principals shows that female principals accounted for more than 60% of all principals in Jordanian schools (67% and 55% at the primary and secondary levels respectively), making the Jordanian education system one of the most progressive of middle-income countries (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2024), although these results must be nuanced owing to the gender-segregated nature of schools, which involving all female or all male staff in schools, resulting in a prevalence of female staff overall owing to a shortage of male staff.[100]

100 At the time of writing of this report, the Ministry of Education Gender Division is finalizing the report of the medium-term review of the Gender Equality Action Plan, which stems from the Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education, developed to accompany the Education Strategic Plan 2018–2025. The report is expected to provide further insights into gender dynamics in the education sector, including teacher management. The findings presented in this document are based on the Executive Summary, which had been published at the time of writing.

Figure 4.21. Breakdown of teachers by gender and education level (2022)



Source: Education Management Information System (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Table 4.9. Overview of the teaching workforce in the 2016/2017 and 2022/2023 school years

		2016/2017			2022/2023		
		Number	% of total	% female	Number	% of total	% female
Authority type	Ministry of Education (permanent teachers only)	79,079	65.3	62.7	96,228	66.2	62.8
	Private education	34,829	28.8	90.6	42,866	29.5	89.2
	UNRWA	4,392	3.6	51.0	4,269	2.9	51.5
	Other government entities	2,718	2.2	13.4	2,030	1.4	17.2
Education level	Kindergarten	6,817	5.6	97.0	6,469	4.4	100.0
	Basic	95,326	78.8	68.9	74,375	51.2	71.7
	Secondary - academic	16,935	14.0	61.6	n.a	n.a	n.a
	Secondary - vocational	1,940	1.6	51.6	n.a	n.a	n.a
	Secondary - total	18,875	15.6	60.6	64,549	44.4	64.3
Shift type	One shift	106,047	87.6	n.a	116,674	80.2	70.9
	Two shifts	14,971	12.4	n.a	28,719	19.8	64.6
		121,018			**145,393**		

Source: Education Management Information System (Ministry of Education, 2024).

To accommodate the influx of Syrian refugees, the share of teachers working in double-shift schools has significantly increased. In 2022/2023, nearly one in five teachers (19.8%) were employed in schools operating double shifts, compared to 12.4% in 2016/2017. This trend reflects the rise in the number of double-shift schools, established to meet the growing demand for schooling among refugee children. Specifically, 6,347 teachers employed by MoE, representing 6.6% of all MoE teachers, taught refugees either in camp schools or evening shifts. Additionally, 5,955 contract teachers were hired to support refugee education in these settings. Altogether, a total of 12,302 teachers were deployed to teach Syrian refugees in 2023/2024 (**Table 4.10**).

Table 4.10. Teachers involved in Syrian refugee education in 2023 and 2024

	Camp schools	Evening shifts for Syrian refugees	Total
Permanent teachers (2023)	1,609	4,738	6,347
Contract teachers (2024)	1,443	4,512	5,955

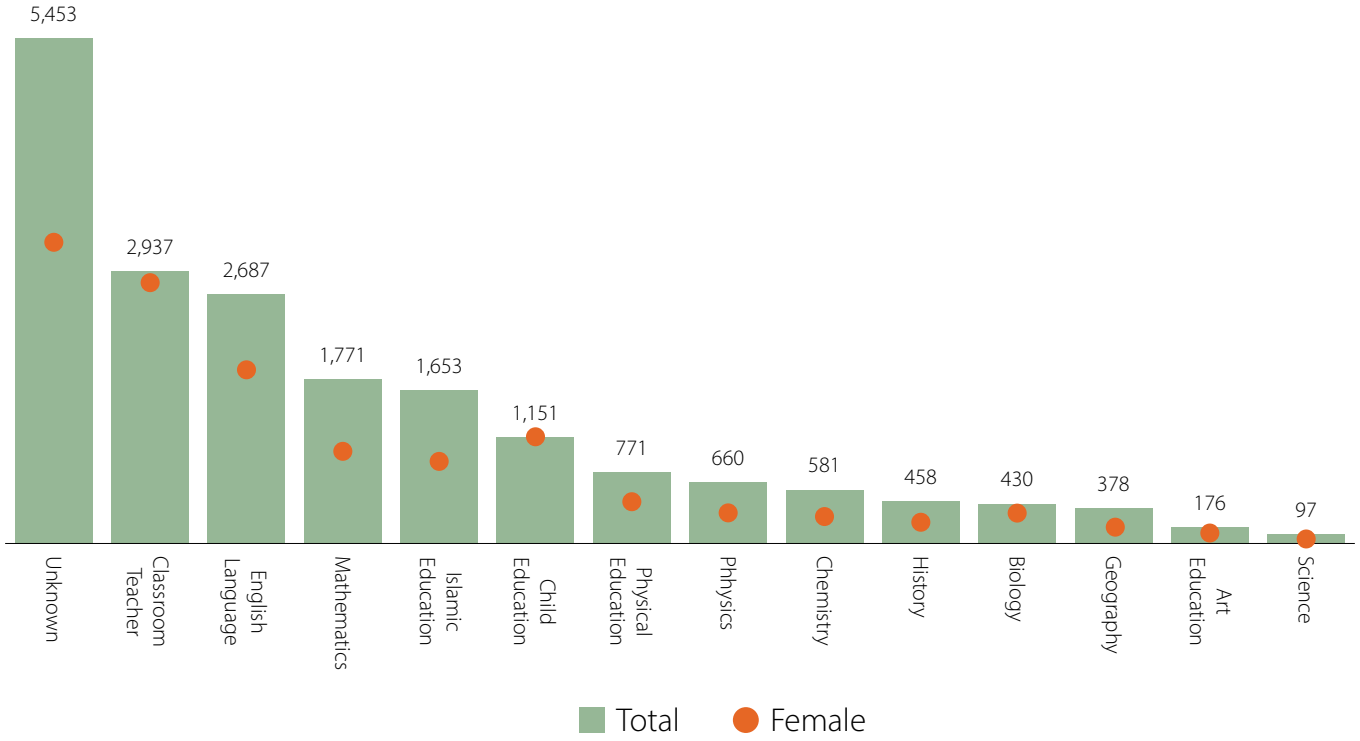
Source: Education Management Information System (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Note: The most recent Education Management Information System data for teachers are for the school year 2022/2023, while data on contract teachers were provided only for the school year 2023/2024.

Contract teachers play an important role in MoE efforts to address staffing gaps in public schools, owing to the annual cap imposed on teacher recruitment by the Ministry of Finance. In 2024, 19,203 contract teachers, representing 17.6% of the MoE teaching workforce, were deployed in public schools. Although contract teachers are required to hold a bachelor's degree and are as qualified as their permanent counterparts, they work under more precarious conditions, facing lower salaries, fewer benefits and fixed-term contracts. These conditions may be demotivating and contribute to higher turnover rates among contract teachers, undermining workforce stability and therefore education quality.

Contract teachers are particularly concentrated in the early grades (Grades 1-3), a critical time for the building of foundational skills, when quality teaching is crucial, as well as in high-demand subjects such as English, mathematics and Islamic education (Figure 4.22). Nearly one-third (6,282) are deployed in high-demand areas, including double-shift schools and schools in refugee camps serving Syrian refugees, as seen in previous sections, where the need for teachers is most acute. In addition, women hold nearly 70% of these contract positions, reflecting the gendered dynamics within the education sector in Jordan.

Figure 4.22. Number of contract teachers by specialization in public schools (2024)



Source: Authors' calculation based on additional education data (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Note: The specialization of 5,453 teachers was unknown in 2024.

4.2.2. Teacher qualifications, recruitment and deployment

Teacher qualifications ensure that educators possess the necessary academic background, certifications and subject-specific expertise to deliver quality instruction. Recruitment is focused on attracting and selecting teachers who are well-suited to meeting the diverse needs of students, while effective deployment ensures that teachers are optimally allocated to schools. Addressing these areas effectively is key to ensuring that every student has access to qualified, competent teachers, which in turn leads to better learning outcomes.

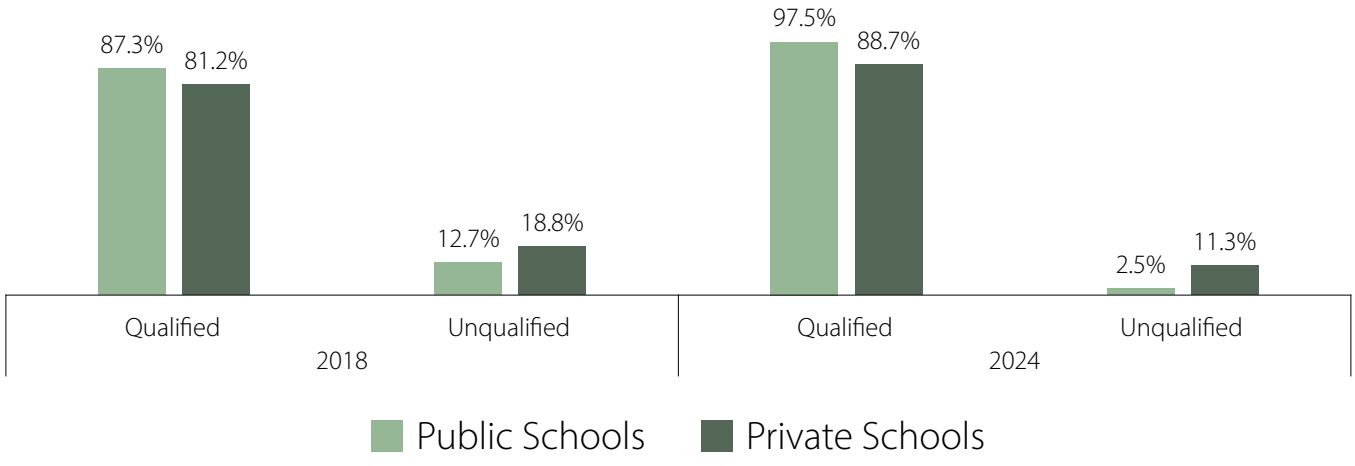
Teacher qualifications

In Jordan, teacher qualifications are linked to the education level they teach. For kindergarten and Grades 1 to 3, a bachelor's degree in education is required, while teachers of Grades 4–12 must hold a bachelor's degree in their respective subject area. Participation in a pre-service teacher education programme is not yet a requirement (see Section 5.3.1).

The share of teachers with at least a bachelor's degree is high and rising, but a significant proportion of kindergarten and Grade 1–3 teachers lack a bachelor's degree in an education-related field. In 2024, approximately 9 in 10 teachers overall, across all education levels and in both public and private schools, held at least a bachelor's degree. This marks a positive trend, with the share increasing by 10.2 percentage points in public schools and 4.5 percentage points in private schools between 2018 and 2024 (**Figure 4.23**). However, gaps persist in meeting qualification standards, particularly at the kindergarten and Grade 1–3 levels. In public

schools, 75.6% of kindergarten teachers and 63% of Grade 1–3 teachers hold a degree in an education-related field (educational science, teacher preparation, classroom teaching, etc.) while the figures are even lower in private schools, at 52.4% and 49.6%, respectively (**Figure 4.23**).

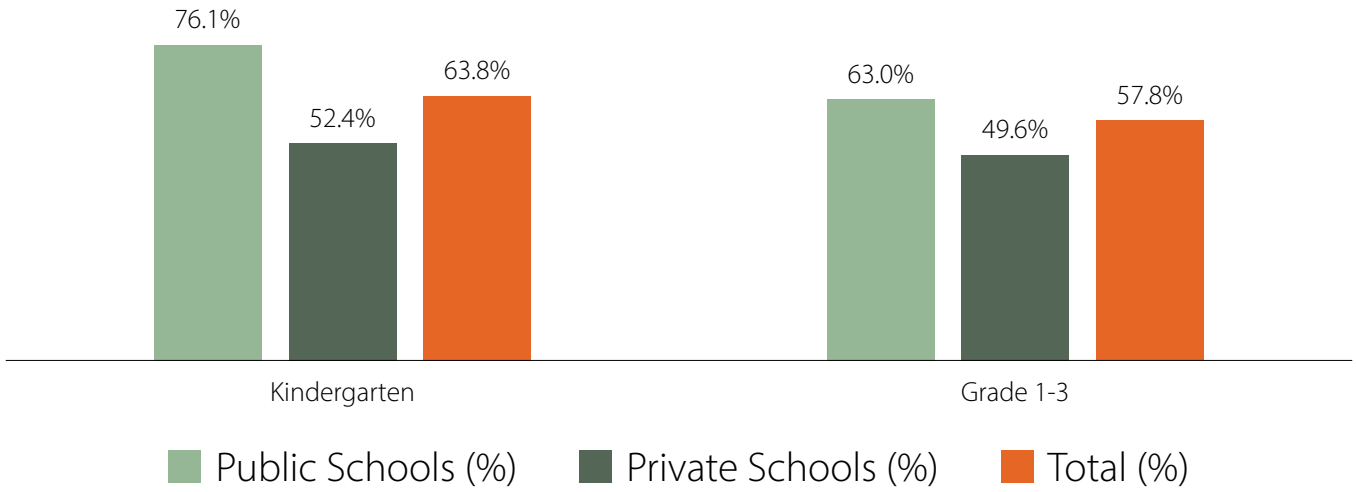
Figure 4.23. Teacher qualification by school type in 2018 and 2024



Sources: National Teacher Survey-Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development for 2018 and Ministry of Education for 2024

Note: Qualified teachers correspond to those with at least a bachelor's degree (bachelor's, higher diploma, master's degree and PhD). Unqualified teachers have less than a bachelor's degree (community college degree, tawjihi or less).

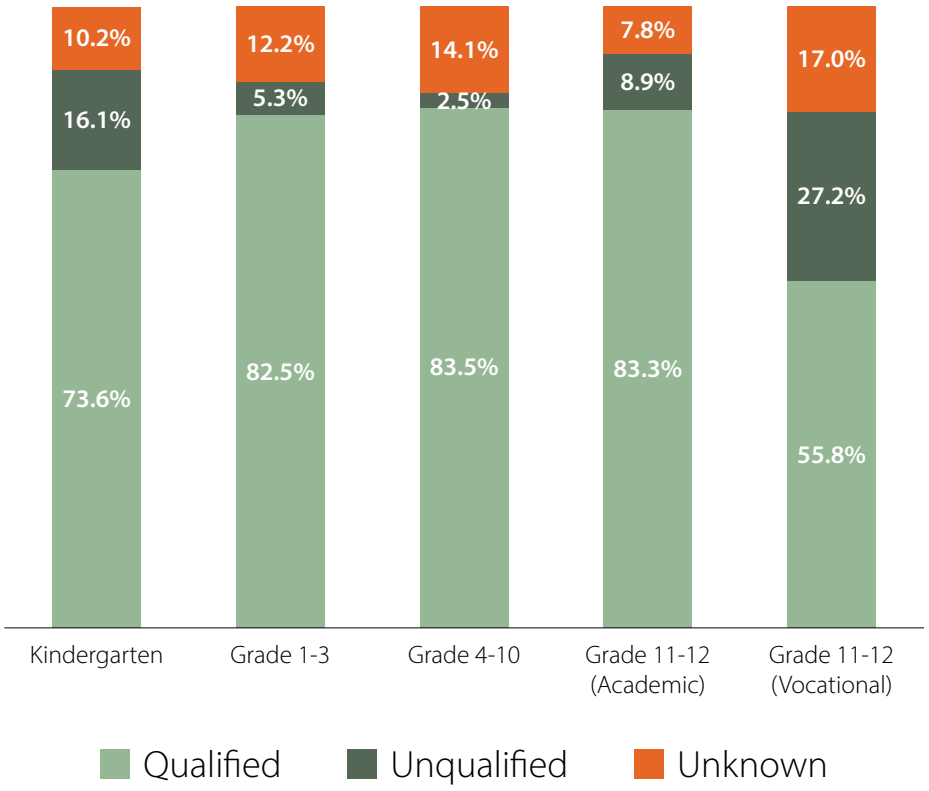
Figure 4.24. Qualified kindergarten and Grade 1-3 teachers by school type in 2024



Source: Authors' calculations based on teacher database (Ministry of Education, 2024).

The proportion of teachers with at least a bachelor's degree increases with the level of education. At the kindergarten level, nearly three-quarters (73.6%) of teachers hold a bachelor's degree across both public and private schools. This figure rises to 83% for teachers of Grades 4–10 and Grades 11 and 12 in the academic stream, but drops to 55.8% for those teaching in the vocational stream (**Figure 4.25**) (see Chapter 7 on technical and vocational education and training).

Figure 4.25. Teacher qualification by education level in 2024

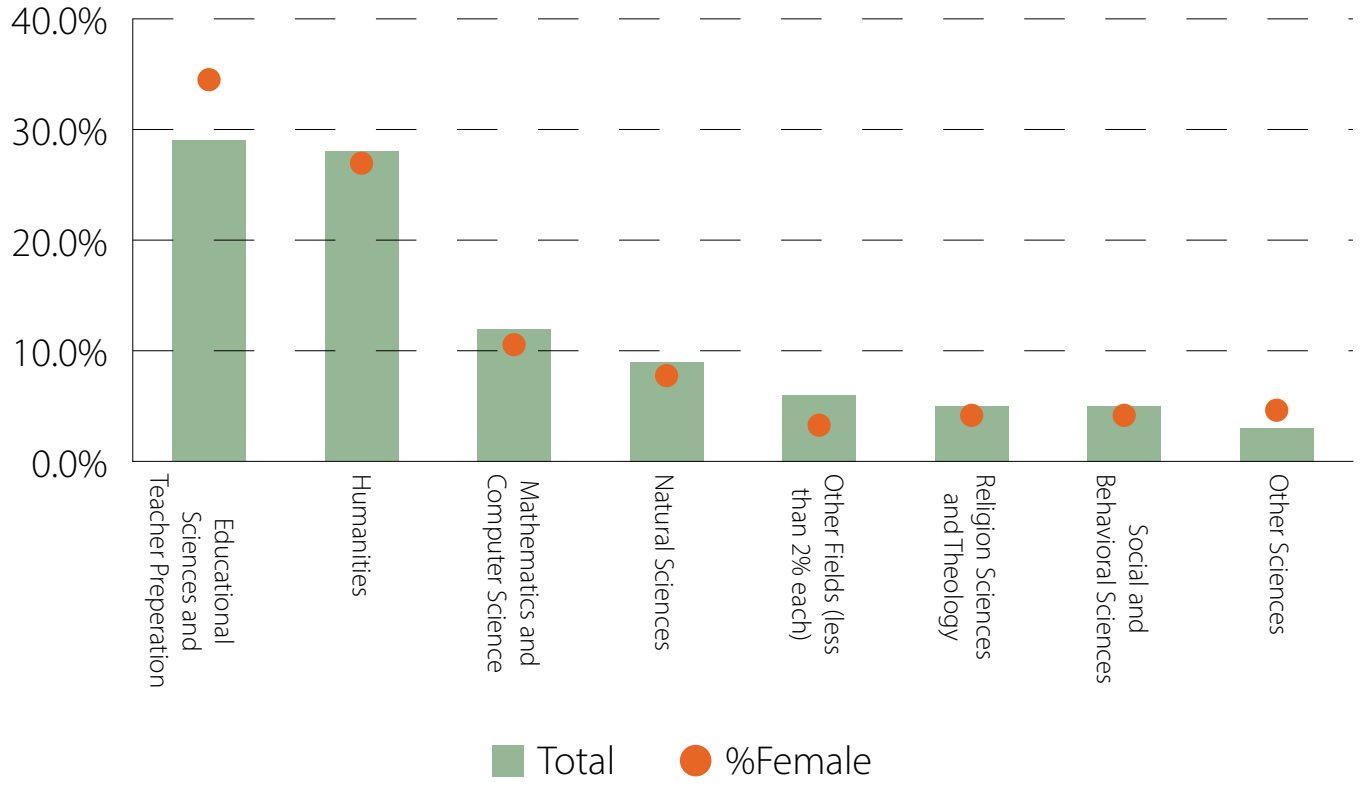


Source: Authors' calculations based on teacher database (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Note: Teacher qualifications were not reported for all teachers in the database provided by the Ministry of Education, resulting in the creation of an "unknown" category.

Women are more likely to study educational sciences for their bachelor's degrees, while men are more inclined toward humanities, mathematics and computer science. Nearly a third (29.9%) of women pursuing educational sciences compared to only 11.7% of men. Conversely, men consistently outnumber women in all STEM-related fields, such as computer science, mathematics and natural sciences. This gendered distribution not only affects the representation of women in teaching of STEM, it likely also affects the representation of girls studying STEM **(Figure 4.26),** particularly at higher grades.

Figure 4.26. Field of study by gender (%) in 2024



Source: Authors' calculations based on teacher database (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Teacher recruitment process

Prior to 2023, teacher recruitment policies were managed by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) and defined by the CSB By-law, excluding MoE from the process. Once they graduated, prospective teachers had to apply to CSB, which selected six candidates per position based on predefined criteria. Candidates who met the criteria were either deployed to schools as permanent teachers, based on the needs identified by field directorates, or placed on the CSB waiting list to wait for a position to be opened. While waiting, those selected teachers could work as contract teachers in public or private schools or in any other field.

In a key reform, MoE has been progressively assuming more responsibility for teacher recruitment and deployment, transitioning away from reliance on CSB and gaining greater autonomy in decision-making that meets their planning needs. In line with the Teacher Policy Framework (2023), this shift involves adopting an open announcement-based system, enabling MoE to define its own selection criteria, though these are yet to be defined. Progressively, the CSB waiting list will be completely phased out and all teacher recruitment will be conducted exclusively through open announcements managed by MoE.

Contract teacher recruitment demonstrates a partially decentralized approach outside the CSB By-law, although with room for improved consistency. Once contract teachers have passed an exam set by MoE, recruitment is then governed by field directorates through field directorate hiring committees, made up of field directorate staff, school principals and supervisors, based on the field directorate's needs. While the process is meant to be based on an exam (set at the central level) and an interview (conducted directly with the field directorates), in practice, interviews are often skipped, leading to some "dissatisfaction" about the transparency of the process among contract teachers (Sarabi and others, 2024).

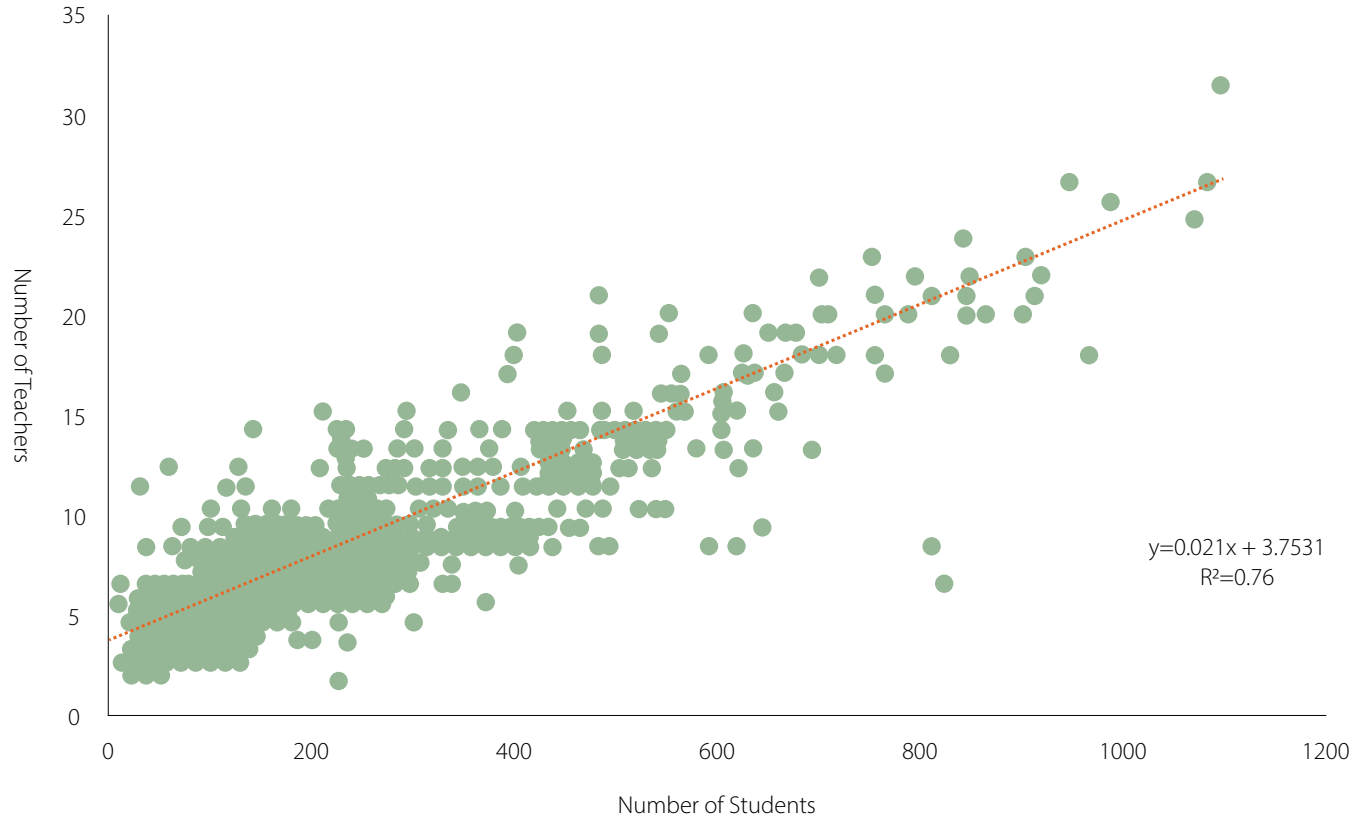
Teacher deployment

An effective teacher deployment strategy ensures that teachers are allocated equitably to appropriate posts, reducing overcrowding and staffing gaps, and balancing the needs of schools and the well-being of teachers. Such a strategy can have a positive impact on education quality, although it can also have detrimental effects on equity (Koussihouèdé and others, 2024). That is why teacher allocation should be carefully analysed.

Despite existing bottlenecks in the deployment process, teacher allocation for Grades 1–3[101] is, overall, consistent throughout the country, but it could be improved. Figure 4.27 illustrates the relationship between the number of teachers and the number of students in public primary schools in Jordan in the 2022/2023 school year. This figure shows a positive relationship between the two variables, meaning that schools with more students tend to have more teachers. The strength of the relationship between the two variables is indicated by the coefficient of determination (R^2), which is 76%.

Nearly a quarter of the variations in the number of teachers across schools are not explained by variations in the number of students. While 76% of the variations in the number of teachers across schools can be explained by variations in the number of students, this leaves 24% of teacher assignments in schools based on criteria other than the number of students, suggesting a significant degree of randomness[102] in teacher allocation.

Figure 4.27. Teacher allocation in Grades 1–3 in public schools in 2022/2023 (by school)



Source: Authors' calculations based on Education Management Information System data and teacher database (Ministry of Education, 2024).

101 As previously mentioned, conducting an analysis of the upper grade levels would have required data on the number of pedagogical groups, which were unavailable for this study.

102 The degree of randomness in teacher allocation refers to the extent to which teacher placement is determined by factors other than the number of students.

Despite recent efforts aimed at improving efficiency through new systems and models, inefficiencies persist in translating projections data into timely teacher allocation, with the CSB-based recruitment system a significant bottleneck. Teacher deployment planning, conducted annually as part of the class formation exercise, is led by the Educational Planning Department in collaboration with the Human Resources Department at the field directorate level, which consolidates data on projected student enrolment, current staff and anticipated retirements. However, permanent teachers report spending up to 20 years on the CSB waiting list before deployment (Bengtsson and others, 2021).

The MoE transition to an open-announcement system represents a significant step towards addressing delays by giving the Ministry greater control over recruitment criteria and timelines. This approach has the potential to enhance efficiency in teacher allocation, reduce bottlenecks and better align recruitment with the system's needs. Key to success will be careful planning and sustained support to ensure that the new processes are effectively implemented and that potential challenges, such as managing a large volume of applicants or addressing regional disparities are addressed.

4.2.3. Teacher training and professional development

Teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, plays a crucial role in educational outcomes by ensuring that educators acquire the skills, knowledge and strategies necessary to deliver high-quality instruction. Inadequate or poorly designed training programmes can result in a mismatch between the skills teachers possess and the needs of the students they serve, leading to gaps in learning outcomes. Crucially, high-quality training needs to be made equally accessible to all teachers, especially in underserved or rural areas, where teachers may face additional challenges such as limited professional development opportunities, lack of resources and logistical barriers to improving their skills.

Significant progress has already been achieved in key areas. In recent years, MoE has expanded pre-service programmes and advanced professional development efforts, notably by diversifying training modalities. Additionally, the introduction of the Teacher Rank System, which more effectively links professional development to career progression, represents a critical step towards enhancing overall teacher quality.

Pre-service teacher education

The Jordanian Pre-Service Teacher Education (PSTE) programme has expanded significantly since its introduction in 2016, offering specialized training for Grades 1–10. It is aimed at enhancing teaching quality through university partnerships and scholarships, although there is currently no specific training for kindergarten teachers and secondary school teachers. Initially launched by the Queen Rania Teacher Academy, the programme has been transitioned to four universities in 2021 (the University of Jordan, Yarmouk University, Mu'tah University and Hashemite University) with support from the Pre-Service Teacher Education in Jordan (PRESTIJ) initiative, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The one-year programme supplements subject-specific degrees with comprehensive training in pedagogy, interactive learning methods, classroom management and cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, inclusion and environmental awareness, as well as a teaching practicum component. Currently, the programme offers training in Arabic, mathematics, science, English, Islamic education, social studies and classroom teaching, with plans to expand to additional subjects.

While MoE strongly supports the programme and provides incentives for participation, mainly through scholarships (see subsequent paragraphs), completion of PSTE is currently not a requirement to qualify as a teacher. To be eligible to apply, candidates must hold a bachelor's degree in a subject aligned with those taught in Jordanian schools, with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of "acceptable" or higher.[103] There are no age restrictions. In addition, candidates must demonstrate a commitment to regular attendance for both theoretical lectures and practical training sessions. Medium-term strategies contained in the Teacher Policy Framework 2023 are aimed at increasing GPA requirements for programme admission and job applications, and attracting top-performing students through targeted scholarships for high-demand fields.

Enrolment in this programme has seen striking and promising growth in recent years, facilitated by an MoE-supported scholarship programme. The number of graduates has risen exponentially from 186 graduates in 2021/2022 to 4,462 in 2024/2025 across the four universities, representing 4.6% of the MoE teacher workforce. This expansion has been facilitated by a scholarship programme supported by MoE, with sponsored student numbers increasing from none in 2021/2022 to 4,209 (94.3%) in 2024/2025 (**Table 4.11**).

Table 4.11. Number of PSTE programme graduates (2021–2024) under the PRESTIJ initiative

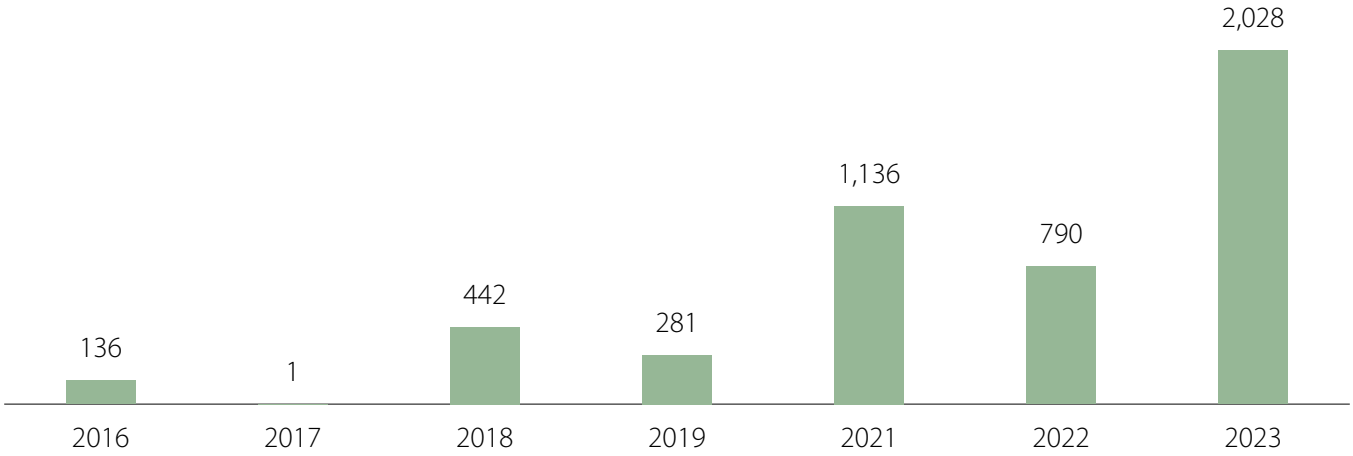
	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Self-paid	186	776	464	253
Sponsored	0	246	1,432	4,209
Total	186	1,022	1,896	4,462
% supported	0	24.1	75.5	94.3

Source: Data from the Pre-Service Teacher Education in Jordan programme (Ministry of Education, 2024).

This scholarship-based PSTE programme led to an increase in the number of new entrants holding such a diploma in public schools, but the transition between the diploma and public schools could be further enhanced. Upon graduation, trained teachers are free to apply to any school, except those who received a scholarship, who are directly appointed to public schools. As a result, the increasing number of graduates from PSTE programmes has led to a corresponding rise in the number of teachers in public schools holding such qualifications. However, the data show an erratic trend, suggesting that many trained teachers are not opting for public schools. There are insufficient data to understand what teachers do after graduation. One assumption could be that they opt for private or UNRWA schools, which typically offer better working conditions, including higher salaries, lighter workloads and clearer career progression opportunities. This assumption is supported by the peak observed in 2021, which may be attributed to the temporary closure of private schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in higher numbers of graduate teachers opting for public schools (**Figure 4.28**). However, such an assumption would need to be backed up by additional evidence.

103 Grading systems vary across universities, with some using numerical scales and others using letter grades. As a result, there is no universal standard applicable to all grading systems. Applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Figure 4.28. Permanent MoE teachers with pre-service diploma (2016–2023)



Source: Data on pre-service diplomas (Ministry of Education, 2024).

In-service teacher training

The Teacher Policy Framework 2023 offers a structured approach to continuous professional development, but as stated in the Framework, continuous professional development faces challenges, including regional disparities, logistical barriers and limited teacher engagement. The Framework establishes a comprehensive structure for the professional development of teachers in Jordan, with an emphasis on aligning continuous professional development with professional standards and career progression. The Framework mandates the development and implementation of standardized guidelines on continuous professional development and curricula tailored to teachers' needs across various categories. Continuous professional development activities are organized around a credit-hour system that integrates directly into performance evaluations and career advancement.

The Framework also underscores quality assurance through the accreditation of training providers and certification of the completion of continuous professional development, ensuring alignment with professional standards and contributing to teachers' career progression.

Together, these policies offer a forward-looking vision for teacher development, albeit one that is challenging to implement. Successful implementation hinges on adequate resources, institutional capacity, and coordination between MoE, universities and regional training centres.

The Induction Programme for Newly Appointed Teachers provides essential training for novice teachers, although its scheduling poses challenges for participants. In 2013, MoE introduced the Programme to strengthen the readiness of novice teachers during their first year of service. This programme is mandatory for all teachers[104] and is also open to contract teachers. The curriculum includes 185 hours of training (equivalent to 38 working days) and is typically conducted in the evening or on Saturday mornings, in an effort to minimize disruption to teachers' regular duties. While the programme equips teachers with key foundational skills, its reliance on evening and weekend sessions presents challenges for participants, particularly in terms of balancing workload and professional development (Bengtsson and others, 2021).

Participation in professional development has significantly increased in recent years, driven by key initiatives that have boosted engagement and narrowed the gender gap. The number of participants has steadily risen, from 53,758 in 2016/2017 to 195,194 in 2022/2023,

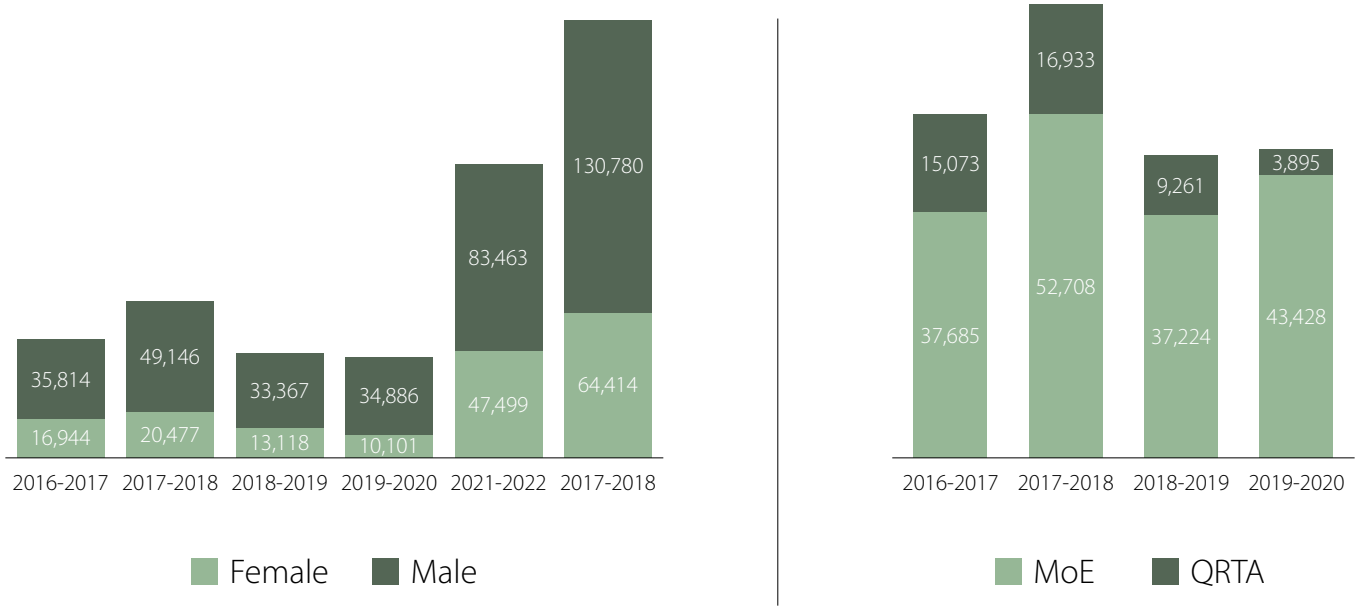
104 Apart from graduates of the Queen Rania Teacher Academy pre-service postgraduate diploma or PSTE programmes, as they receive similar preparation during their training.

with a remarkable 176.7% increase in participation between 2019/2020 and 2021/2022, including contract teachers.[105] This surge can be attributed to two concurrent factors in 2021, namely:

- Introduction of the online Teacher Training Platform, which provides greater flexibility for teachers to access training while reducing transportation-related costs; it is proving particularly effective in attracting male teachers.
- Implementation of the Teacher Rank System, which directly ties promotions to participation in professional development, creating a strong incentive for teachers to engage in in-service training (see Section 5.4.1).

Female participation in professional development predominates. It is constantly higher than male participation, with women accounting for over two-thirds of attendees, mirroring the gender distribution in the teacher workforce in general (**Figure 4.29**).

Figure 4.29. Teacher participation in professional development by gender (left) and by provider (right)



Source: Teacher Needs Assessment Reports (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Note: The data are sourced from the annual reports produced by the Ministry of Education on teachers' professional development. For nearly every year since 2016/2017, the number of teacher attendees has been disaggregated by the professional development provider (i.e. the Ministry of Education or the Queen Rania Teacher Academy), with the exception of 2022/2023, where the disaggregation is based on the delivery mode (i.e. face-to-face or online). No report was produced for 2020/2021 owing to the pandemic.

Despite the growth in participation, significant challenges persist in ensuring the effectiveness and accessibility of professional development programmes. Participation varies widely by region, with urban and centrally located districts, such as Amman and Irbid, showing higher engagement, while rural and remote areas, such as the southern governorates, experience lower attendance. Furthermore, teachers often attend training primarily to fulfil credit-hour requirements for career advancement, which diminishes their engagement with the content. Logistical challenges, such as inconvenient scheduling, especially after school hours, also hinder participation, particularly for female teachers balancing family responsibilities and male teachers

105 However, available data on teachers' participation in professional development are not disaggregated by teacher status, making it impossible to determine the respective shares of participation for each category of teachers.

with evening jobs. In addition, the lack of child care facilities, insufficient transportation allowances and poorly equipped training environments, particularly in rural areas, further undermine participation (Ministry of Education, 2023b).

Professional development programmes have addressed diverse priorities, but challenges persist in aligning training with classroom realities and measuring outcomes effectively. The analysis of specific training programmes in 2022/2023 highlights the breadth of professional development initiatives in Jordan, addressing both foundational and emerging priorities, as well as implementation challenges:

- Programmes focused on remedial education and gender inclusion reflect a strong commitment to equity and support for vulnerable student populations. In addition, as curricula are reviewed from a gender perspective, some teachers are benefiting from training, which has shown promise in promoting transformative change.
- Training on updated curricula and ICT integration demonstrates efforts to modernize teaching practices, although participation disparities across regions suggest uneven readiness to adopt these innovations.
- Specialized programmes, such as those on financial literacy and democracy, offer innovative opportunities but currently have limited reach, underscoring the need for scaling and broader teacher engagement.

While the variety of programmes showcases flexibility in addressing diverse teacher needs, gaps in measuring training outcomes and alignment with classroom realities remain significant challenges. Indeed, many teachers find the content misaligned with the realities of Jordanian classrooms and student needs, which indicates either shortcomings in the teacher needs assessment performed each year by MoE, or a mismatch between the needs assessment and the training programmes offered. In addition, training sessions are often lecture-based, with insufficient interactivity, limiting their impact on professional growth (Ministry of Education, 2023c).

While the Teacher Training Platform has been positively received for its interactivity, convenience and potential to address participation barriers, there remains room for improvement, particularly in aligning content with classroom realities (Ministry of Education, 2023f).

Ensuring the effectiveness and scalability of these programmes will require enhanced planning, resource allocation and feedback mechanisms.

4.2.4. Teacher career development

Teacher career development is a critical aspect of educational planning, encompassing various elements that shape teachers' professional growth and motivation. Licensing and career pathways ensure that teachers are appropriately certified and have clear opportunities for advancement based on their experience, qualifications and performance. Teacher salaries and benefits play a significant role in attracting and retaining qualified educators, ensuring that compensation reflects the value placed on their work and meets their needs. Additionally, teacher performance evaluation and supervision are essential to maintaining high teaching standards, providing constructive feedback and supporting continuous professional development. Addressing these areas effectively is key to fostering a motivated, well-supported teaching workforce, which directly contributes to improved education quality and student outcomes.

Career pathways

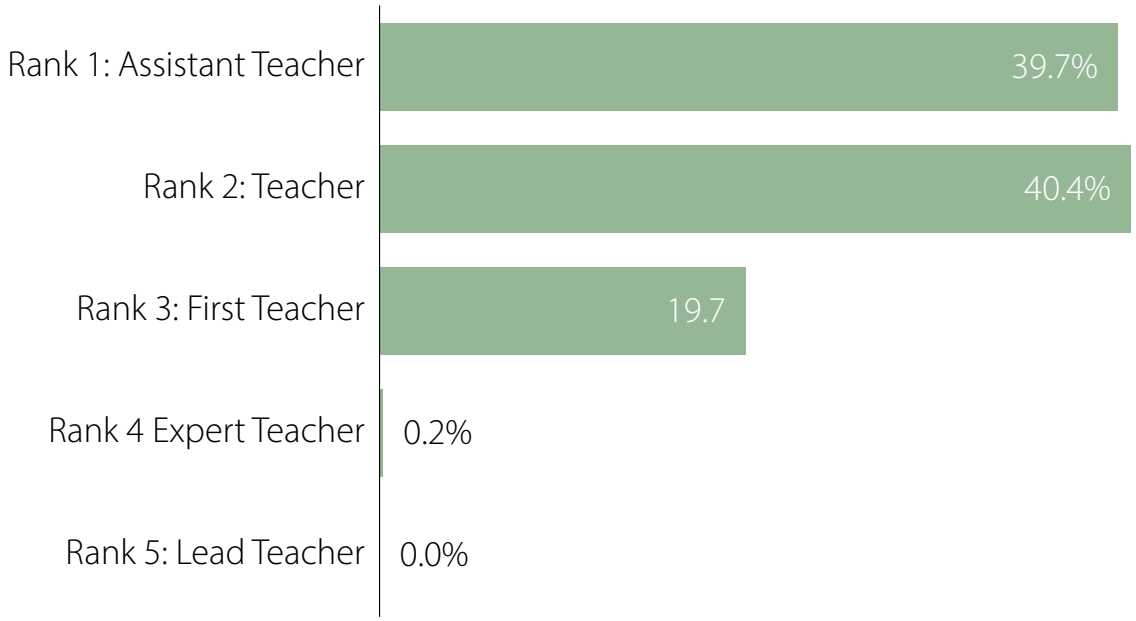
While the introduction of the Teacher Rank System marks a significant step toward professionalizing teaching in Jordan, certain gaps in teacher promotion systems still pose challenges to achieving meaningful career progression. Starting from 2021, MoE implemented the Teacher Rank System, a new integrated licensing system linked to professional standards and career pathways, requiring periodic recertification through continuous professional development. This system is aimed at ensuring that teachers maintain high competency levels throughout their careers. For promotions, a multitrack career framework is envisioned, offering differentiated pathways for teachers, administrators and educational leaders. Promotions are tied to cumulative performance portfolios and aligned with continuous professional development cycles, creating incentives for teachers to continuously improve their skills. These solutions are aimed at professionalizing teaching by setting clear standards for entry and advancement while fostering a culture of accountability and lifelong learning. Together, they seek to enhance teacher retention, motivation and overall quality in the Jordanian education system. This is a non-compulsory system where teachers must apply to the different ranks to be promoted.

Gender equality is gradually being incorporated into the requirements for promotion within the Teacher Rank System. In collaboration with USAID, MoE has integrated gender-sensitive criteria into the advancement framework for three key subjects: Islamic and social education, Arabic and early childhood education. A separate, optional 15-hour gender module complements the core 160-hour training required to progress through the five ranks. This is aimed at equipping teachers to deliver unbiased, inclusive instruction. However, stronger and more regular assessments are needed to monitor the implementation of gender-responsive pedagogy at the school level (Ministry of Education, 2023c).

However, the implementation of the Teacher Rank System faces significant challenges that limit its effectiveness. Key obstacles, highlighted in the Teacher Policy Framework, include the difficulty experienced by MoE in managing implementation processes and assigning clear responsibilities among departments to handle the process of assigning new ranks. In addition, the system places financial strains on the MoE budget. (Ministry of Education, 2022). These issues impede teachers' progression to higher ranks and highlight the need for stronger structural support to ensure the system's effectiveness and sustainability. Besides, the new rank system is not applied to contract teachers since they are not considered permanent employees, which limits their prospects for promotion.

Four-fifths of the teaching workforce are clustered at the lower two ranks, indicating severe bottlenecks in the career ladder. As of 2024, 39.7% were assistant teachers and 40.4% were teachers. First teachers accounted for 19.7%, while the two highest ranks combined represented less than 0.5% of the MoE teaching workforce **(Figure 4.30).**

Figure 4.30. Distribution of teachers per rank in 2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data on Ministry of Education personnel (Ministry of Education, 2023).

Note: Calculations are based on salary data for Ministry of Education personnel. All types of teachers across educational levels, including vocational education teachers, coach teachers, field teachers and Teachers' Club managers, regardless of appointment status, were used for the calculations (n=80 844).

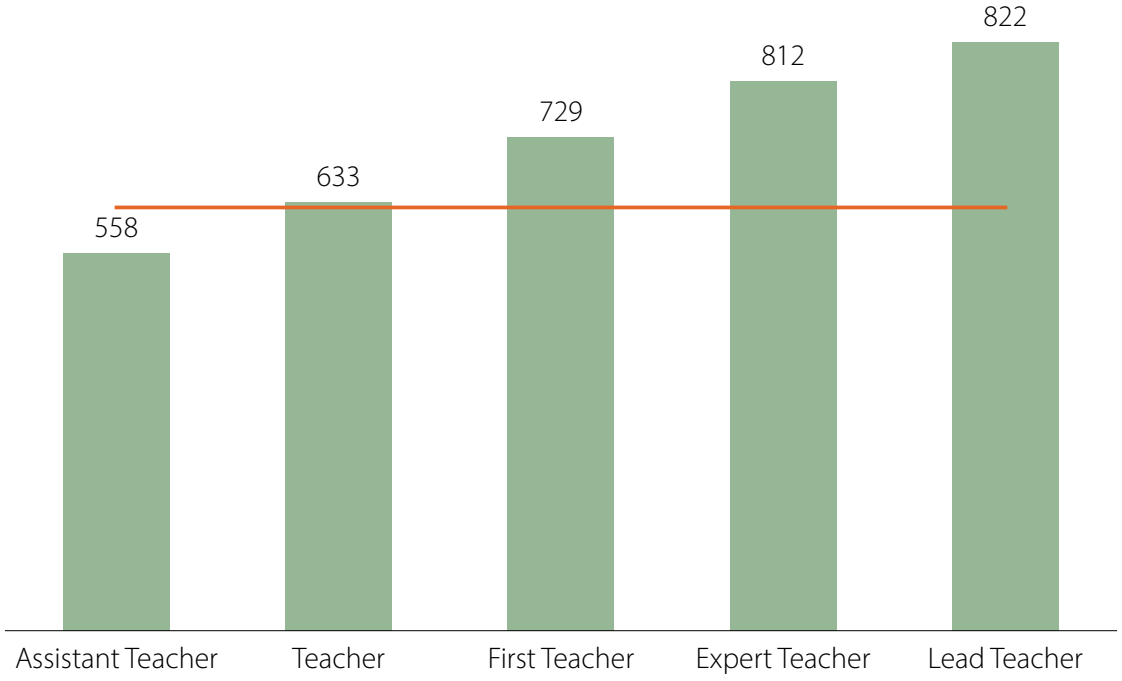
Teacher salaries and benefits

The CSB By-law outlines a salary structure tied to years of service, rank and category. Incremental salary increases are mandated according to the Teacher Rank System. The By-law also outlines allowances based on marital status and additional responsibilities, as well as the six types of leave: annual, parental, urgent, hajj, sick and unpaid.

Teacher salaries in Jordan are moderate compared to regional and income-group benchmarks. On average, MoE teachers in Jordan earn a monthly gross salary of JOD 622, equivalent to 2.4 times the national minimum wage of JOD 260.[106] Salaries vary significantly by rank, ranging from JOD 558 per month for assistant teachers to JOD 822 for lead teachers **(Figure 4.31),** although, as highlighted in previous sections, very few teachers reach the higher ranks. In 2023, the share of civil servant teacher salaries in the GDP of Jordan was 2.3%, which is slightly below the average for lower-middle-income countries (3.1%) and for the Middle East and North Africa region (2.8%) (Crawfurd and Pugatch, 2020). These figures suggest that it may be difficult to ensure competitive remuneration to attract and retain qualified teachers.

106 This was the minimum wage in 2023, the reference year for wage data in this document. In January 2025, the minimum wage in Jordan rose to JOD 290.

Figure 4.31. MoE teacher salaries in 2023[107]



Source: Authors' calculations based on data on Ministry of Education personnel (Ministry of Education, 2023).

Note: Calculations are based on salary data for Ministry of Education personnel. All types of teachers across educational levels, including vocational education teachers, coach teachers, field teachers, and Teachers' Club managers, regardless of appointment status, were used for the calculations (n=80 844).

Contract teachers face lower salaries and limited benefits, with modest variation by rank. Contract teachers employed by MoE receive JOD 280 per month, very slightly above the national minimum wage, but substantively below MoE teaching staff salaries. In fact, as they do not receive holiday pay, summer vacation or sick leave, when their income is evened out over the year, their actual salary works out at just JOD 175 per month on average. Although rank-based salary variation exists among contract teachers, it is less pronounced, with average monthly salaries ranging from JOD 170 for teachers in the first rank to JOD 194 for first teachers (there are no contract teachers in the upper ranks). In addition, their pay is based solely on documented attendance reported to the field directorates, with no benefits or leave entitlements, despite full-semester work.

Teacher performance evaluation and supervision

Teacher supervision and evaluation are critical to improving teaching quality and, ultimately, education outcomes. Supervision supports teachers' professional growth through guidance and feedback while ensuring accountability. Adequate resources and equitable access to supervision are therefore essential to maintaining consistent teaching standards and addressing disparities, ensuring that all students benefit from well-supported teachers.

In Jordan, supervision is managed at the central level by the Educational Supervision and Training Department, which provides central guidance on teacher supervision, and is implemented at the field directorate level by the Head of Educational Supervision and Training through the deployment of supervisors.

Since 2019, the role of supervisors has shifted to prioritize supporting teachers' professional development over evaluation,

107 Further analysis is needed to assess potential disparities in salaries and benefits between men and women. However, the data provided by the Ministry of Education for this document did not allow for disaggregation by sex.

but resources are insufficient for supervisors to efficiently perform their new roles. While evaluation remains a part of supervisors' duties, it is now closely tied to strategies for improving teaching practices. Supervisors may recommend training for struggling teachers and facilitate peer-learning opportunities. Supervisors are also tasked with delivering continuous professional development and visiting schools regularly to provide one-on-one support. School principals also play a significant role in teacher supervision and evaluation. For teacher evaluations, the principal's assessment accounts for 70% of the overall score, while the supervisor's evaluation contributes 30%. Besides, the Teacher Policy Framework 2023 proposes a shift towards competency-based evaluation systems that incorporate classroom observations, student performance and self-assessments. The goal is to tie evaluations to professional development requirements and promotions, thereby creating incentives for continuous improvement.

As noted in the Framework, teacher performance evaluation and supervision in Jordan face several challenges, including inconsistent evaluation practices, an overemphasis on administrative compliance, and a lack of alignment with professional teaching standards. Current systems often fail to provide actionable feedback or support for teachers' professional growth, limiting their impact on teaching quality and student outcomes.

Teacher-to-supervisor ratios reflect overall progress, but significant disparities remain. The teacher-to-supervisor ratios across education levels, subjects and field directorates in Jordan show overall progress, with a declining ratio since 2016. In 2024, there were 1,428 supervisors overseeing 96,228 teachers, resulting in an average ratio of 67.4 teachers per supervisor, a 15% improvement from 2016, when the ratio was 79.6. This progress is well below the standard of 100 teachers per supervisor (except for kindergarten where the ratio is 1:50), reflecting positive strides in strengthening teacher support. However, this overall improvement masks significant disparities across education levels, subjects and regions. In addition, this ratio is calculated based solely on permanent MoE teachers and does not include contract teachers. If contract teachers are included for 2024, the ratio would rise to 80.8. However, in practice, evidence indicates that supervisors are stretched too thinly to effectively oversee contract teachers (Sarabi and others, 2024).

Kindergarten supervision is adequate, but early grades face acute shortages. For kindergarten teachers, the ratio of 25.2 suggests sufficient supervision well-below the 1:50 standard, especially considering the limited expansion of kindergarten education as of 2024. However, Grades 1–3 face critical shortages, with an overall ratio of 133 teachers per supervisor. This shortfall is particularly acute in the north-eastern Badia (256), Aqaba (233) and Irbid (230) Field Directorates, where supervisory support is severely strained. By contrast, Northern Valley (70) and Wadi Al-Seer (75) report lower ratios, suggesting more favourable conditions but also potential inefficiencies in resource allocation (**Table 4.12**). **Grades 4–10 also show wide disparities in supervisory support across field directorates.**

Table 4.12. Teachers-to-supervisor ratio by field directorate for Grades 1–3 (2024)

Lowest 10	Teacher-to-supervisor ratio	Highest 10	Teachers-to-supervisor ratio
Northern Valley	70	**Aqaba**	233
Wadi Al-Seer	75	**Irbid**	230
Busaira	83	**Marka**	192
Naour	94	**North-western Badia**	181
South Shona	97	**Zarqa 1**	175
Southern Mazar	97	**Zarqa 2**	172
North Mazar	97	**Mafraq**	164
Bani Obeid	99	**Amman**	158
University District	101	**Karak**	149
North-eastern Badia	256		

Source: Authors' calculations based on data on supervisors (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Teacher-to-supervisor ratios across subjects reveal stark imbalances. Geography and science subjects face the most significant shortages, with high ratios of 117 and 176, respectively, hindering effective teacher support. Conversely, French and information technology have exceptionally low ratios of 19 and 38, owing to the low number of teachers in those subjects.

While the overall teacher-to-supervisor ratio shows progress, significant deficits persist across certain areas, subjects and grade levels. These gaps highlight the need for better resource allocation and an overall increase in the number of supervisors to ensure equitable and effective oversight throughout the education system.

School leaders also play a key role in supervising and evaluating teachers to improve the quality of teaching and student learning, but they often lack the time and resources to fulfil their supportive role. In terms of supporting teachers, the 2020 Executive Guide for Evaluation Methodology and Tools for Teachers and Educational Leaders mentions that the responsibilities of school leaders include assessing teachers' teaching methods, classroom management skills and ability to meet curriculum objectives. They are also expected to provide feedback and support to help teachers to improve their teaching practice. Finally, they play an active role in identifying teachers' training needs, suggesting appropriate programmes and facilitating their enrolment. However, the Teacher Policy Framework highlights that their ability to perform these roles effectively is hampered by several challenges, such as an overemphasis on administrative tasks, insufficient training in instructional leadership and limited resources. In addition, imbalances in teacher allocation, reflected in high pupil-teacher ratios in some areas, and outdated evaluation systems further limit their ability to provide meaningful support and guidance to teachers.

4.2.5. Teacher well-being

Teacher well-being refers to the physical, emotional and professional state of teachers, encompassing their job satisfaction, mental health, work-life balance and sense of purpose in their roles. It involves not only the absence of stress and burn-out, but also the presence of supportive working conditions, opportunities for growth and a sense of accomplishment (Viac and Fraser, 2020). Teacher well-being is critically important for education quality because it directly affects teaching effectiveness, classroom management and student learning outcomes (Howley-Rouse, 2020). When teachers feel supported and valued, they are more likely to foster positive learning environments and contribute to the overall success of the education system. Conversely, poor teacher well-being can lead to absenteeism, high turnover rates and diminished student achievement, undermining the goals of educational improvement and quality.

Teacher well-being in Jordan faces severe challenges, with low financial and physical environment well-being and notable disparities across regions, gender and educational qualifications. Based on a recent study conducted by Save the Children - Jordan (2022), teachers' professional well-being in Jordan has been assessed as moderate, with key findings highlighting significant challenges and areas for improvement. The study, involving a representative sample of 4,687 teachers across the country, revealed that **financial well-being scored the lowest,** with a mean score of 1.13 (on a four-point scale where scores below 1.50 indicate low well-being), reflecting widespread dissatisfaction with salaries and benefits; **74% of teachers reported not receiving adequate raises or bonuses.** Additionally, physical environment well-being was low, with over half **(53%) of teachers citing poor facilities** such as insufficient internet access and outdated equipment. In contrast, the social dimension scored the highest, with a mean of 2.43, emphasizing satisfaction with positive relationships and community respect. Regional differences were notable, as teachers in the southern region reported higher levels of well-being compared to their peers in the north and centre of the country. Female teachers generally reported better well-being than male teachers, except in terms of physical well-being. Interestingly, teachers with less than a bachelor's degree reported higher overall well-being than those with advanced qualifications, while years of teaching experience negatively correlated with well-being. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve financial support, enhance school infrastructure, and promote sustained professional growth opportunities for teachers (Save the Children - Jordan, 2022).

The moderate level of teacher well-being in Jordan aligns with a high desire to leave the profession, driven by low salaries, undervaluation of teaching and poor working conditions. One consequence of this moderate level of well-being among teachers can be seen in the rather high desire of teachers to leave the profession within a fairly short space of time. Although the most comprehensive data on this issue, drawn from the 2018 National Teacher Survey, may not fully capture shifts in current realities, at the time, one in five teachers planned to leave the profession within five years, with low salaries identified as the primary reason. Dissatisfaction was particularly pronounced among male teachers in MoE schools, who also highlighted a broader issue: the undervaluation of teaching as a profession. While the context has changed in recent years, as we have seen, more recent studies (such as the one conducted by Save the Children - Jordan) suggest a persistent trend of inadequate financial incentives and unsatisfactory working conditions, underscoring the enduring nature of these challenges and their potential detrimental impact on rates of teacher retention (see Box 4.1 for details on teacher attrition).

Box 4.1: Methods to compute teacher attrition

Teacher attrition refers to the number of teachers leaving the profession, voluntarily or involuntarily, owing to reasons such as retirement, illness or personal factors. Understanding attrition rates is vital for planning recruitment and improving teacher retention. There are methods to compute attrition rates: one is the method of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) method (Tournier and others, 2024)[108] and the second is described on the website of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).[109]

Method 1 (IIEP): Direct leavers count

This widely accepted method calculates attrition by dividing the number of teachers who left during year t (e.g. retirement, dismissal, resignation) by the total number of teachers at the start of year t.

Method 2 (UIS): Leavers based on net change

This method estimates attrition by subtracting the number of teachers in year t+1 from the number of teachers in year t and then adds new recruits in year t+1. The result is divided by the total number of teachers in year t. This method has certain limitations – for instance, it can occasionally produce negative attrition rates when recruitment exceeds the number of leavers, which requires careful interpretation. In addition, the UIS method demands more data than the IIEP method, which can pose challenges in terms of data quality and availability.

This study employs the IIEP method and found an **attrition rate of 5% for the 2022/2023 academic year** using data provided by MoE on teachers leaving the profession (i.e. the number of leavers and their reasons for leaving), while an estimate of 12% is found based on the same year using the UIS method. This important discrepancy between the two methods calls for caution in interpretation and for further investigation from MoE. While a 5% attrition rate can be considered low, 12% is high because it means that more than 1 in 10 teachers will need to be replaced every year (for comparison, the global average in 2022 was 9%[110]).

The appeal of the teaching profession in Jordan is limited, potentially deterring high-achieving individuals from entering the profession, although public perception of teachers' status has improved slightly over the period 2020–2022 (Figure 4.32). According to the PRESTIJ initiative conducted among the general public in 2022,[111] only 24% rated teaching as "high status". The majority of respondents (55%) perceived teaching as being of just "medium status", while a further 21% viewed it as "poor status". This perception of only moderate respect and status for teachers, combined with the relatively low level of teachers' salaries (see Section 5.4.2) could be a major factor in deterring high-achieving individuals from entering the profession, thus limiting the talent pool from which MoE can recruit.

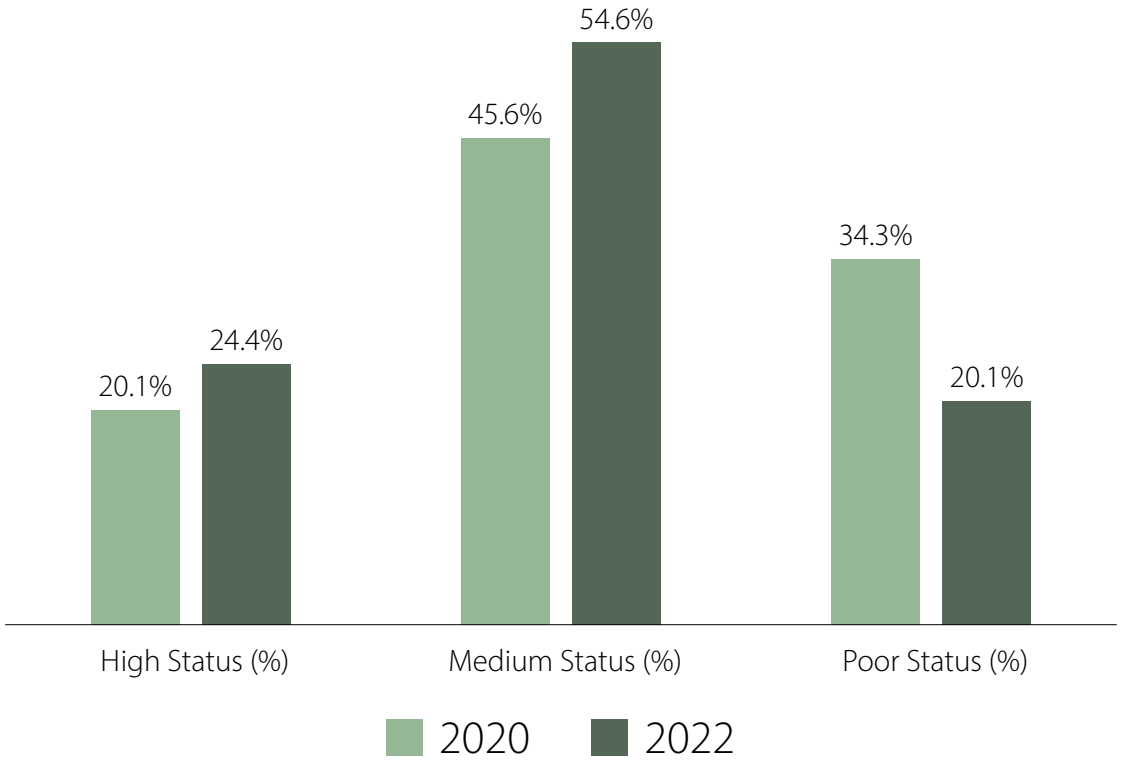
108 Tourner, Barbara, and others, Secondary teacher management: requirements, allocation, and utilization (Paris, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization International Institute for Educational Planning, 2024, p.47).

109 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics, "Teacher attrition rate by education level".

110 UNESCO. International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. 2024. Global Report on Teachers, p.60.

111 The survey received 11,299 responses across all 12 governorates of Jordan, with 5,386 valid responses analysed after excluding incomplete submissions and those with certain demographic inconsistencies. Respondents were primarily from Amman (33%) and Irbid (13%), with the remaining 54% distributed across other regions. Women made up 53% of the sample, and 47% were male. The age distribution skewed younger among women compared to men, with a higher proportion of respondents aged 26–60 years. Approximately 11% of respondents reported had a long-lasting or chronic condition, mostly concentrated in the 41–60-year-old age range. Half of the respondents had a household income of less than JOD 500 per month, and 31% were employed full-time. Notably, 37% of respondents were teachers or had worked in education, with 25% reporting a family connection to the teaching profession. The sample also revealed gendered employment disparities, particularly in the 26–40-year-old age group, and a higher incidence of unemployment in urban areas.

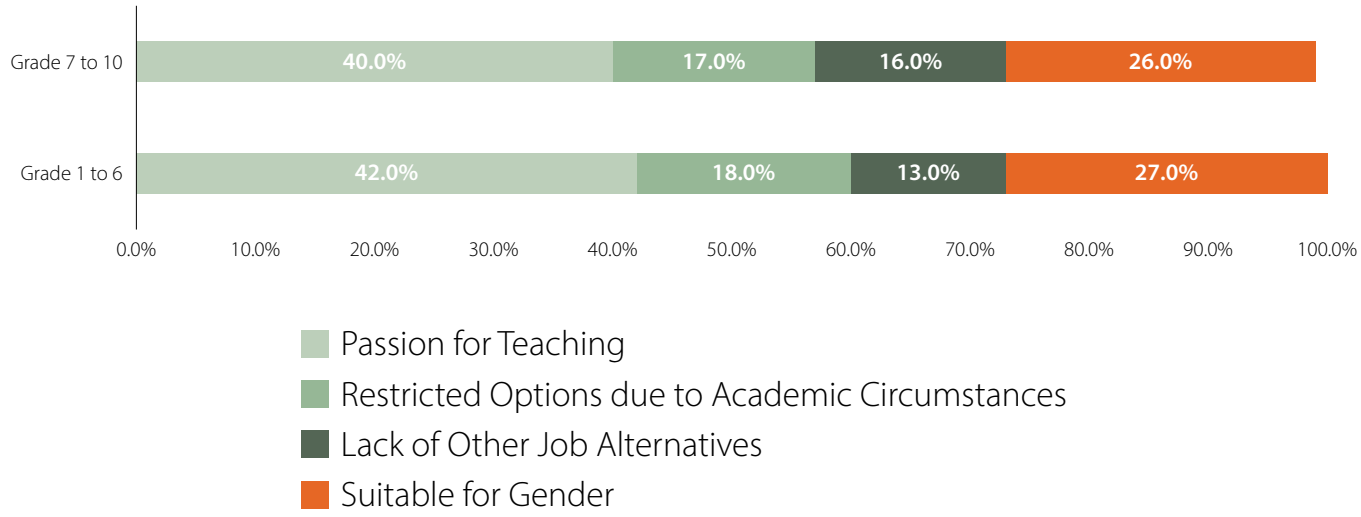
Figure 4.32. Perceived status of public-school teachers, 2020 and 2022#



Source: National perception of teaching survey (United States Agency for International Development, 2022).

A large segment of the teaching workforce in Jordan is entering the profession owing to extrinsic factors, rather than a genuine commitment. The National Teacher Survey (2018) revealed that fewer than half of teachers in public schools (40–42%) enter the profession owing to a genuine passion for teaching. Notably, just over a quarter of teachers (26–27%) cited gender-appropriateness as their reason for choosing teaching as a career (**Figure 4.33**), suggesting that teaching is viewed as a socially acceptable profession for women. A significant proportion cited limited options owing to academic circumstances (17–18%) (i.e. access to higher education programmes is based on an applicant's score in the tawjihi, with lower scores required for education programmes than for other professional programmes), as well as a lack of other job opportunities (13–16%) This lack of intrinsic motivation can lead to lower engagement and job satisfaction, which are likely to affect teacher performance and retention rates over time, which in turn, exacerbate teacher shortages and poor student learning outcomes. However, the initiatives implemented by MoE in recent years – aimed at professionalizing and streamlining recruitment processes while incentivizing teachers to enrol in PSTE programmes – may contribute to enhancing the appeal of the teaching profession going forward.

Figure 4.33. Teachers' motivation to join the teaching profession



Source: National Teacher Survey (Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development, 2018).

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

Student learning outcomes are low across all levels, with particularly severe deficits in the early grades. In the 2022 PISA, over 80% of Grade 10 students scored below basic proficiency in mathematics, and in PIRLS 2021, 53% of Grade 4 students did not meet the minimum reading benchmarks. National early-grade assessments (2021 EGRA/EGMA) show that fewer than 40% of Grade 3 students met reading proficiency, and only 18% did so in mathematics, indicating a weak foundation for future learning and a systemic challenge in terms of quality.

Multiple interrelated factors influence learning outcomes and education quality. Key drivers include student gender, socio-economic status and access to early childhood education, as well as teacher qualifications, teaching practices and the school environment, notably parental involvement and perceived safety. Additional quality enablers include adequate school facilities, sufficient instructional time and support for student well-being.

The teaching workforce is feminized and reliant on contract teachers. Women dominate early education (100% in kindergarten), and contract teachers now represent 17.6% of the MoE workforce, often concentrated in early grades and refugee settings, reflecting cultural norms and hiring constraints, and raising concerns about equity and workforce stability.

Teacher qualifications are improving, but gaps remain. Nearly 90% of teachers hold a bachelor's degree, yet many early-grade and kindergarten teachers lack education-specific training. The PSTE programme expanded from 186 graduates in 2021 to 4,462 in 2024, but it remains optional and excludes the kindergarten and secondary levels.

Weak career progression and poor conditions affect teacher motivation. Over 80% of teachers remain in the lowest ranks, and contract teachers are excluded from the career ladder. Low pay and challenging work environments contribute to attractivity and retention concerns.

ANNEXES TO CHAPTER 4

Annex 4.1 Multivariate model with the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2021 international learning assessment

PIRLS	(1) Standardized score in reading
Female student	0.317***
	(0.077)
Student age	0.052*
	(0.028)
Student did not attend preschool (reference)	
Student attended preschool for 1 year or less	0.168***
	(0.063)
Student attended preschool for 2 years	0.424***
	(0.084)
Student attended preschool for 3 years or more	0.358***
	(0.084)
Student socio-economic status is lower (reference)	
Student socio-economic status is middle	0.107*
	(0.056)
Student socio-economic status is higher	0.357***
	(0.102)
Student has access to digital books	0.074
	(0.105)
Student has never participated in early activities before school (reference)	
Student has sometimes participated in early literacy activities before school	0.139
	(0.089)
Student has often participated in early literacy activities before school	0.301***
	(0.099)
Student has sometimes participated in early literacy and numeracy activities before school	0.029
	(0.054)
Student's parent did not go to school (reference)	
Student's parent has some primary or lower secondary education	-0.186*
	(0.105)
Student's parent has lower secondary education level	-0.160**
	(0.077)
Student's parent has upper secondary education level	-0.097
	(0.059)

PIRLS	(1) Standardized score in reading
Student's parent has university or higher education level	0.270***
	(0.054)
Teacher has a bachelor's degree	-0.024
	(0.111)
Teacher has a master's degree or equivalent	0.158*
	(0.088)
Teachers are less than satisfied with their job (reference)	
Teachers are satisfied with their job	0.175
	(0.317)
Teachers are satisfied with their job	0.259
	(0.303)
Reading instructional hours per year	0.078
	(0.075)
Language instructional hours per year	0.003
	(0.043)
Parental involvement in school activities is very low (reference)	
Parental involvement in school activities is low	0.597***
	(0.171)
Parental involvement in school activities is medium	0.841***
	(0.165)
Parental involvement in school activities is high	0.868***
	(0.181)
Parental involvement in school activities is very high	0.647***
	(0.207)
Constant	-1.594***
	(0.391)
Observations	3,751
Adjusted R-squared	0.243

Clustered standard errors in parentheses

**** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Annex 4.2 Multivariate models with the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2023 international learning assessment

	(1) Standardized mathematics score	(2) Standardized science score	(3) Standardized aggregate index in mathematics and science
Female student	-0.142	-0.031	-0.095
	(0.110)	(0.113)	(0.112)
Student age	0.061	0.078*	0.072*
	(0.041)	(0.043)	(0.042)
Student socio-economic status is neither more affluent nor more disadvantaged (reference)			
Student socio-economic status is more disadvantaged	-0.030	-0.014	-0.022
	(0.112)	(0.122)	(0.117)
Student socio-economic status is more affluent	0.460***	0.461***	0.473***
	(0.165)	(0.163)	(0.162)
Digital learning available during mathematics lessons	0.278**	0.266**	0.272**
	(0.118)	(0.125)	(0.122)
Digital learning available during science lessons	-0.223**	-0.149	-0.192*
	(0.110)	(0.109)	(0.110)
Student parent has some primary or lower secondary education or did not go to school (reference)			
Student parent has lower secondary education level	0.026	0.023	0.013
	(0.126)	(0.150)	(0.132)
Student parent has upper secondary education level	0.336***	0.421***	0.374***
	(0.122)	(0.146)	(0.127)
Student parent has post-secondary education but did not attend university	0.563***	0.568***	0.570***
	(0.124)	(0.139)	(0.125)
Student mother has university or higher education level	0.679***	0.738***	0.715***
	(0.118)	(0.134)	(0.119)
Teacher has no formal education beyond upper secondary (reference)			
Teacher has all other majors	-0.192	-0.206	-0.191
	(0.211)	(0.182)	(0.200)

	(1) Standardized mathematics score	(2) Standardized science score	(3) Standardized aggregate index in mathematics and science
Teacher has a major in mathematics but no major in mathematics education	-0.409***	-0.339**	-0.386**
	(0.167)	(0.130)	(0.150)
Teacher has no formal education beyond upper secondary (reference)			
Teacher has all other majors	-0.823**	-0.539*	-0.707**
	(0.364)	(0.310)	(0.345)
Teacher has a Major in science education but no major in science	-0.129	0.242	0.041
	(0.298)	(0.303)	(0.303)
Teacher has a major in science but no major in science education	-0.072	0.162	0.038
	(0.273)	(0.260)	(0.273)
Major in science and science education	0.024	0.211	0.119
	(0.287)	(0.275)	(0.286)
Teacher does not explain a topic in mathematics again at all when a student does not understand (reference)			
Teacher explains a topic in mathematics again when a student does not understand	-0.003	0.002	0.009
	(0.128)	(0.157)	(0.141)
Teacher always explains a topic in mathematics again when a student does not understand	0.404***	0.292**	0.373***
	(0.096)	(0.116)	(0.103)
Teacher does not explain a topic in science again when a student does not understand	0.678***	0.733***	0.708***
	(0.178)	(0.242)	(0.202)
Teacher does not explain a topic in science again at all when a student does not understand (reference)			
Teacher explains a topic in science again when a student does not understand	0.652***	0.680***	0.668***
	(0.138)	(0.228)	(0.172)
Teacher always explains a topic in science again when a student does not understand	0.678***	0.900***	0.788***
	(0.134)	(0.240)	(0.179)
Teachers are less than satisfied with their job (reference)			
Teachers are satisfied with their job	-0.146	-0.152	-0.154
	(0.212)	(0.176)	(0.196)

	(1) Standardized mathematics score	(2) Standardized science score	(3) Standardized aggregate index in mathematics and science
Teachers are very satisfied with their job	-0.100	-0.089	-0.102
	(0.210)	(0.169)	(0.193)
Parental involvement in school activities is very low (reference)			
Parental involvement in school activities is low	-0.205	-0.087	-0.153
	(0.128)	(0.124)	(0.127)
Parental involvement in school activities is high	-0.086	-0.199	-0.144
	(0.107)	(0.121)	(0.113)
Student does not feel safe at all at school (reference)			
Student feels safe at school	-0.268	-0.247	-0.267
	(0.173)	(0.193)	(0.182)
Student feels very safe at school	-0.244	-0.184	-0.217
	(0.163)	(0.162)	(0.163)
Constant	-0.373	-0.877**	-0.614
	(0.406)	(0.400)	(0.401)
Observations	8,490	8,490	8,490
R-squared	0.225	0.217	0.228
Adjusted R-squared	0.222	0.215	0.225

Clustered standard errors in parentheses
*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Annex 4.3 Multivariate model with the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 international data assessment

	(1) Standardized score in mathematics	(2) Standardized score in reading	(3) Standardized score in science	(4) Standardized aggregate score of the three subjects
Female student	-0.015	0.380***	0.232***	0.216***
	(0.069)	(0.059)	(0.062)	(0.063)
Immigrant status	0.264***	0.323***	0.254***	0.300***
	(0.068)	(0.066)	(0.071)	(0.067)
Index of economic, social and cultural status	0.142***	0.195***	0.159***	0.177***
	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.023)
Student repeated at least once	-0.700***	-0.837***	-0.701***	-0.800***
	(0.077)	(0.056)	(0.069)	(0.064)
Student has no book at home (reference)				
Student has 1–10 books at home	0.160***	0.093**	0.141***	0.142***
	(0.044)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.039)
Student has 11–25 books at home	0.154***	0.027	0.142***	0.112**
	(0.050)	(0.043)	(0.047)	(0.045)
Student has more than 26 books at home	0.261***	0.210***	0.194***	0.241***
	(0.052)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.050)
No use of digital resources at school (reference)				
Up to one hour of use of digital resources at school	-0.039	0.007	0.005	-0.016
	(0.045)	(0.042)	(0.046)	(0.043)
More than one hour and up to two hours of use of digital resources at school	-0.069	0.042	-0.009	-0.011
	(0.055)	(0.049)	(0.059)	(0.052)
More than two hours and up to three hours of use of digital resources at school	-0.056	-0.063	0.034	-0.035
	(0.065)	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.063)
More than three hours and up to four hours of use of digital resources at school	-0.053	-0.069	0.026	-0.042
	(0.074)	(0.063)	(0.072)	(0.068)
More than four hours and up to five hours of use of digital resources at school	-0.066	-0.008	-0.092	-0.059
	(0.080)	(0.093)	(0.087)	(0.080)

	(1) Standardized score in mathematics	(2) Standardized score in reading	(3) Standardized score in science	(4) Standardized aggregate score of the three subjects
More than five hours and up to six hours of use of digital resources at school	-0.097	-0.081	-0.071	-0.102
	(0.095)	(0.073)	(0.085)	(0.074)
No use of digital resources before and after school (reference)				
Up to one hour of use of digital before and after school	-0.000	-0.017	0.090**	0.018
	(0.042)	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.039)
More than one hour and up to two hours of use of digital resources before and after school	0.057	0.054	0.029	0.055
	(0.052)	(0.045)	(0.050)	(0.046)
More than two hours and up to three hours of use of digital resources before and after school	0.113*	0.055	0.177***	0.120**
	(0.058)	(0.048)	(0.053)	(0.051)
More than six hours and up to seven hours of use of digital resources before and after school	-0.217*	-0.454***	-0.352**	-0.344***
	(0.131)	(0.126)	(0.154)	(0.131)
More than seven hours of use of digital resources before and after school	-0.344***	-0.289**	-0.144	-0.282**
	(0.121)	(0.119)	(0.110)	(0.110)
Student's mother has no level (reference)				
Student's mother has lower secondary education level	0.186**	0.065	0.138*	0.140*
	(0.073)	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.073)
Student mother has upper secondary education with no direct access to tertiary education	0.198**	0.022	0.223**	0.160*
	(0.084)	(0.098)	(0.100)	(0.089)
Student mother has upper secondary education with direct access to tertiary education	0.239***	0.207***	0.218***	0.243***
	(0.074)	(0.076)	(0.079)	(0.074)
Proportion of all teachers at the school with at least a bachelor's degree	0.015	0.030	0.029	0.025
	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.023)

	(1) Standardized score in mathematics	(2) Standardized score in reading	(3) Standardized score in science	(4) Standardized aggregate score of the three subjects
Proportion of all teachers at the school with at least a master's degree	0.117**	0.058	0.085**	0.091**
	(0.046)	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.041)
School has more than five teachers with at least a bachelor's degree with a major (reference = school has no teacher with at least a bachelor's degree with a major)	-0.294**	-0.291***	0.011	-0.202
	(0.134)	(0.112)	(0.131)	(0.123)
Teachers monitored by principal or senior staff a few times a year	-0.382***	-0.284*	-0.535***	-0.431***
	(0.121)	(0.149)	(0.117)	(0.133)
Learning hindered by teacher absenteeism	-0.077	-0.065	0.058	-0.041
	(0.115)	(0.094)	(0.121)	(0.111)
School organizes one-day in-service training for mathematics teachers	-0.212***	-0.104	-0.224***	-0.183**
	(0.076)	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.072)
Teacher never provided by incentives to integrate digital devices (reference)				
Teacher provided less than half of the time to integrate devices	0.202**	0.144*	0.179**	0.184**
	(0.092)	(0.073)	(0.085)	(0.081)
Teacher provided about half of the time to integrate devices	0.041	0.057	0.022	0.039
	(0.094)	(0.081)	(0.094)	(0.088)
Teacher provided more than half of the time to integrate devices	0.203	0.235	0.191	0.227
	(0.150)	(0.146)	(0.133)	(0.145)
Teacher never helps student learning in lessons (reference)				
Teacher helps student learning in some lessons	0.012	-0.102**	-0.039	-0.050
	(0.054)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.051)
Teacher helps student learning in most lessons	0.030	-0.027	0.026	0.006
	(0.052)	(0.042)	(0.052)	(0.047)

	(1) Standardized score in mathematics	(2) Standardized score in reading	(3) Standardized score in science	(4) Standardized aggregate score of the three subjects
Teacher never continues teaching until the students understand (reference)				
Teacher continues teaching until the students understand in some lessons	-0.066	-0.090*	-0.081	-0.081
	(0.051)	(0.048)	(0.055)	(0.049)
Teacher continues teaching until the students understand every lesson	0.062*	0.082**	0.057	0.076**
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.045)	(0.038)
Public school	-0.527***	-0.449***	-0.438***	-0.492***
	(0.134)	(0.125)	(0.124)	(0.128)
Class size	0.004	0.030	0.010	0.016
	(0.034)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.030)
Student-to-mathematics-teacher ratio	0.026	0.038*	0.009	0.028
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.017)	(0.020)
Percentage of school-year funding coming from the government	-0.045	-0.046	-0.075*	-0.055
	(0.045)	(0.036)	(0.043)	(0.041)
Percentage of school-year funding coming from benefactors, donations, bequests	-0.055**	-0.031	-0.065***	-0.050**
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Student safety index	0.016	-0.001	-0.002	0.003
	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)
School safety risks	-0.092***	-0.103***	-0.083***	-0.100***
	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.021)
Existence of intimidation or verbal abuse among students	0.012	0.015	0.099	0.041
	(0.134)	(0.117)	(0.118)	(0.119)
Existence of intimidation or verbal abuse from teachers	0.049	0.024	-0.173	-0.033
	(0.127)	(0.144)	(0.117)	(0.130)
Constant	0.785***	0.574**	0.753***	0.741***
	(0.218)	(0.241)	(0.220)	(0.230)
Observations	3,411	3,411	3,411	3,411
Adjusted R-squared	0.258	0.362	0.274	0.329

Clustered standard errors in parentheses

**** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

CHAPTER 5:

Inclusion and Diversity in Education



INTRODUCTION

The principles of diversity and inclusion are critical to fostering inclusive and sustainable educational systems worldwide, ensuring that all learners – irrespective of gender, ability, socioeconomic status or cultural background – can access, participate in and benefit equitably from quality education. While Jordan has made commendable progress across key indicators, as detailed in Chapter 2, national averages can mask significant pockets of exclusion, where specific groups have fewer educational opportunities and attain lower educational outcomes than their peers. With inclusive and equitable quality education, a key pillar of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, understanding and addressing structural and systemic barriers that perpetuate educational disparities is critical to realizing the right to education for all.

Jordan has long been committed to advancing inclusion and diversity in education, as demonstrated by its robust policy framework and range of associated strategic initiatives, which together provide a solid platform for addressing educational inequities and strengthening inclusive practices. Jordan has made particular strides in mainstreaming gender equality across education policies, improving access to education for refugees and expanding enrolment opportunities for children with disabilities. Rising demand and interventions on the supply side, focusing on improving equity in both the quality of education and access to it, have lent momentum to these gains.

The Jordan Declaration on Inclusion and Diversity in Education (2022) marked a significant milestone, identifying 10 groups of girls and boys most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education, including refugees, children with disabilities and those from low-income backgrounds. This declaration (presented in detail in Section 5.2), was developed through a highly consultative process and provides the analytical framework for this chapter. While the Declaration includes comprehensive definitions related to "inclusion and diversity in education" that reflect the national context, **Table 5.1** defines concepts adopted in Jordan, as well as more broadly used key terms that are relevant to this chapter. Despite important advances, this analysis shows that significant inclusion and diversity challenges remain. These include persistent disparities in access, retention and learning outcomes across socioeconomic, gender, nationality and disability dimensions. There are also structural barriers, such as inadequate infrastructure and insufficient specialized training for teachers in inclusive practices, as well as data gaps that limit the formulation, planning and implementation of effective equity policies.

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the status of inclusion and diversity in the Jordanian education system, focusing primarily on the basic and secondary levels.[112] Beginning with an overview of the policy, legal and institutional framework for inclusion and diversity in education, it then delves into the nuances of the disparities in Jordan, highlighting how different contextual factors impinge on the educational experience of girls and boys, affecting the educational outcomes they achieve. It also explores the structural and social barriers imposed by stereotypes and prejudices, as well as the socioeconomic and institutional factors that marginalize certain groups.[113] Specifically, this chapter will present the data available on how access, retention and learning outcomes differ based on learner characteristics and explain what quality inputs, processes, practices and policies the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) and its partners have developed to minimize inequities in education.

112 The subsectors of early childhood education and development (ECED), technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education are examined in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, respectively.

113 Structural barriers are obstacles embedded within systems, policies and institutions that hinder access to opportunities or services (e.g. discriminatory local laws or unequal access to resources). Social barriers are challenges or limitations that arise from social norms, attitudes or relationships and prevent individuals or groups from fully participating in society.

Table 5.1. Select terminology related to diversity and inclusion in education

Term	Definition
Disability	The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Law No. (20) for the Year 2017 Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (Article 3) defines a person with disabilities as "a person who has long-term physical, sensory, intellectual, mental, psychological or neurological impairment, which, as a result of interaction with other physical and behavioural [sic] barriers, may hinder performance by such a person of one of the major life activities or hinder the exercise by such person of any right or basic freedom independently."
Diversity	People's differences within a group, which may relate to race, ethnicity, gender, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, class or immigration status.
Equity	Ensuring that there is a concern for fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as being of equal importance.
Exclusion	Exclusion from education encompasses scenarios in which children are out of school and not receiving other formal education. Exclusion within education generally refers to situations where children are physically present in school but restricted from participating or learning to their full potential.
Gender equality	The understanding that women and men should have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural and political development.
Inclusion	A process that helps to overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.
Inclusive education	The following definition of inclusion and diversity in education was adopted by the Government of Jordan and its partners in 2022 through the endorsement of the Jordan Declaration on Inclusion and Diversity in Education: "Systems, political will, and commitments by all key partners and stakeholders are in place to guarantee that all students regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and circumstances have equal and equitable access to quality education in their home or host communities, with learning environments that embrace diversity and support their participation and achievements towards reaching their full social, emotional, physical, and cognitive potentials".
Mainstreaming	Focuses on integrating learners from marginalized groups (e.g. learners with disabilities) into mainstream schools. However, it tends to focus on the learner's condition(s) as being the cause of their exclusion (i.e. it is somehow the learner's fault that they are not learning). The solution offered by mainstreaming is to try to change or "cure" the learners so that they can adapt to the existing education system.

Term	Definition
Special education programmes	Separate education systems for different types of learners (e.g., special schools for people with disabilities and special units or classes within regular schools) are created through special education programmes. These offer learners with disabilities a chance to receive an education, but they also perpetuate segregation.
Special educational needs	These refer to the special accommodations or modifications needed by certain children, such as gifted students and those with learning, sensory, physical or mental disabilities, or individual psychosocial needs.

Source: Adapted from UNESCO (2017, p. 7); and Jordan, MoE and HCD (2020, pp. 16–21).

Notes: (1) Definitions adopted by the MoE, as articulated in the Reference Document of the National Framework on Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan, are highlighted in green. (2) The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) uses the United Nations definition of disability from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which recognizes persons with disabilities as those who have "long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations, 2006). (3) The Washington Group on Disability Statistics studies disability by focusing data collection on "those who have difficulty in carrying out a few basic, universal activities" (Washington Group, n.d.).



5.1. Political, legal and institutional context surrounding inclusion and diversity in education

This section outlines the political, legal and institutional frameworks surrounding diversity and inclusion in the Jordanian education system, summarizing international and national commitments, legal provisions, and strategic plans aimed at improving the educational experiences for children vulnerable to exclusion.

Jordan benefits from a robust, supportive policy framework predicated on principles of non-discrimination, providing a strong enabling environment for inclusion and diversity throughout its education system.

Jordan has comprehensive commitments to inclusion, diversity and gender equality in education, which are rooted in robust international, regional and national frameworks (Table 5.2). In addition to adopting the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),** Jordan has ratified several key international treaties, including the **Convention against Discrimination in Education** (1960), the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** (1965) and the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (1979). Additionally, Jordan supports universal education principles through its adoption of the **World Declaration on Education for All** (1990) and the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989). The **Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education** (1994) and the **Dakar Framework for Action** (2000), emphasizing inclusive education for marginalized groups, and the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (2006), providing legal guarantees for persons with disabilities, are also part of the Jordanian policy framework. Jordan also participates in the **Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)** developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which found in its most recent assessment in 2023 that there were continuing high levels of gender discrimination in Jordan, relative to both the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and world averages, that had not yet been addressed. In 2023, the Jordanian MoE and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) developed a compendium, **Compendium Jordan: National and International Commitments on the Equal Right of All Children to Quality Education in Inclusive and Child-Friendly Settings,** which details all legal and policy frameworks to which the country is a signatory, further enhancing transparency and accountability for achieving inclusive education goals.

Table 5.2. Global and national commitments of Jordan to inclusion and diversity in education

Global commitments endorsed by Jordan	National commitments
• Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) • Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) • Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States (1978) • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) • Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) • Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989) • World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) • Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) • Millennium Development Goals (2000) • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) • Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (2015)	• Education Act No. 3 (1994) with its later amendments • Law No. 20 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017) • Education Strategic Plan (2018–22), extended until 2025 • National Policy to Ensure the Rights of People with Disabilities in Jordan (2020–30) • Ten-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education (2020–30) • Roadmap Towards Capacity Development for System Strengthening, Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan (2022) • Jordan Declaration on Inclusion and Diversity in Education (2022) • National Statement of Commitment at the Transforming Education Summit (2022) • Gender Equality Action Plan of the MoE (2023–25) • Economic Modernisation Vision (2022–33), including a vision for the education sector • Reference Document of the National Framework on Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan (2025)

Source: Adapted from Jordan, MoE and HCD (2020); and Jordan, MoE, and UNESCO (2024).

At the national level, the legal framework in Jordan further underscores its commitment to equitable education. The Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (1952) guarantees the right to education for all. Article 20 states that "Elementary education shall be compulsory for Jordanians and free of charge in government schools", and Article 6 stipulates that:

- Jordanians shall be equal before the Law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards to their rights and duties, on grounds of race, language, or religion.
- The Government shall ensure work and education within the limits of its possibilities, and shall ensure a state of tranquillity and equal opportunities to all Jordanians.

The Law No. 20 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017) laid new legal foundations for the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of persons with disabilities. Pertinent to education, the Law prohibited the exclusion of a person with a disability "from any educational institution on the basis of, or because of, disability". The law emphasizes the importance of accessibility across all educational institutions, including the provision of accessible teaching and learning materials and reasonable accommodation in both public and private schools. Articles

17, 18, 19 and 20 also stress that educational policies, strategies, plans and programmes should incorporate the requirements of educating persons with disabilities in order to help them achieve "the full enjoyment of their right to education and access to all educational programs, services, facilities and institutions". If access is impeded because of lack of reasonable accommodation or accessibility, the law mandates that the MoE provide a suitable alternative. Additionally, the Law mandated:

- The establishment of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), which is tasked with overseeing the implementation of policies, ensuring accessibility, providing technical support to ministries and monitoring the progress of disability inclusion across sectors, including education.
- Coordination between the MoE and the HCD to: (a) revise the curricula to reinforce acceptance and diversity, and (b) develop a comprehensive national plan for enrolling students with disabilities into educational institutions.

Jordan has put in place several strategies and development plans with a view to achieving inclusion, diversity and gender equality in education. The Government of Jordan reiterated its commitment to inclusive education for all in the **Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018–2022,** which was extended until 2025, and its associated **Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education** and **Gender Equality Action Plan 2023–2025 (GEAP+).** The **National Strategy for Human Resource Development (2016–2025)** aims to shift the education system towards equity by scaling the implementation of non-discriminatory and enabling practices for all learners. While the main strategic objective of the roadmap for education presented in the **Economic Modernisation Vision,** is a skilled, qualified Jordanian society prepared for twenty-first century needs, the Vision also aims to achieve 100% enrolment in basic and secondary education by 2033. National strategies for inclusive education have also been laid out in the **Ten-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education,** and the **Jordan Declaration on Inclusion and Diversity in Education.** In 2025, the MoE developed a **Reference Document of the National Framework on Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan** with the aim of compiling all Jordanian commitments and plans concerning inclusion and diversity in education to provide a policy framework for further guidance and monitoring of the implementation process and to lay the foundations for concrete steps forward across the system at the central, field directorate and school levels.

The purpose of the Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education is to achieve gender equality in and through all aspects of education, from planning and administration to curriculum development and teaching practices. The Strategy "aims to guide and support the MoE's efforts to ensure that gender inequalities in education are identified and appropriate interventions to address them are implemented" (Jordan, MoE, 2018, p. 147). It is fully aligned with the ESP 2018–20 and aims to mainstream gender into its implementation. The Strategy includes 15 strategic objectives, such as: (a) reducing the gender gap in education by ensuring that girls and boys, particularly those from marginalized groups, have equal access to quality education, (b) reducing the risk of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), (c) ensuring the use of sex-disaggregated data in education information systems, and (d) promoting gender balance in school leadership and community participation, and (e) ensuring that learning content, processes and environments are free from gender bias. The Strategy outlines interventions to strengthen institutional capacity, promote gender balance in leadership, and enhance the ability of the MoE to implement gender-responsive policies. It also focuses on improving data collection and analysis to guide decision-making and measure progress toward achieving gender equality in education. The implementation of the Strategy is supported by a multiyear **Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).** The current action plan for 2023–2025 (GEAP+) encompasses 12 strategic objectives, 23 subobjectives, 47 measures and 87 indicators. GEAP+ is translated at the decentralized level into 42 targeted action plans, many of which focus on

reducing SRGBV and improving gender equality in the TVET subsector. On the ground, the GEAP+ is supported by a gender focal point network and numerous awareness-raising sessions, workshops and trainings to strengthen the sense of ownership and accountability for its implementation, in particular at management level.

The Ten-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education focuses on creating accessible, gender-sensitive, and inclusive education environments and expanding educational opportunities, particularly for children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Strategy explicitly intends to implement inclusive education to "establish a culture of commitment to the education of all students, including students with disabilities in mainstream schools, as part of the policy, practice and responsibility of the Ministry of Education" (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2020, p. 9). It focuses on nine specific goals related to achieving universal inclusive education, designed to address both structural barriers against and cultural attitudes toward disability inclusion in education. These include, but are not limited to: (a) identifying students with disabilities through an integrated and comprehensive educational assessment, (b) rendering school buildings and facilities accessible to persons with disabilities, (c) including persons with disabilities who drop out of school and those not enrolled in schools in non-formal education (NFE) programmes, (d) strengthening the professional capabilities of teachers to deliver inclusive education, and (e) developing curricula and teaching strategies that meet the requirements of inclusive education. A major focus of the Strategy is on changing societal attitudes toward students with disabilities, through media, advocacy and partnerships with local communities and religious groups. The Strategy also outlines extensive training and capacity-building for educators, school administrators, and support staff, including training on inclusive education techniques, teaching strategies and ways to work with students with disabilities. The implementation of the aforementioned Strategy is guided by the **Roadmap Towards Capacity Development for System Strengthening, Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan,** as informed by an institutional capacity needs assessment undertaken in 2021.

A National Statement of Commitment, delivered at the 2022 United Nations Transforming Education Summit (TES), has further reinforced efforts for inclusive education. The Statement reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to providing safe, healthy, and accessible learning environments and support systems for all children, with special emphasis on children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education. Measures included the implementation and continuation of a school meals programme, efforts to bolster the safety of school environments, the provision of psychosocial support, and specialized programmes for life skills education. Commitments were also made to monitor and address inequities in educational outcomes through the disaggregation of all SDG 4 indicators.

Collectively, these policies demonstrate that Jordan has a multilayered approach to creating a more inclusive and equitable education system. The frameworks prioritize system strengthening, equitable funding, capacity development, advocacy and the removal of barriers to inclusion for children of all groups, as further elaborated below.

5.2. Children identified as most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education

Inclusive education systems are built on a rights-based framework that empowers all children and youth equitably and celebrates diversity. A human rights approach addresses students as rights holders, entitled to know, claim and enjoy their rights, and it considers teachers, schools and the MoE as the duty bearers, obligated to respect, protect and realize students' rights, in particular their right to education, but also their other human rights, such as physical integrity and cultural rights.

Political commitment to inclusive education is most concretely articulated through the Jordan Declaration on Inclusion and Diversity in Education, which was endorsed at the highest level in 2022. The Declaration committed to putting learners' inclusion and diversity at the heart of education following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It outlined nine areas of action to achieve greater inclusion and diversity in Jordan, namely: (a) system strengthening; (b) operationalized legal frameworks; (c) increased data collection and access; (d) additional equitable funding and sustainable programming; (e) systematic capacity and professional development; (f) removing barriers and mainstreaming inclusion; (g) improved and safer learning environments, (h) coordinated advocacy and planning; and (i) more relevant and future-oriented education. In an effort to operationalize these action areas, the Declaration established the following definition for inclusion and diversity in education: "Systems, political will, and commitments by all key partners and stakeholders are in place to guarantee that all students regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and circumstances have equal and equitable access to quality education in their home or host communities, with learning environments that embrace diversity and support their participation and achievements towards reaching their full social, emotional, physical, and cognitive potentials" (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2022, p. 2).

The Declaration identified 10 groups of children in Jordan most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education. Jordan is focused on addressing the barriers these groups face in accessing quality education. These groups, as presented in English alphabetical order in the Declaration (pp. 3–4), are:

- **Children affected by drugs and substance abuse**
- **Children experiencing gender inequality**
- **Children from ethnic, language and social minorities**
- **Children from low-income backgrounds**
- **Children (including orphans) suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse**
- **Children who are understimulated and disengaged** (including first generation learners, children who are not supported by their families, and those who are often referred to as "gifted and talented").
- **Children with disabilities**[114]
- **Institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement**
- **Out-of-school children** (i.e. children who dropped out of school or never enrolled in formal education, and street and working children)
- **Refugee, returnee and unregistered children** (i.e. children who were never registered at birth or may be registered in another country)

Current efforts to support these 10 vulnerable groups in Jordan are multiple and diverse,

114 Including, for instance, children with learning difficulties.

requiring an efficient coordination mechanism to align the initiatives of all partners across the education sector and beyond. Progress towards developing this coordination mechanism, along with other necessary elements for a unified effort for inclusion and diversity in education, has yet to take shape. For example, while both the Jordan Declaration and the National Framework on inclusion and diversity in education stipulate the need to enhance data collection and monitoring in order to support these 10 marginalized groups and provide recommendations for how current data systems could be better leveraged to support diversity and inclusion in education, such actions have not yet been realized.

To the extent possible, this chapter presents data to portray how the Jordanian education system is experienced by the 10 groups of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education. Procedural definitions for each of these groups, as defined in the Reference Document of the National Framework on Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan, are presented in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3. Procedural definitions for groups of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education

Groups of children	Procedural definition
Children affected by drugs and substance abuse	This group includes children who use drugs themselves or live in families where parents or siblings abuse drugs or misuse prescribed medications.
Children experiencing gender inequality	This group comprises boys and girls who experience various forms and causes of gender inequality (e.g. early marriage, child labour, gender-based violence). It also exemplifies the importance of mainstreaming gender equality across all other groups by ensuring data disaggregation and addressing differing needs by gender.
Children from ethnic, language and social minorities	This group includes non-Jordanian students, excluding refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Yemen, as well as stateless persons (e.g. the Bidoon). These are groups that face challenges integrating into Jordanian society due to social norms and specific cultural factors.
Children from low-income backgrounds	This group includes children living in poverty pockets across Jordan who benefit from school feeding programmes. These children are particularly at risk of dropping out or being unable to access education.
Children (incl. orphans) suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse	This group refers to children exposed to violence, children living in orphanages, and abandoned children.
Children who are understimulated and disengaged	This group includes gifted or high-achieving students and children from uneducated families who lack motivation or support for learning.

Groups of children	Procedural definition
Children with disabilities	Article 3 of the Jordanian Law No. 20 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017) defines a person with disabilities as "a person who has long-term physical, sensory, intellectual, mental, psychological or neurological impairment, which, as a result of interaction with other physical and behavioural [sic] barriers, may hinder performance by such a person of one of the major life activities or hinder the exercise by such person of any right or basic freedom independently." An impairment will be considered of a long-term nature if it is not expected to disappear within at least 24 months of the start date of treatment or rehabilitation. Physical obstacles and behavioural barriers include a lack or absence of reasonable accommodation or accessibility, as well as individual behaviours and institutional practices that discriminate on the basis of disability. Major life activities include: (a) eating, drinking, administering self-care, reading and writing; (b) movement and mobility; (c) interaction and concentration, expression, and verbal, visual and written communication; (d) learning, rehabilitation and training; and (e) work.
Institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement	This group refers to children who are detained, convicted or whose movement is restricted (due to involvement with the juvenile justice system). Lack of data is a key constraint to understanding the education challenges of children affected by drugs and substance abuse and institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement.
Out-of-school children	This group consists of children who dropped out of school or never enrolled in formal education, and street and working children.
Refugee, returnee and unregistered children	This group refers to children holding refugee cards, including Syrian, Iraqi and Yemeni children. It also includes unregistered children, that is, those who were not registered at birth or may have been registered in another country.

Source: Adapted from Jordan, MoE and HCD (2020).

Significant data gaps are a key constraint, however. While disaggregated and intersectional data and indicators are essential to inform policy-making regarding inclusion and diversity in education, census data in Jordan are outdated (as highlighted in Chapter 2), resulting in heavy reliance on household surveys instead. Although gender-focused and sex-disaggregated data monitoring systems are well-established in Jordan, there are no applicable legal provisions regulating the production and dissemination of sex-disaggregated statistics or those related to other groups vulnerable to exclusion.[115] As a result, significant data gaps exist for several of these groups, in particular: (a) children from low-income backgrounds; (b) children affected by drugs and substance abuse; (c) understimulated and disengaged children; (d) institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement; and (e) children (including orphans) suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse (see **Table 5.4**).

115 The MoE is currently collaborating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNESCO on better utilizing OpenEMIS software to facilitate the collection of data on refugee students and their protection status.

Table 5.4. Data gap analysis of key education indicators for groups of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education

Groups of children	Access to and retention in pre-tertiary education	Access to TVET and NFE programmes	Learning outcomes on international assessments	Learning outcomes on national assessments	Learning outcomes on national examinations	Access to specialized programmes or schools	Access to specialized staff or services
Children affected by drugs and substance abuse	No	No	No	No	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No
Children experiencing gender inequality	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Children from ethnic, language and social minorities	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	Yes, and sex-disaggregated*	No	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No
Children from low-income backgrounds	Yes, and sex-disaggregated*	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated*	No	No	No	No
Children suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse, including orphans	No	No	No	No	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No
Children who are understimulated and disengaged	No	No	No	No	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No
Children with disabilities	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	Yes, and sex-disaggregated
Institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement	No	No	No	No	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No

Groups of children	Access to and retention in pre-tertiary education	Access to TVET and NFE programmes	Learning outcomes on international assessments	Learning outcomes on national assessments	Learning outcomes on national examinations	Access to specialized programmes or schools	Access to specialized staff or services
Out-of-school children	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No	No	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No
Refugee, returnee and unregistered children	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	No	No	No	Yes, and sex-disaggregated	Yes, and sex-disaggregated

Source: Authors

*Notes: * indicates data available through non-ministerial data sets, such as household surveys or large-scale international learning assessments.*

5.2.1. Children affected by drugs and substance abuse

Children who persistently abuse, or are frequently subject to, substances often experience an array of problems, including academic difficulties, physical and mental health problems, poor relationships with their peers, families and communities, and involvement with the juvenile justice system (Akiba et al., 2002; Squeglia, Jacobus and Tapert, 2009). Therefore, drug and substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation programmes have significant implications for the continued development of human capital.

The Jordanian Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act No. 23 (2016) and its amendments criminalize the use and possession of illegal narcotic and psychotropic drugs. In 2020, there were 16,118 cases of narcotics abuse and possession in Jordan, with the rate of drug crimes per 10,000 people rising from 6 in 2011 to 19 in 2020 (Alhrerat et al., 2023). While full decriminalization is not possible for Jordan given its commitment to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988), the Kingdom has taken steps to support rehabilitation, such as allowing judges to replace imprisonment for drug-related offenses with alternatives, including placement in specialized clinics (Alhrerat et al., 2023). The Anti-Narcotics Department in Jordan is guided by the **National Anti-Drug Strategy (2024–2026).**

The lack of relevant data makes it difficult to estimate the number of children who use drugs themselves or live in families where parents or siblings abuse drugs or misuse prescribed medications. Data from juvenile education and rehabilitation centres in Jordan offer some insights into drug abuse among children who are arrested and institutionalized, but the overall prevalence of drug use among children is likely underestimated. Information about how children's educational experiences are affected by living with family members who abuse drugs or misuse medications is even more limited.

Although criminal arrest data suggest that the rate of substance abuse among children in Jordan is declining, drug use remains a critical concern among boys. According to data collected in 2022–2023 (see **Table 5.5**), there were 148 children aged 12–18 arrested for drug-related offenses. Furthermore, 10% of boys aged

16–18 were admitted to juvenile education and rehabilitation centres due to drug-related offenses. That is compared to only 4.7% of girls of the same age, 3.3% of boys aged 12–15 and 0% of girls aged 12–15. Thus, it is a significantly gendered issue, and more resources could be invested in better understanding and responding to drug and substance abuse issues among boys and young men.

Table 5.5. Number of children in juvenile education and rehabilitation centres for drug-related offences by gender and age, 2017/2018 through 2022/2023

Age	2017/ 2018	2018 /2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023
12–15 years old						
Male	72	88	38	18	20	20
Share of institutionalized children (%)	11.3%	13.2%	7.8%	3.3%	2.8%	3.3%
Female	1	5	1	0	1	0
Share of institutionalized children (%)	5.9%	23.8%	3.6%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%
Subtotal	73	93	39	18	21	20
Share of institutionalized children (%)	11.2%	13.5%	7.6%	3.2%	2.8%	3.1%
16–18 years old						
Male	547	593	293	138	128	125
Share of institutionalized children (%)	29.3%	30.0%	21.8%	11.3%	9.2%	10.0%
Female	9	13	4	3	4	3
Share of institutionalized children (%)	13.8%	21.3%	8.7%	5.3%	5.4%	4.7%
Subtotal	556	606	300	141	132	128
Share of institutionalized children (%)	28.7%	29.8%	21.4%	11.1%	9.0%	9.7%
Total	629	699	339	159	153	148
Overall share of institutionalized children (%)	24.3%	25.7%	17.7%	8.7%	6.9%	7.6%

Source: Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), 2017/2018–2022/2023.

In 2021, a study in Jordan found that 16.9% of participating secondary school students tested positive for illicit drugs (Raffee et al., 2021). Of these students, 80% were males. This gender difference can be attributed to cultural norms and stereotypes, in which it is more socially acceptable for men and boys to engage in drug use and smoking than it is for women and girls. The study found that disruptive behaviours, such as disrespect towards teachers and school management, and destruction of property, were prevalent among students and significantly associated with drug addiction (Raffee et al., 2021).

Rehabilitation services available in Jordan are often not tailored for children. Once a child is admitted to a juvenile education or rehabilitation centre, they undergo an initial medical examination. If symptoms of addiction are observed, the child is transferred to the National Centre for the Rehabilitation of Addicts (NCRA), where they are prescribed medication without being admitted for treatment and are then sent back to the juvenile institution. The NCRA does not have a department or staff dedicated to the treatment of children.

5.2.2. Children experiencing gender inequality

While gender is an analytical category for each of the nine other groups of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education, it is also considered as its own separate group under the Jordan Declaration on Inclusion and Diversity in Education. Although Jordan has achieved universal basic education for both boys and girls, important gender-based differences emerge at early and later education levels, as well as among marginalized student populations.

Inequitable gender norms contribute to a variety of adolescent and subsequent adult gender inequities in and beyond education. Jordan has a gender-segregated schooling system, in which boys and girls often experience different learning environments, pedagogies, educators and school communities. Gender barriers also vary depending on factors, such as refugee status, disability, economic background and geographic region.

The complex interplay between patriarchy, tradition and religion prevents girls and young women in Jordan from accessing education continuously and safely and pursuing the educational coursework of their choice. This, combined with the added vulnerabilities of protracted warfare and displacement, means that refugee girls are exposed to even greater exclusion from education. Girls are more likely to be kept at home due to safety concerns and household responsibilities, such as caring for younger siblings or elderly family members. Girls, particularly Syrian refugees, are also far more likely to be married at an early age. When girls under the age of 18 marry and become pregnant, they are unlikely to resume their education. Low academic performance followed by dropout is also cited as a risk factor for early marriage (UNICEF Jordan, 2014). Abuse of girls at school has also been widely reported, with issues ranging from verbal and sexual harassment to corporal punishment. Gender-based physical and psychological threats and abuses, along with the coercive practice of early marriage, put girls, especially refugees, at greater risk in terms of their health, psychological well-being, and social and economic prospects (Hattar-Pollara, 2019). Particularly in households that are more vulnerable to economic shocks, female children are subject to greater educational disruption than are their male counterparts due to gender norms that undervalue the education of girls (Krafft, Assaad and Pastoor, 2021). Gendered social expectations also influence academic subject preferences and career aspirations for girls, creating what has been termed the "culture of shame" by one report and channelling females towards less sustainable, lower-paying career paths (Assaad et al., 2021). The greater educational attainment of girls has not yet translated into greater economic participation by women in the Jordanian economy and labour market.

Economic pressures to join the labour market and the questionable quality of all-male schools leads to dropout and underperformance among boys in Jordan. Whether boys are Jordanians or refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic or the State of Palestine, they are still less likely to be enrolled in schools than girls. In 2015, Jordan also had the largest gender gap in the world between boys' and girls' performance on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test (Presler-Marshall, 2018). Despite their poorer educational outcomes in terms of both access and learning, there has been little research into the educational experience of male children in Jordan. Boys are most likely to drop out of school due to low academic performance, poor classroom management, school-based violence and bullying, or economic pressure to join the workforce (Presler-Marshall, 2018). For refugee boys, the need to contribute to household income can pull them out of school all at once or slowly over time as their absences accumulate and their performance declines. The poor academic performance of boys may be linked to teacher quality, the availability of male teachers, violence in schools and the quality of learning environments in all-male schools (Al-Khatib et al., 2021). Compared to girls, boys and their families have historically underinvested in education, as reflected by the smaller amount of time that boys spend doing their homework and that their parents spend supervising them in that task (Presler-Marshall, 2018). An in-depth analysis on the quality of boys' schools would provide an updated understanding of the quality of learning available to male students in Jordan and the factors that push or pull them from the formal education system.

5.2.3. Children from ethnic, language and social minorities

Jordanian society is characterized by unique social communities and pluralism – differences in ethnic, linguistic and social backgrounds – as well as a large number of non-Jordanian nationalities. Jordan has adopted laws against racial discrimination and established a committee on the elimination of racial discrimination to tackle discrimination in education.

An inclusive education system not only empowers schools to provide all students with equitable opportunities to learn but also offers a chance to reduce the risk of broader societal biases. Social, ethnic and linguistic differences, and discrimination based thereon, can be an obstacle on a child's educational journey, inhibiting their learning and integration. For example:

- **Jordan has become home to number of immigrant subgroups.** The vast majority (over 95%) of students enrolled in the formal education system are of Jordanian or Syrian nationality, but there are also over 90,000 students of Egyptian, Iraqi, Palestinian and other nationalities, according to educational management information system (EMIS) data collected in 2022–2023 (see **Table 5.6**). While not all of these subgroups are under refugee status, their transition to a new national context may bring challenges related to navigating a new education system, new social services, and, in some cases, a new language.

Table 5.6. Numbers and share of students enrolled in the formal education system by nationality, academic year 2022/2023

Jordanian students	Syrian students	Palestinian students	Egyptian students	Iraqi students	Students of other nationalities
2,016,184 (88.6%)	163,629 (7.2%)	56,672 (2.5%)	16,127 (0.7%)	9,316 (0.4%)	12,412 (0.5%)

Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023

- **The Bidoon of Jordan tend to live nomadically or semi-nomadically, without a determined nationality, legal status in the country or the necessary documentation.** Many Bidoon are native to the large desert area to the east of the western highlands of Jordan, the Badia region. However, the size of the Bedouin-related Bidoon population in Jordan is unknown. While one report noted that there were more than 7,000 Bidoon in the northern Badia region, further research is required to estimate and understand the extent of the stateless and at-risk populations associated with the Bedouin in Jordan (Akram and Bustany, 2021). Many of the Badia's nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled communities depend principally on raising livestock for their livelihood.[116] In addition to being subject to discrimination when accessing public services, the mobile nature of the Badia's pastoral communities can also prevent regular school attendance.
- **Jordan hosts a small number of non-Arabic-speaking populations.** Language minorities in Jordan, such as Syriac-speaking Assyrians, are reported to be shifting from their mother tongue to the predominant language of Arabic to ease their integration in Jordanian society (Dweik and Al-Refa'i, 2015). This shift, when not supported by proper instructional resources for second language learners, can have a negative impact on language acquisition.
- **The Dom minority community is often highly marginalized and faces multilayered challenges in exercising their basic human rights, such as access to quality education.** There is limited information on the educational experiences of the Dom's two major subgroups, the Bani Mura (who tend to speak Domari and Arabic) and the Turkmen (who tend to speak Turkish), with no exact figures on the size of their community in Jordan; estimates range from 30,000 to 130,000 people (Devonald et al., 2021). While the Dom have historically been nomadic, they have become increasingly settled. Reports indicate that Dom communities have high rates of malnutrition, child labour and early marriage, and they face discrimination in employment and educational contexts (Devonald et al., 2021). There is a significant lack of data on the status and well-being of young people from the Dom community in Jordan. However, research as part of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) study found that despite a positive view of education, many Dom children had either never attended school or had dropped out at an early age, with many reporting being unable to read or write (Devonald et al., 2021).

International and national data systems have limited information about the educational opportunities and outcomes of ethnic, linguistic and social minorities in Jordan. However, the Jordanian EMIS system has education data from 2017 which are disaggregated by nationality, categorizing students as either Jordanian, Syrian or "other nationalities" (e.g. Egyptian, Palestinian or Iraqi). This information, which provides important insights into non-Jordanian ethnic groups, is presented where available in the analysis below. There are far less data available on the educational outcomes of other ethnic, language and social minorities. Addressing this data gap requires that greater resources to allocated towards achieving the Jordanian vision of inclusion and diversity in education.

116 Although the national poverty rate has declined, it remains high in the Badia region, with the southern and northern Badia being particularly impoverished. This is attributable to relatively large family sizes, scattered settlement patterns, high rates of adult illiteracy and limited sources of income.

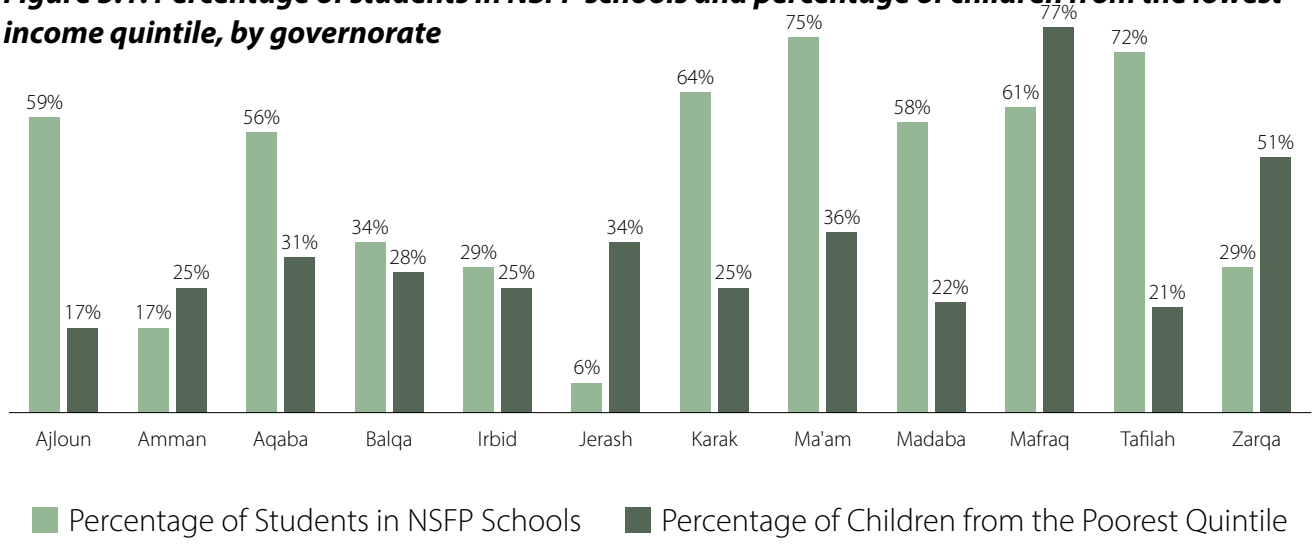
5.2.4. Children from low-income backgrounds

Jordan has long supported social protection programmes designed to support its citizens in meeting their basic needs and contending with poverty-related risks. The Kingdom's social protection programming is guided by the **National Social Protection Strategy 2019–2025.** Throughout its history, the Government of Jordan has pioneered new approaches to social protection, such as the Zakat Fund and collection law, direct housing programmes for low- and middle-income citizens, and the National Aid Fund. One of these programmes, the National School Feeding Programme (NSFP), reaches over 2,300 schools across the Kingdom. The Reference Document of the National Framework for Diversity and Inclusion in Education in Jordan states that participation in such programmes can be used as a proxy for identifying children from low-income backgrounds. By doing so, the Government of Jordan can identify, monitor and direct additional targeted support to the over 430,000 general education students (cira 19%) from low-income backgrounds.

Currently, the NSFP is focusing primarily on schoolchildren in poverty pockets and with areas of specific need based on health and socioeconomic studies conducted 10 years ago. However, it should be noted that the lack of recent national studies on micronutrient deficiency and food security among children and up-to-date poverty data hinders present-day expansion efforts and outreach to all vulnerable children.

Schools benefitting from the NSFP are not always located in the governorates with the most impoverished communities. In theory, the efforts of the NSFP are meant to be concentrated in the governorates with higher rates of poverty and food insecurity; in practice, however, there is great variation between governorates when it comes to the proportion of students benefiting from the NSFP. For example, over 70% of students in the Governorates of Ma'an and Tafielah study in schools that participate in the NSFP, compared to less than 10% in Jerash. However, there is only a weak correlation between the share of students participating in the NFSP and the percentage of children from the lowest income quintile, as measured by the 2023 DHS (see **Figure 5.1**).[117] In the Governorate of Ajloun, the NSFP is implemented in schools serving 59% of all students, yet only 17% of children in Ajloun fall into the lowest income quintile. Comparatively, 34% of children in Jaresh are from the country's lowest income quintile, but the schools that participate in the NSFP represent only 6% of all students.

Figure 5.1. Percentage of students in NSFP schools and percentage of children from the lowest income quintile, by governorate



Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023, and the 2023 DHS

117 Household income quintiles are calculated using a principal component analysis, wherein household scores are allocated based on the number and types of consumer goods owned and various housing characteristics. National income quintiles are compiled by assigning the household score to each household member, ranking each person in the population by their individual score, and then dividing that distribution into five equal segments, each comprising 20% of the population (DoS and ICF, 2024).

While participation in the NSFP can be a useful proxy for monitoring and supporting children from low-income backgrounds, additional measures need to be considered and analysed so as to better understand the prevalence of child poverty in Jordan and how children living in poverty navigate and experience the education system.

Poverty levels vary by both location and governorate. Data from the 2023 DHS indicate that rural households are more likely than urban households to fall into the lowest income quintiles. A total of 52% of rural households are in either the lowest income quintile (25%) or the second lowest (27%). Income varies by region as well, with 25% of the population in the central region falling in the highest income quintile, compared to only 11% in the north and 12% in the south (DoS and ICF, 2024). There is also great variation in income by governorate, with the percentage of the population in the highest income quintile ranging from 2% in Mafraq to 31% in Amman (DoS and ICF, 2024). More than a third of the population in Jaresh (34%), Ma'an (36%), Mafraq (77%) and Zarqa (51%) fall in the lowest income quintile.

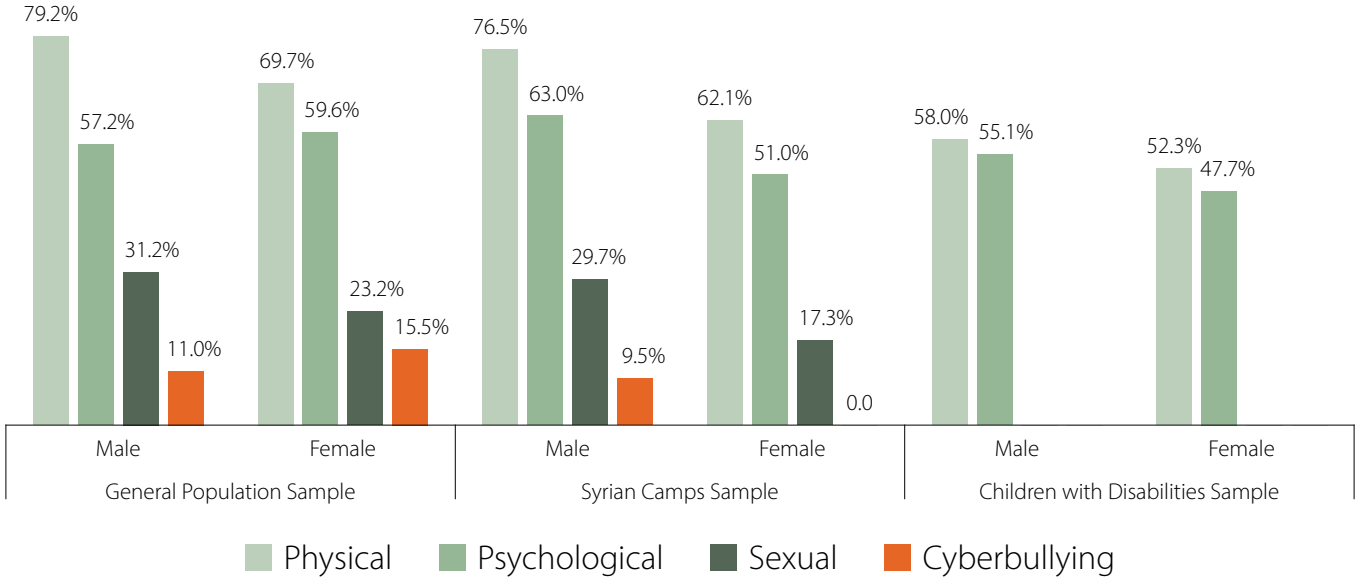
Households vulnerable to economic shocks are more susceptible to disruptions in education, irregular school attendance and early exits from formal schooling. The vast majority of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line, facing significant structural and social barriers to accessing long-term, sustainable employment, such as cumbersome administrative procedures, widespread informal labour in the economy, and discrimination from employers and colleagues (International Rescue Committee, 2017; Rubiano, Santamaria and Hammer, 2022). Marginalized Jordanian minorities are more likely not only to suffer from poverty but also to experience gaps in essential social services.

5.2.5. Children suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse, including orphans

The right of children to be protected from violence is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Jordan ratified in 1991. The Convention defines violence as "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse" against persons under the age of 18, whether committed by parents, other caregivers, peers, institutions or others (UNICEF and Jordan, NCFA), 2020, p. 3). In 1997, the Jordanian Government established the Public Security Directorate's Family Protection Department to oversee the protection of children and their families against domestic violence and sexual abuse. It also operates a 24-hour confidential and free telephone helpline for receiving and registering cases of violence against children. Child protective services in Jordan are guided by the **National Framework for Family Protection against Violence** and the **Strategic Plan for the Protection of the Family and the Prevention of Domestic Violence.**

According to data from the 2023 DHS, 76% of children aged 2-18 had experienced at least one form of violent discipline in their lifetime. While rates of violent discipline did not differ significantly by gender, economic background, disability status or nationality, Syrian children in refugee camps were more likely to report suffering from violent forms of discipline. While this figure has decreased over the past 11 years (from 89% in 2012), the vast majority of children in Jordan are still subject to violent methods of discipline. In 2020, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Jordanian National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) conducted the National Study on Violence Against Children in Jordan, confirming high rates of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children, especially boys (see **Figure 5.2**).

Figure 5.2. Sample proportions (%) of children ages 8–17 who have experienced violence in their lifetime by gender and type of violence, 2020



Source: Authors, adapted from UNICEF and Jordan, National Council for Family Affairs (2020)

Notes: Definitions for physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence and online violence taken from 2019–2020 National Study on Violence Against Children in Jordan (pp. 4–5).

Data collected by the MoE through its reporting mechanisms can be leveraged to understand the prevalence of school-based violence in Jordan. Jordan has multiple channels for students to report school-based violence, as further described below. However, these data only reflect the cases that are reported and therefore may not be fully representative of the actual prevalence of school-based violence since some incidents may remain unreported. Furthermore, it is not possible to determine whether increases in reports of violence are driven by increases in violence or by improvements in the accessibility of national reporting mechanisms.

If being orphaned is understood as the consequence of losing one or both parents, the percentage of orphaned children in Jordan is 3%, and it decreases with increasing income levels. Data from the 2023 DHS show that less than 1% of children under the age of 18 do not live with a biological parent, although it is a more common living arrangement for children from low-income backgrounds (DoS and ICF, 2024). Orphanhood rates vary slightly by governorate, from only 2% in Amman to 4% in Ma'an, Karak and Zarqa (DoS and ICF, 2024). However, children may be separated from their parents and placed in orphanages or other alternative care settings for various reasons, and many children in these settings do, in fact, have at least one living parent or other relative.

Data on abandoned and orphaned children in Jordan are limited. The Family and Childhood Directorate of the MoSD funds and manages a number of orphanages across the country and monitors the number, characteristics and well-being of children living under alternative care. When housed in these settings, children are enrolled in nearby government schools. According to data from UNICEF and the MoSD, for every 100,000 children under the age of 18 years, 15 were in residential care in 2022.[118] However, official records typically capture only a small fraction of the true number of children in residential care and often omit children living in privately owned centres (Petrowski et al., 2017). Several private providers operate their own centres for orphaned

118 Of the countries of the Mashreq and Maghreb regions, only Morocco and Egypt also had recent information on the proportion of children in residential care. In 2022, for every 100,000 children under the age of 18 in Egypt, 28 were in residential care. In Morocco, 83 children out of every 100,000 individuals under the age of 19 were in residential care.

and abandoned children in Jordan. Concerns about data privacy and the continuous flow of children into and out of the care of government and private orphanages also hinders the Government of Jordan from producing a reliable estimate of how many abandoned children are within their own care centres and those of private providers. Demographic and schooling data of orphans are also not readily accessible in Jordan, making it difficult to further analyse the educational experiences and needs of this marginalized population.

Orphans are an extremely vulnerable population, often exposed to poverty, stigma, physical and sexual violence, and a lack of educational resources. Children who live in substandard care centres or orphanages experience marked delays in both physical and behavioural development, with consequences for their present and future academic performance (St. Petersburg-USA Orphanage Research Team, 2008). The widespread recognition of the adverse impacts that institutionalization has children's development and well-being highlights the need to reduce the numbers of children living in alternative care settings. However, the current system in Jordan for monitoring and addressing the needs of orphaned and abandoned children is insufficient to achieve this goal.

5.2.6. Children who are understimulated and disengaged

While it is acknowledged that all children have their own distinct potential and talents and are therefore all "gifted and talented" in some way, this subsection specifically addresses "academically gifted" students, defined as those demonstrate outstanding academic performance by achieving exceptionally high scores on end-of-year examinations, for example.

Jordan has been at the forefront of MENA nations that have invested in nurturing gifted and talented students, though student numbers remain limited. Early initiatives include the creation of the Al-Salt Centre for Gifted and Talented Students in 1982 and a formal mandate to educate gifted and talented students in the public and private sectors, which was implemented in the 1986/1987 academic year (Ghanem, 2011 as cited in Al-Hroub, 2023). The MoE, through its Department of Programmes for Distinguished and Gifted Students, is responsible for creating a school environment that allows gifted and talented students to demonstrate their potential and abilities. The MoE has supported and offered several programmes for gifted students over the past four decades, which, according to Al-Hroub (2023) include:

- **Pioneering centres for the gifted and talented:** The first centre dedicated to nurturing gifted and talented students in Jordan was established in Al-Salt in 1982, through a collaboration between the Emaar Al-Salt Foundation, the University of Jordan and the MoE (Ghanem, 2011 as cited in Al-Hroub, 2023). Since this initiative began, the number of centres has grown to 19.
- **Academic acceleration programme:** Endorsed by the MoE in 1994, this programme allows learners who are highly advanced academically speaking to skip one or two grade levels between Grades 2 and 8 (Al-Hroub, 2023).
- **Jubilee School:** Established in 1993, the school operates under the supervision of the MoE and is considered one of the leading institutions for gifted education in Jordan. It offers a comprehensive four-year secondary education programme (Grades 9–12).
- **King Abdullah II Schools for Excellence:** In the 2000/2001 academic year, the MoE established a network of public schools across the Kingdom for academically gifted students who receive a score 95% or above on Arabic, English, mathematics and science exams in Grades 5 and 6 (Al-Hroub, 2023). In the 2023/2024 academic year, there were five King Abdullah II Schools for Excellence, serving a total of 1,519 students (males: 782; females: 737) at the upper basic and secondary levels.

- **Resource rooms for the gifted and talented:** In the 1999/2000 academic year, the MoE initiated the use of fully equipped resource rooms within regular public schools to identify gifted students in Grades 3–10 and provide them with enrichment activities. In 2021/2022, there were 70 resource rooms benefiting 2,000 gifted students and staffed by approximately 150 teachers (Al-Hroub, 2023).

While it is clear that Jordan has curated a number of support systems for children identified as academically gifted and talented, data on educational outcomes among this population, such as academic performance, and post-secondary education and career trajectories, was not available at the time of this report. Information on the quality of these gifted and talented programmes and their impacts on students is also limited.

The MoE has yet to identify how to monitor the educational outcomes of children who are understimulated and disengaged. While data suggests that disengagement from education generally appears to be a trend primarily affecting boys, little more is known about understimulated youth in the Jordanian education system. Further planning and coordination among education stakeholders will be necessary to develop a shared understanding of which children are at risk of disengagement, and how to adequately identify and support them.

5.2.7. Children with disabilities

Jordan has made a distinction between children with disabilities and children with learning difficulties. While there is more legislation protecting the educational rights of persons with disabilities (defined broadly as those who have long-term impairment that interferes with major life activities), the procedural definition for this group also includes children with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit disorders. The Directorate of Programmes for Students with Disabilities within the MoE is responsible for meeting the needs of students with disabilities **and those with learning difficulties** and facilitating their inclusion in local schools and communities.

The vast majority of school-aged persons with disabilities are left behind by educational institutions. The ability to accurately estimate of the number of children and youth living with disabilities in Jordan is therefore limited. In fact, according to information from the 2015 General Population and Housing Census, 79% of persons with disabilities in Jordan do not receive any form of education (DoS and ICF, 2019). As will be discussed further below, EMIS data suggest that the number of children with disabilities or learning difficulties who benefitted from educational services in the 2022/2023 academic year did not exceed 21,000 individuals, representing only 0.9% of the total number of students in Jordan.[119]

Traditionally, children with disabilities in Jordan have been educated in separate, specialized schools. Among these institutions, which may or may not be residential, are special education centres and specialized schools for children with visual or hearing impairments. In the 2022/2023 academic year, Jordan had 110 special education centres and 95 specialized schools for children with disabilities, including 10 schools for deaf children and 1 school for blind children.

Efforts to fully include learners with disabilities in mainstream educational settings are advancing on a student-by-student basis. As of 2025, Jordan has 359 public schools that have been categorized as pioneering inclusive schools, uniquely designed and equipped to provide basic services for students with disabilities (Jordan, MoE, 2025). The vast majority of these schools are

119 MoE statistics indicate that 21,859 students with various types of disabilities were served by the Ministry in 2018/2019. For that same academic year, the MoSD indicated that 5,859 students with disabilities were served in MoSD-affiliated centres and institutions, and in the private sector. Therefore, the total number of students with disabilities receiving educational or quasi-educational services was 27,694, which represents 1.9 % of all students in Jordan (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2020).

directly supported by development partners and other non-governmental organizations rather than through the Government budget.

Partially inclusive learning modalities, such as separate classes in mainstream schools, have increased access to education for children with learning disabilities. Integrating students with learning disabilities or difficulties into general education has been possible through multipurpose resource rooms and classes that are separate from regular classrooms and follow a tailored curriculum. The majority of multipurpose resource rooms are hosted in primary schools and primarily serve students in Grades 2–6. Typically, one learning support teacher serves 18–25 students.[120] Students diagnosed with a learning disability or difficulty participate in multipurpose resource room classes between three and five times per week, attending mainstream classes for the remainder of the time. A 2022 study analysing the quality of learning in multipurpose resource rooms indicated poor results. Curriculum delivery was disorganized and not comprehensive, perhaps due to teachers' inexperience with inclusive education methodologies and the lack of a curriculum adapted for students with learning difficulties (Al-Zboon et al., 2022). As of the 2022/2023 academic year, there were 1,150 multipurpose resource rooms across the country. It should be noted that these rooms serve only students with learning disabilities or difficulties, rather than being a support tool for all students with disabilities.

While considerable progress has been made towards welcoming children with disabilities into mainstream education settings, regular schools still struggle to implement inclusive education. Insufficient knowledge of and skill in inclusive education, inadequately prepared teachers and overcrowded classrooms make it difficult to meet the needs of children with disabilities (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2022). A recent study conducted focus groups with teachers and found that educators support the inclusion of children with physical and mild intellectual disabilities but often do not believe it is currently possible to do so given the insufficient human and physical resources, inaccessible buildings, inadequate teacher training and lack of parental support (Al-Hassan et al., 2022).

Other government and non-governments agencies also contribute towards expanding educational opportunities and other services for children with disabilities. The MoSD manages 26 inclusive daycare centres for persons with disabilities offering a range of services, such as a mentorship programme, life skills classes, vocational training and preparation for the labour market. The centres also provide other support services, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and access to a special education expert (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2020). These inclusive daycare centres also host early intervention units, which, had served 574 children with disabilities aged 6 years or younger by 2025.

5.2.8. Institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement

In light of its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, Jordan is obligated to harmonize its juvenile justice system with international standards. Countries that have ratified the Convention have the obligation to establish a juvenile justice system whose principal aim is to reintegrate children into their communities and society (UNICEF and Jordan, NCFA, 2018).

Children in conflict with the law are affected by both child-specific legislation and general legislation at various stages of the juvenile justice process. The juvenile justice system in Jordan is guided by the **Juvenile Law No. 32 (2014),** which emphasizes a rehabilitative approach to juvenile justice. The **Conflict Resolution Regulations (2016)** structure the bodies authorized to hear cases of children in conflict with the law and set forth the principles and procedures to be applied by Jordanian police and mediator. In 2023, the Government of Jordan launched the **National Strategy for Juvenile Justice 2024–2028,** outlining plans to decrease

120 There are generally no other professionals (e.g. speech therapists or teaching assistants) in these classrooms.

juvenile delinquency, enhance the efficiency of juvenile justice procedures, and improve rehabilitation and care for vulnerable children and youth.

Jordan has specialized justice institutions for children, including juvenile police, juvenile courts, juvenile rehabilitation facilities and a juvenile probation service. However, these specialized institutions and professionals do not yet provide full geographical coverage over the 12 governorates (UNICEF and Jordan, NCFA, 2018). The three general justice institutions that interact with children in conflict with the law but do not have staff specialized juvenile justice are: the Public Security Directorate, gov¬ernors' offices and the National Centre for Human Rights.

The juvenile justice system in Jordan concerns children ages 12–18, who fall into conflict with the law and are placed into either juvenile education institutions (pre-trial) or juvenile re¬habilitation institutions (post-trial), both of which are overseen by the MoSD.[121] The Directorate of Juveniles and Protection, of the MoSD, manages and operates six of these juvenile education and rehabilitation centres across the country. Through the MoE, all children in these institutions are provided with educational programming tailored to their needs. E-learning is also being piloted in the juvenile education and rehabilitation centres. The educational programmes available there consist of:

- Literacy and Education, designed for children who are illiterate or have no previous schooling.
- Evening Studies, covering academic content from the national curriculum for Grades 7–12 for those who have yet to finish basic education.
- The Cultural Promotion of Dropouts Programme is intended for children who have previously dropped out of school, but are able to read and write. Children who finish the study requirements are granted a Grade 10 certificate.
- Home Studies, where qualifying children study independently and sit for their end-of-cycle examinations at their juvenile institution. Children are provided with the necessary resources, such as textbooks and stationery.
- Enrolment in nearby formal schools, permitted for qualifying children who meet certain conditions.

According to data from the 2022/2023 academic year, there were 1,956 institutionalized children in Jordanian juvenile education and rehabilitation centres, living without the freedom of movement. **Table 5.7** shows a significant decline in the population of juvenile education and rehabilitation centres since 2017/2018 for both boys and girls within both age brackets. Boys make up the largest proportion of children housed in juvenile education and rehabilitation centres, although their numbers have declined over the six years analysed. Boys aged 16–18 continue to make up the most significant proportion of those residing in juvenile education and rehabilitation centres, followed by younger boys aged 12-15 years.

121 In accordance with international standards, 12 is the minimal age of criminal responsibility in Jordan. Children in conflict with the law who are below age 12 are not allowed to be prosecuted and are classified not as "delinquents" but rather as "children in need of care and protection" who cannot yet be held accountable for their offences.

Table 5.7. Number of students in juvenile education and rehabilitation centres by gender and age, academic years 2017/2018 through 2022/2023

Year	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023
12–15 years old						
Male	637	666	485	540	719	605
Female	17	21	28	18	31	34
Subtotal	654	687	513	558	750	639
16–18 years old						
Male	1,869	1,974	1,342	1,219	1,393	1,253
Female	65	61	46	57	74	64
Subtotal	1,934	2,035	1,388	1,276	1,467	1,317
Total	**2,588**	**2,722**	**1,901**	**1,834**	**2,217**	**1,956**

Source: MoSD data, 2017/2018 through 2022/2023

Syrian and Jordanian children go through the same system when in conflict with the law. However, a Syrian child's entry point into the juvenile justice system can also be through the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate in the Ministry of Interior. Syrian children in conflict with the law are separated from their families and placed in the Azraq camp reception centre. Reunification of these children with their families requires multiple levels of advocacy and can be lengthy. According to the 2018 Situation Analysis of Juvenile Justice, the majority of institutionalized Syrian children in Jordan were boys. (UNICEF and Jordan, NCFA, 2018).

Information on the educational outcomes of institutionalized children without freedom of movement in Jordan is limited. International evidence shows that institutionalized children tend to have poor academic performance, low attachment to school, low literacy levels, and high rates of learning and behavioural issues, all of which are often exacerbated when these children are institutionalized and absent from formal schooling for extended periods (Assink et al., 2015). Additional effort also needs to be invested in the monitoring and supporting the mental health needs of children in juvenile education and rehabilitations institutions. A small-scale study in 2025 found that well-being among institutionalized children in Jordan was poor, with 36% reporting frequent suicidal ideation, 57% experiencing moderate to severe depressive symptoms, and 47% facing high stress levels due primarily to academic pressures (Dardas et al., 2025).

5.2.9. Out-of-school children

As discussed in Chapter 2, data from 2023 show that 2.6% of children aged 6–11 and 5.0% of children aged 12–15 were out of school at that time. Although limited population data made it impossible to offer an updated estimate in this report of how many children are out-of-school, Chapter 2 and Section 5.3.3 of this chapter present analyses concerning the prevalence and trends of out-of-school children in Jordan. This report classifies children as out-of-school regardless of whether their age-appropriate education level is compulsory (e.g. basic education) or not (e.g. kindergarten or secondary education).

The procedural definition for this group of children also includes working and street children; however, updated information on these populations in Jordan is limited. In 2016, the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch, the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and the Department of Statistics (DoS) conducted a national child labour survey in Jordan, which found that 1.0% of children aged 7–14 years (33,182 children) were engaged in some form of child labour (CSS and ILO, 2017). At the time of the survey, most of these children in Jordan were working in agriculture, the service sector (e.g. in small retail shops, auto-repair shops or private homes) and on the street (e.g. as street vendors). Some children in Jordan were also found to be subjected to forced labour in agriculture, forced begging and coerced involvement in illicit activities. The survey found that, rather than attending school, Syrian refugee children were often required to work alongside their families in the agriculture and service industries (CSS and ILO, 2017). A similar survey on the prevalence of child labour in Jordan has not been conducted since then.

The National Committee on Child Labour, led by the MoL, formulates and oversees the implementation of child labour policies. In 2022, the Committee drafted the National Strategy for the Reduction of Child Labour and helped to amend Jordanian penal code to increase penalties for enabling or encouraging a child under the age of 16 to beg or collect donations (United States, Department of Labor, 2022). Moreover, child labour units have been established within both the MoSD and the MoL. The MoSD unit intervenes to support children engaged in child labour, attempts to return them to formal or non-formal schooling and provides services to their families. The MoL unit coordinates government campaigns against child labour and manages the Child Labour Monitoring System, a case management tool that helps coordinate efforts by relevant government agencies and civil society organizations to ensure that children are removed from child labour and provided with critical social and educational services (United States, Department of Labor, 2022).

5.2.10. Refugee, returnee and unregistered children

Jordan has been one of the countries most affected by the Syrian refugee crisis, hosting the second-highest share of refugees per capita in the world. As at March 2025, there were approximately 615,000 refugees registered with UNHCR in Jordan, a majority of which were from the Syrian Arab Republic, with large shares also coming from Iraq and Yemen (UNHCR, 2025). Additionally, in 2021, there were 2.3 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Jordan (UNRWA, 2021).

Large influxes of refugee families into Jordan have increased the student-age population and raised school enrolment levels across the country, with the Government mobilizing resources in response. Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the Jordanian Government and the international community have been working together to provide Syrian refugees with free primary and secondary education by

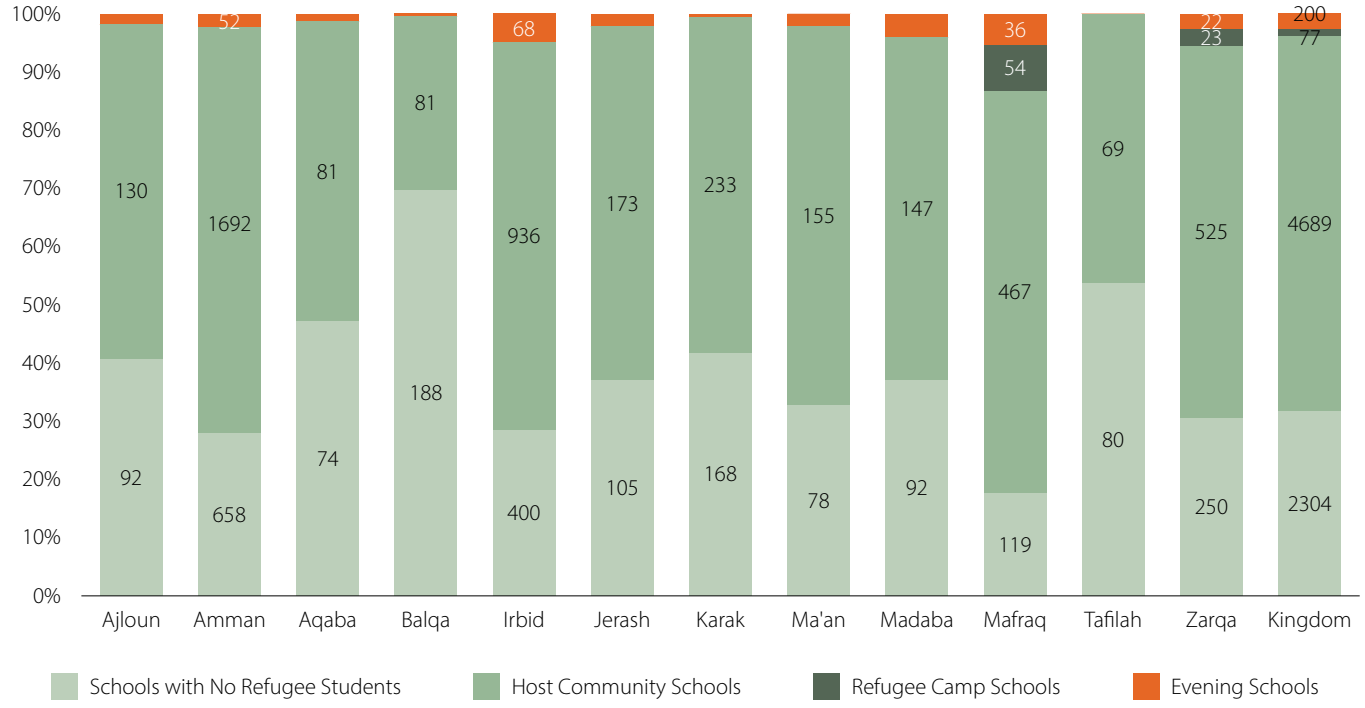
exempting them from tuition fees and covering the cost of textbooks. In 2023, the MoE expanded this policy to include refugees of all nationalities.

Syrian refugees residing in Jordan have free access to the public education system, whereas Palestinian refugees are educated in UNRWA schools. Refugee students can access education in Jordan through one or more of the following pathways: UNRWA schools (for Palestinians), government schools (located in refugee camps or host communities, which have single- or double-shift schools) or NFE programmes. While Palestinian refugees are taken in at UNWRA schools, Syrian refugee children are eligible for free public education, receiving "service cards" from the Jordanian Ministry of Interior (MoI), which enable them to enrol in public schools in their respective host communities (Sieverding et al., 2018). In addition to the 77 schools providing education to Syrian refugees in camps, almost two-thirds of the mainstream schools in Jordan (4,802) welcome Syrian refugee students into the same classes as Jordanian learners. To meet the educational needs of the large number of Syrian children, 204 schools in Jordan adopted a double-shift system that allows them to provide education to both Syrian and Jordanian children in separate morning and afternoon shifts. Though refugee student numbers are unevenly spread across governorates, this double-shift system created to meet the increased demand has had negative effects on the quality of education (as discussed in Chapter 4). In the 2022/2023 academic year, UNRWA operated 161 schools that provided free basic education to Palestinian refugees residing in Jordan.

The distribution of schools by orientation to refugee inclusion varies significantly between governorates. Figure 5.3 displays the number of schools by orientation to refugee inclusion and by governorate. Differences in a region's composition of schools is influenced by its proximity to, or distance from, borders with conflict-afflicted areas. For examples, Governorates, such as Balqa, Irbid, Madaba, Mafraq and Zarqa, which are close to or share a border with the State of Palestine or the Syrian Arab Republic, have larger proportions of refugee students, who are served by double-shift, refugee camp or UNRWA schools. For Governorates further from such areas, including Ajloun, Aqaba, Karak, Ma'an and Tafielah, a significant majority of refugee students are educated in host community schools. The Governorates of Amman, Balqa, and Jerash have more than half of all refugee students studying in double-shift schools.



Figure 5.3. Number of schools by orientation to refugee inclusion and by governorate, academic year 2022/202023



Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023

Refugees in Jordan face a number of structural barriers to accessing education and progressing along the educational ladder. Refugee registration policies require children to obtain identification documents, or "service cards", to enrol in public schools. However, since 2014, these cards have become unobtainable for many Syrians no longer in refugee camps – unless they already have the backing of a guarantor who is a Jordanian citizen, a first-degree relative and above the age of 35 (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Although the 2012 and 2023 DHS point to a significant reduction in the number of children (Syrian and otherwise) in Jordan without a birth certificate, which is a necessary component for receiving the aforementioned "service card", lacking identification documents continues to be a barrier to enrolment (DoS and ICF, 2024). Certification and documentary requirements create additional obstacles for older children, who are required to show official school certificates from their home countries in order to prove that they completed the previous grade, which is an impossibility for families that fled without bringing their original documents (Human Rights Watch, 2016). MoE regulations also prohibit children from enrolling in school if they are three or more years older than their grade level, a phenomenon more likely to affect Syrian children.

5.3. Inclusion and diversity in educational access and retention

This section analyses the available data on trends in enrolment and retention as they pertain to the groups of children identified as most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education.

Due to the challenges with population data presented in **Box 2.1** (see Chapter 2), this section primarily uses data sourced from household surveys, such as the 2012, 2018 and 2023 DHS and the 2016 Jordan Labour Market Panel Survey (JLMPS). One key equity indicator used in the following subsections to analyse how different groups of children experience the education system in Jordan is the parity index (see **Box 5.1**).

Box 5.1. Parity indices and their interpretation

A **parity index (PI)** is the ratio of the indicator value for one group to that of another. A value of exactly 1.00 indicates parity between the two groups. For the purposes of this analysis, parity indices that fall within the range of 0.97 to 1.03 will be considered to represent parity. The gender parity index (GPI) is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator.

Example: If boys have a primary school completion rate of 96% and girls have an 80% completion rate, their GPI would be calculated by dividing the value for the girls' indicator (0.80) by the value of the boys' indicator (0.96), which leads to a GPI of 0.83. This value is outside of the range typically categorized as parity (0.97-1.03) and would indicate that girls are more disadvantaged in the system when it comes to primary school completion.

5.3.1. Enrolment trends seen through an equity lens

Enrolment trends from various sources show disparities in access to education across multiple equity dimensions.

Results from the 2023 DHS indicate disparities in access to education across multiple equity dimensions, though gender parity was met at all education levels. A summary of net attendance rates (NAR) for student groups at the kindergarten, basic and secondary education levels is presented in **Table 5.8**. Gender parity in attendance has been reached at all levels of general education. Across other equity dimensions, NAR at the lower and upper basic levels show the least disparity. For example, parity in attendance at the lower basic level has been reached between Jordanian children and children of other nationalities; at the upper basic level, it has been reached between Syrian children who live in host communities and those who live in refugee camps. However, attendance rates at the kindergarten and secondary levels show greater variation by student characteristics, such as disability status, socioeconomic status, familial presence and nationality.

Table 5.8. Net attendance rates, and associated parity indices, by education level and student population, 2023

		Kindergarten	Lower basic	Upper basic	Secondary
Gender	**Female**	45.6%	94.1%	87.8%	58.2%
	Male	45.0%	93.7%	86.1%	56.9%
	GPI (female/male)	1.01	1.00	1.02	1.02
Location	**Rural**	44.0%	93.6%	88.1%	61.0%
	Urban	45.4%	93.9%	86.8%	57.1%
	PI (rural/urban)	0.97	1.00	1.01	1.07
Income	**Lowest income**	29.9%	90.7%	72.5%	39.1%
	Highest income	62.2%	95.0%	94.0%	63.3%
	PI (lowest income/highest income)	0.48	0.95	0.77	0.62
Disability	**Has a significant disability**	53.2%	61.0%	53.7%	30.8%
	Has a moderate disability	59.8%	87.3%	79.5%	49.7%
	Without disability	44.7%	94.5%	87.6%	58.1%
	PI (significant disability/ without disability)	1.19	0.65	0.61	0.53
	PI (moderate disability/ without disability)	1.34	0.92	0.91	0.86
Nationality	**Syrian**	30.2%	88.6%	63.1%	25.0%
	Other nationalities	39.7%	91.8%	85.8%	38.8%
	Jordanian	47.4%	94.5%	89.2%	61.2%
	PI (Syrian/Jordanian)	0.64	0.94	0.71	0.41
	PI (other nationalities/ Jordanian)	0.84	0.97	0.96	0.63
Hosting location (Syrians only)	**Camp**	51.4%	92.0%	63.2%	15.9%
	Host community	25.9%	88.0%	63.1%	26.5%
	PI (refugee camp/host community)	1.99	1.05	1.00	0.60
Familial presence	**Both parents present**	45.3%	93.9%	87.0%	57.9%
	One or both parents absent	36.7%	92.4%	85.5%	51.4%
	PI (one or both parents absent/both parents present)	0.81	0.98	0.98	0.89

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Note: (1) The 2023 DHS utilizes the Washington Group's criteria for disability, namely: children are classified as having a moderate disability if they self-report some difficulty with the following functional domains: (a) seeing, (b) hearing, (c) walking or climbing steps, (d) remembering or concentrating, (e) self-care, such as washing or dressing, or (f) communicating with others. Children are classified as having a significant disability if they self-report having substantial challenges with or being entirely unable perform these functions. (2) Parity indices highlighted in red fall outside the 0.97–1.03 range typically categorized as "parity". Parity indices highlighted in green fall within the 0.97–1.03 range, typically categorized as "parity". (3) Presence is defined as the child's parent being alive at the time the survey was conducted.

Available data on enrolment trends for the groups of children identified as most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education are discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

Enrolment trends by children's nationality and refugee status

Enrolments of children from ethnic minorities and refugee backgrounds have increased, although these children remain less likely to attend school compared to Jordanian children.

The increase in enrolment of Syrian children has outpaced that of Jordanians and children of other nationalities over the past six years. Across all education levels, the average annual growth rate of enrolment between 2017/2018 and 2022/2023 has been highest for Syrian children (see **Table 5.9**). The change in kindergarten and upper basic enrolment levels among Syrian students is particularly noteworthy, with an average annual growth rate nearly triple that of Jordanian students. Enrolment growth of students of other nationalities has been slowest at the kindergarten level, with an average annual growth rate of less than 1% between 2017/2018 and 2022/2023. These data should be interpreted with caution, however, because without reliable population data, it is impossible to determine whether growth in enrolment for certain student groups was due to improved access to education or an increase in the size of these groups.

Table 5.9. Growth in enrolment by student nationality and education level, 2015/2016 through 2022/2023

Education Level	Nationality	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	Average annual growth rate
Kindergarten	All students	115,560	122,176	128,035	134,733	145,189	119,828	140,928	162,071	4.8%
	Jordanian	–	–	119,212	125,979	135,128	111,206	130,984	149,109	4.6%
	Syrian	–	3,971	4,974	5,394	6,389	6,726	6,934	9,102	12.9%
	Other	–	–	3,849	3,360	3,672	1,896	3,010	3,860	0.1%
Basic	All students	1,594,545	1,679,993	1,722,678	1,759,590	1,769,593	1,796,494	1,827,154	1,833,683	1.3%
	Jordanian	–	–	1,506,155	1,541,914	1,560,732	1,581,580	1,570,568	1,610,084	1.3%
	Syrian	–	131,171	134,117	134,103	131,839	138,658	141,605	144,555	1.5%
	Other	–	–	82,406	83,573	77,022	76,256	114,981	79,044	-0.8%
Lower basic	All students	1,049,674	1,106,611	1,133,982	1,147,202	1,126,254	1,112,411	1,113,808	1,105,189	-0.5%
	Jordanian	–	–	972,991	987,156	977,738	967,388	945,084	961,866	-0.2%
	Syrian	–	104,151	106,441	105,416	99,445	98,486	97,061	96,472	-2.0%
	Other	–	–	54,550	54,630	49,071	46,537	71,663	46,851	-3.0%

Education Level	Nationality	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	Average annual growth rate
Upper basic	All students	544,871	573,382	588,696	612,388	643,339	684,083	713,346	728,494	4.4%
	Jordanian	–	–	533,164	554,758	582,994	614,192	625,484	648,218	4.0%
	Syrian	–	27,020	27,676	28,687	32,394	40,172	44,544	48,083	11.7%
	Other	–	–	27,856	28,943	27,951	29,719	43,318	32,193	2.9%
Secondary	All students	189,173	190,312	201,126	220,396	236,888	260,985	276,669	278,586	6.7%
	Jordanian	–	–	186,362	204,225	219,743	241,192	255,041	256,991	6.6%
	Syrian	–	5,978	6,425	7,113	7,530	9,180	9,967	9,972	9.2%
	Other	–	–	8,339	9,058	9,615	10,613	11,661	11,623	6.9%

Source: EMIS data from 2015/2016 through 2022/2023

Notes: Average annual growth rates were calculated from 2017/2018 to 2022/2023.

Between 2017/2018 and 2022/2023, enrolment growth trends were not the same for boys and girls, even within the same nationality groups. For example, at the lower basic level, boys of other nationalities saw the more significant decline in enrolment, followed by girls of other nationalities (see **Table 5.10**). Regardless of nationality, boys also saw a greater growth in enrolment at the secondary level compared to girls.

Table 5.10. Average annual growth in enrolment by student nationality, gender and education level, 2017/2018 through 2022/2023

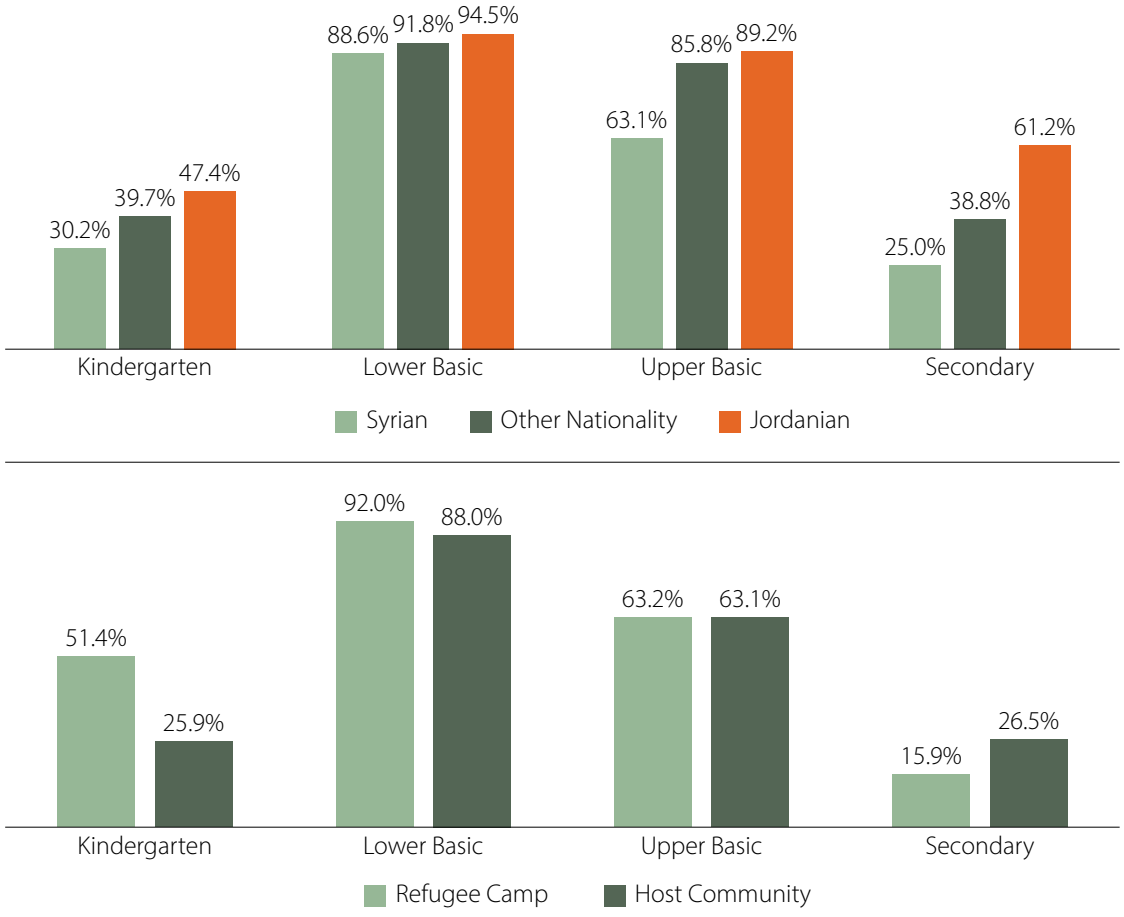
Education level	Student nationality	Student gender	Average annual growth rate (2017/2018 to 2022/2023)
Kindergarten	Jordanian	Boy	4.5%
		Girl	4.7%
	Syrian	Boy	12.9%
		Girl	12.8%
	Other	Boy	-0.1%
		Girl	0.2%
Lower Basic	Jordanian	Boy	-0.1%
		Girl	-0.3%
	Syrian	Boy	-2.0%
		Girl	-1.9%
	Other	Boy	-3.2%
		Girl	-2.8%
Upper Basic	Jordanian	Boy	4.0%
		Girl	4.0%
	Syrian	Boy	11.7%
		Girl	11.7%
	Other	Boy	2.7%
		Girl	3.2%

Education level	Student nationality	Student gender	Average annual growth rate (2017/2018 to 2022/2023)
Secondary	Jordanian	Boy	7.6%
		Girl	5.8%
	Syrian	Boy	9.3%
		Girl	9.1%
	Other	Boy	7.4%
		Girl	6.5%

Source: EMIS data from 2017/2018 to 2022/2023

However, Syrian children and children of other nationalities were less likely to attend school across all levels when compared to Jordanian children, though access varied by level. At every education level, more Jordanian children have access to schooling than do children of Syrian or other nationalities (see **Figure 5.4**). Furthermore, Syrian children residing in refugee camps have greater access to kindergarten and lower basic education, while those living in host communities have greater access to secondary education. Information on the educational access of non-Syrian refugees was not available for this report.

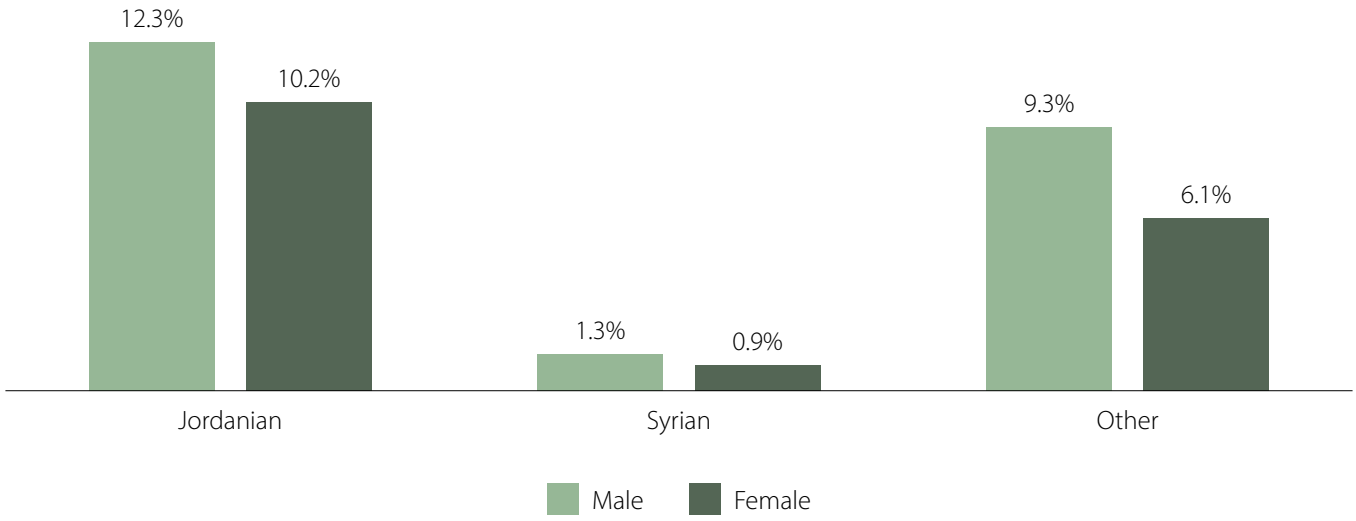
Figure 5.4. Net attendance rates by education level and student nationality and by education level and location for Syrian students, 2023



Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

At the secondary level, Jordanian children were far more likely than Syrians or other nationalities to opt for a vocational path, although boys predominated among both groups. Syrian students had the lowest participation in vocational education, with only 1.1% of all Syrian secondary school students enrolled therein for the 2022/2023 academic year (see **Figure 5.5**). This is a stark contrast to the higher rates of vocational education participation among Jordanian students and students of other nationalities, indicating potential barriers to access or a preference for the academic tracks among Syrian students. Furthermore, while MoE regulations for vocational education do not prevent Syrian students from attending, the number of the places available at vocational schools does not meet the overall level of demand among students. Therefore, Jordanian students tend to be prioritized for places in vocational education programmes (this is discussed further in Chapter 7). Among all students, regardless of nationality, males are more likely than females to pursue a vocational path at the secondary level. In the 2024/2025 academic year, the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) programme enrolled a total of 33,590 students; a 5.5% share thereof (1,838 students) were non-Jordanian. Among BTEC students, 37% of all students were female and 40% of non-Jordanian students were female. BTEC programme enrolment data disaggregated by student nationality and course specialization were not available at the time of this report.

Figure 5.5. Percentage of secondary school students enrolled in vocational education by student nationality and gender, 2022/2023



Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023

Note: Does not include students enrolled in the BTEC programme.

Enrolment trends by children's socioeconomic background

Children from low-income backgrounds were less likely to attend school at all levels, especially kindergarten.

There was a significant gap between the attendance rates of children from the highest and lowest income backgrounds, particularly at the kindergarten level. As can be seen in **Table 5.8,** children from the highest income quintile have a net attendance rate of 62.2% in kindergarten, compared to only 29% for the children from the lowest income quintile. This disparity narrows in lower basic education but remains pronounced in both upper basic and secondary education.

While gaps in access between children from the highest and lowest income backgrounds have grown for both boys and girls at the lower and upper basic levels, disparities at the secondary school level have declined over the past five years. Between 2018 and 2023, the gap in attendance rates between children from the highest and lowest income backgrounds declined significantly at the secondary school level, falling by approximately 13.6% on average (15.2% for girls and 13.4% for boys). This narrowing of the attendance rate gap between secondary school children from opposite socioeconomic backgrounds is caused by both greater net attendance among boys and girls from the lowest income quintile and a slight drop in net attendance among boys and girls from the highest income quintile. Across the same time span (2018–2023), the gap in access between the highest and lowest income quintiles grew by an average of 3.9% and 4.1% at the lower and upper basic levels, respectively (see **Figure 5.6**).

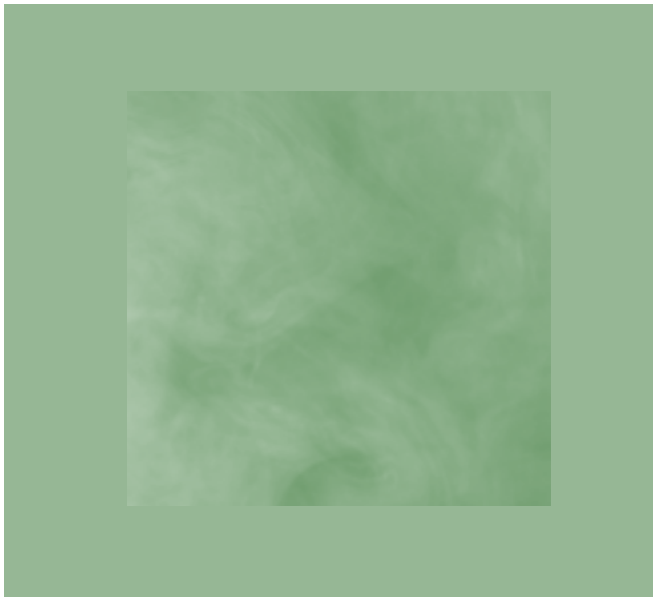
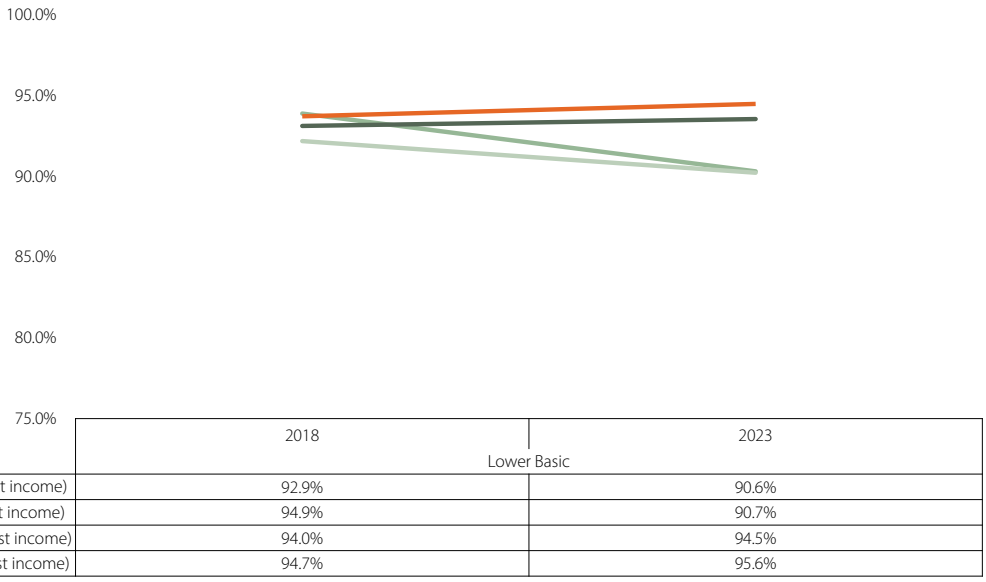
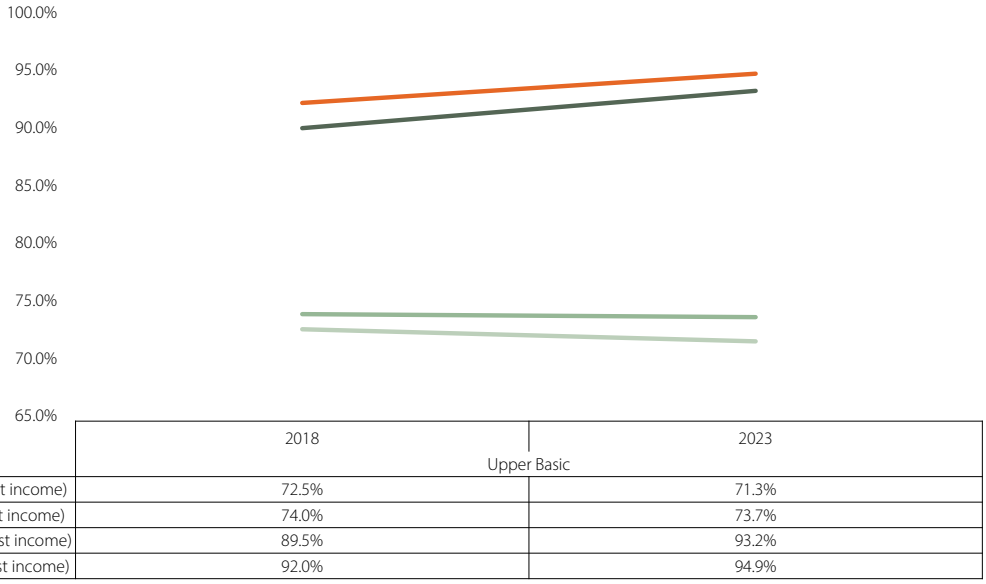


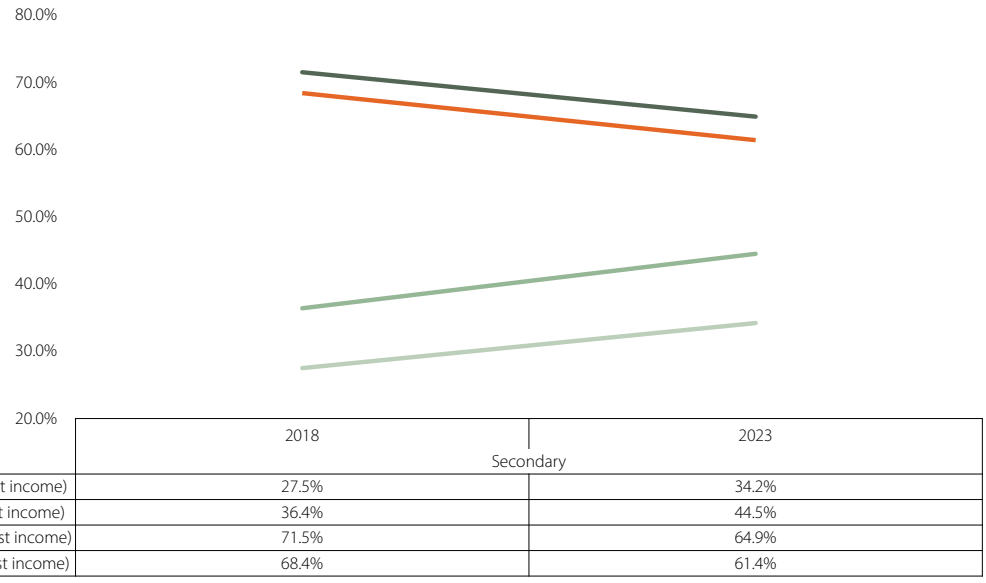
Figure 5.6. Changes in net attendance rates by student income background and gender, 2018–2023



Lower Basic	2018	2023
Boys (Lowest income)	92.9%	90.6%
Girls (Lowest income)	94.9%	90.7%
Boys (Highest income)	94.0%	94.5%
Girls (Highest income)	94.7%	95.6%



Upper Basic	2018	2023
Boys (Lowest income)	72.5%	71.3%
Girls (Lowest income)	74.0%	73.7%
Boys (Highest income)	89.5%	93.2%
Girls (Highest income)	92.0%	94.9%



Secondary	2018	2023
Boys (Lowest income)	27.5%	34.2%
Girls (Lowest income)	36.4%	44.5%
Boys (Highest income)	71.5%	64.9%
Girls (Highest income)	68.4%	61.4%

Source: Data from the 2018 and 2023 DHS

Disparities in access vary significantly by region, with students from higher-income backgrounds being most advantaged in the Governorates of Amman, Balqa, Karak and Zarqa. As shown in **Table 5.11,** the gap between students from the highest and lowest income quintiles varies significantly by both region and education level. Income-based disparities in access are the widest at the kindergarten level (ranging from -6.1% in Ajloun to 41.8% in Balqa) and the narrowest at the lower basic level (ranging from -4.0% in Ma'an to 9.1% in Mafraq). Ajloun has relatively limited income-based disparities in access across all education levels. In contrast, students from the highest income backgrounds in the Governorates of Amman, Balqa, Karak and Zarqa are over 35% more likely to access certain levels of education compared to those from the lowest income backgrounds.

Table 5.11. Percentage point differences in net attendance rates between students from the highest and lowest income backgrounds by education level and governorate, 2023

Governorate	Kindergarten	Lower basic	Upper basic	Secondary
Ajloun	-6.1%	4.2%	2.7%	20.4%
Amman	41.7%	5.8%	34.5%	24.6%
Aqaba	17.9%	5.0%	12.0%	21.1%
Balqa	41.8%	3.1%	9.0%	24.2%
Irbid	21.6%	7.0%	16.5%	33.1%
Jerash	24.3%	-1.7%	7.0%	27.8%
Karak	38.9%	4.8%	22.2%	24.9%
Ma'an	4.8%	-4.0%	16.0%	34.4%
Madaba	31.3%	5.6%	21.7%	23.1%
Mafraq	-0.4%	9.1%	29.5%	28.5%
Tafielah	34.1%	8.2%	14.2%	21.4%
Zarqa	26.3%	6.6%	15.4%	37.6%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Note: Cells shown in the darkest shade of red indicate where there is the greatest percentage point difference in net attendance rates between students from the highest and lowest income backgrounds at each education level.

Enrolment trends by children's disability status

At all levels of education, there has been significant improvement in the number of children with disabilities enrolled in formal schooling, particularly at the kindergarten level; however, actual numbers remain low. There has been a concerted effort in recent years to increase the enrolment of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools and to monitor progress towards achieving universal inclusive education. The MoE began documenting students' disability status in the 2019/202020 academic year. Over the four years analysed, enrolment of students with disabilities has increased by an average of 27.6% annually (see **Table 5.12**). Although enrolment numbers have grown most substantially at the kindergarten level, with an average annual growth rate of 69.0%, progress at the secondary school level has been the slowest, with an average annual growth rate of only 18.0%. Notwithstanding the efforts made to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream schools, the attendance rates presented in **Table 5.8** suggest that a large proportion of children with disabilities remain out-of-school.

Table 5.12. Growth in enrolment of students with disabilities by student gender and education level, 2019/2020 through 2022/2023

Education level	Gender	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	Average annual growth rate
Kindergarten	All students	40	41	3	193	69.0%
	Male	20	22	1	119	81.2%
	Female	20	19	2	74	54.7%
Basic	All students	8,044	13,267	11,964	17,332	29.2%
	Male	3,961	6,368	5,682	8,139	27.1%
	Female	4,083	6,899	6,282	9,193	31.1%
Lower basic (Grades 1–6)	All students	4,250	8,316	6,925	10,335	34.5%
	Male	2,053	4,034	3,491	5,332	37.5%
	Female	2,197	4,282	3,434	5,003	31.6%
Upper basic (Grades 7–10)	All students	3,794	4,951	5,039	6,997	22.6%
	Male	1,908	2,334	2,191	2,807	13.7%
	Female	1,886	2,617	2,848	4,190	30.5%
Secondary	All students	1,655	1,655	2,188	2,717	18.0%
	Male	796	796	1,033	1,241	16.0%
	Female	859	859	1,155	1,476	19.8%
Total	All students	9,739	14,963	14,155	20,242	27.6%
	Male	4,777	7,186	6,716	9,499	25.8%
	Female	4,962	7,777	7,439	10,743	29.4%

Source: EMIS data from 2019/2020 to 2022/2023

In the academic year 2022/2023, approximately 44% of enrolled students classified by the MoE having a disability were also diagnosed with a learning disability or difficulty. This is the most common diagnosis received by children with disabilities in Jordan (see **Table 5.13**). Although far less common than those with learning disorders or difficulties, students with visual impairments represent 14% of all students with disabilities. The share of students by disability diagnosis do not differ greatly by gender, apart from students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and students diagnosed with speech and language disorders, who are more likely to be boys, and students with visual impairments, who are more likely to be girls.

Table 5.13. Number and share of students by disability diagnosis and gender, 2022/2023

Disability diagnosis	Student gender	
	Girls	Boys
Hearing impairment	1,132 (7.9%)	1,028 (8.0%)
Intellectual/mental disability	835 (5.8%)	1,141 (8.8%)
Down syndrome	26 (0.2%)	12 (0.1%)
Autism spectrum disorder	161 (1.1%)	505 (3.9%)
Learning disability/difficulty	6,496 (45.4%)	5,466 (42.4%)
Physical disability	1,460 (10.2%)	1,214 (9.4%)
Cerebral palsy	12 (0.1%)	11 (0.1%)
Medical condition	258 (1.8%)	208 (1.6%)
Diabetes	176 (1.2%)	140 (1.1%)
Epilepsy	82 (0.6%)	68 (0.5%)
Psychological disorder	26 (0.2%)	29 (0.2%)
Speech or language disorder	654 (4.6%)	911 (7.1%)
Visual impairment	2,214 (15.5%)	1,570 (12.2%)
Other	1,227 (8.6%)	1,337 (10.4%)
Total	**14,302**	**12,904**

Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023

Children with disabilities affecting communication and mobility tend to have reduced access to education. To estimate the proportion of children with disabilities, the analysis in **Table 5.14** utilizes survey data from the 2023 DHS. The disability module of the DHS uses the Washington Group's set of six questions on functioning to assess disability, asking respondents to self-report their experience when conducting specific activities related to seeing, hearing, walking, communicating and self-care (Altman, 2016). Difficulties with these can indicate visual impairment, auditory impairment, physical disability or developmental disability. At every level of education, children who do not experience any difficulties with these activities have a higher NAR than those who do. Children who struggle to communicate with others have the lowest NAR at the lower basic level, while at the upper basic and secondary levels, it is children with difficulty washing and dressing independently who have the lowest NAR. At every level, excluding kindergarten, children with visual impairments have an NAR similar to those without any self-reported difficulties.

Table 5.14. Net attendance rates by education level, severity and reported functional difficulty, 2023

Functional difficulty type	Kindergarten	Lower basic	Upper basic	Secondary
Seeing	52.7%	87.8%	87.2%	57.4%
Hearing	57.0%	70.0%	75.1%	14.0%
Communicating with others	38.0%	42.6%	37.9%	12.7%
Remembering or concentrating	42.4%	57.1%	47.9%	25.5%
Walking or climbing steps	27.1%	57.2%	46.3%	7.3%
Washing or dressing	62.0%	77.0%	12.9%	0.9%
No difficulties reported	71.6%	94.5%	87.6%	58.1%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Note: For this analysis, children were recorded as having a difficulty if they had reported at least some difficulty with one of the activities. Disaggregating each NAR by reported difficulty type and severity was not possible due to issues with the sample size. Within each education level, cells highlighted in green indicate the highest NARs, and cells highlighted in red indicate the lowest.

Although it was not possible to disaggregate the difficulties by type and severity, there are distinct differences in attendance rates between children with moderate disabilities and those with severe disabilities. For example, students with moderate hearing difficulties were almost 30% more likely to attend lower basic education when age-appropriate (NAR of 81.8%) compared to students with significant hearing difficulties (NAR of 53.1 %). The differences in attendance rates that exist between children based on the severity and type of their disability suggests that efforts towards achieving universal basic education in Jordan have improved accessibility for some learners more than others.

Having a disability appears to be a greater barrier to education access for boys, children from low-income backgrounds and children of other nationalities. Not all children with disabilities face the same structural and social barriers. For example, children with disabilities who are Jordanian, from high-income backgrounds or are girls have far higher NARs than those of their peers (see **Table 5.15**). For Syrian children with disabilities, living in a refugee camp is associated with far higher school attendance at lower levels of formal education (kindergarten and lower basic), whereas those living in host communities are more likely to access upper basic education at the appropriate age. These findings suggest that some children may have greater access to support resources for quality, inclusive education (e.g. accessible learning environments, specialized staff and assistive devices), while others continue to face challenges. Evidence from small-scale studies indicates that the under-resourcing schools that are located in refugee camps or serving a large refugee student population prevents the implementation of inclusive education practices, such as hiring a special education teachers, supplying children with assistive devices, and developing and managing individual education plans (Muhaidat, Alodat and Almeqdad, 2020). The intersectional nature of disability with other student characteristics should continue to be a focus of efforts in Jordan to promote education for all, with additional resources being dedicated to understanding how disability impacts the educational outcomes of boys, children from low-income backgrounds and children of other nationalities.

Table 5.15. NARs for students with a moderate or significant disability by education level and other demographic characteristics, 2023

Education level	Gender		Socioeconomic Status		Nationality			Hosting location (Syrians only)	
	Male	Female	Lowest income	Highest income	Jordanian	Syrian	Other nationalities	Host community	Camp
Kindergarten	64.0%	53.8%	33.1%	67.4%	64.1%	33.9%	22.6%	28.8%	56.5%
Lower basic	82.0%	87.9%	73.9%	95.5%	86.9%	75.6%	72.3%	73.3%	86.9%
Upper basic	73.0%	80.0%	67.1%	83.3%	78.5%	67.9%	63.5%	70.1%	54.6%
Secondary	40.5%	55.7%	35.2%	70.9%	52.6%	17.7%	38.4%	16.8%	20.6%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Note: For this analysis, children were recorded as having a difficulty if they reported at least some difficulty with one of the following actions: (a) seeing, (b) hearing, (c) walking or climbing steps, (d) remembering or concentrating, (e) self-care, such as washing or dressing, and 6) communicating with others. Within each education level, cells highlighted in green indicate the highest NARs, and cells highlighted in red indicate the lowest.

5.3.2. Learner access to and progression along the educational ladder seen through an equity lens

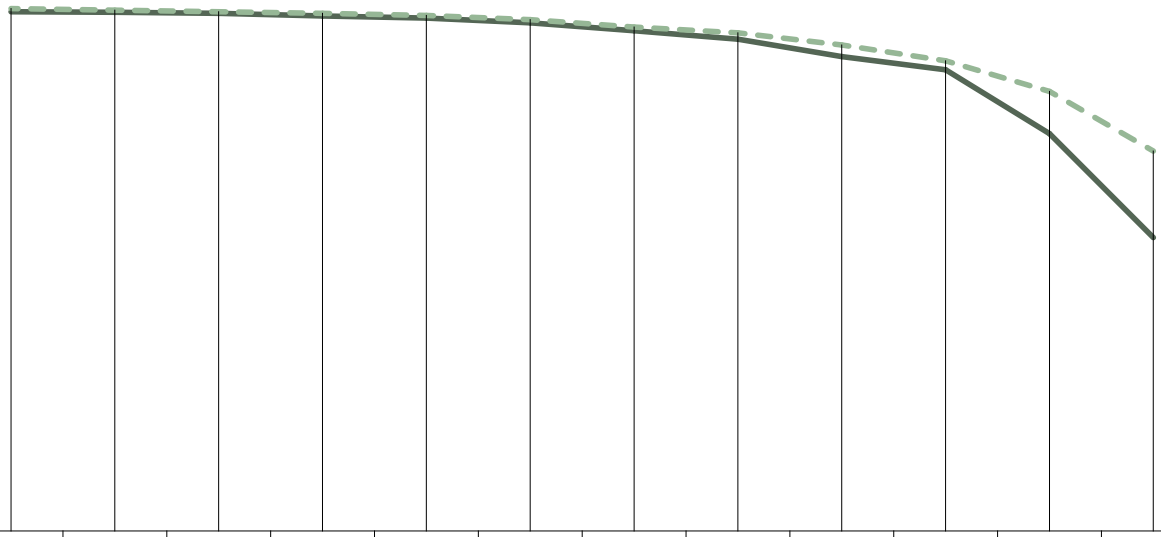
Disparities in access and retention are reflected throughout the educational ladder, widening as students progress towards the upper grades. Available data concerning trends in educational access, retention and progress for the children identified as most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education are discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

Access to and progression along the educational ladder by student gender

Children experiencing gender inequality with regard to education access are increasingly male, especially in rural settings.

Beginning at the upper basic level, male students exit the education system at a higher rate than do female students. The flows of male and female students through basic education are similar until learners reach upper basic. From Grade 7 onwards, there is a steep decline in retention among boys as they progress through the upper basic and secondary levels (see **Figure 5.7**). By Grade 12, the rate of access to education for boys drops to 55.6% compared to 72% for girls. This indicates that although access to education is relatively equal for boys and girls in the early grades, a large gap emerges in later on at the upper basic and secondary levels, when boys have much lower access rates than girls do. While factors contributing to non-attendance among boys and girls in Jordan are discussed in **Box 5.2**, household survey data from 2016 suggest that boys are disproportionately more likely to drop out at the upper basic education to enter the labour force.

Figure 5.7. Probabilistic schooling profile by student gender, 2023



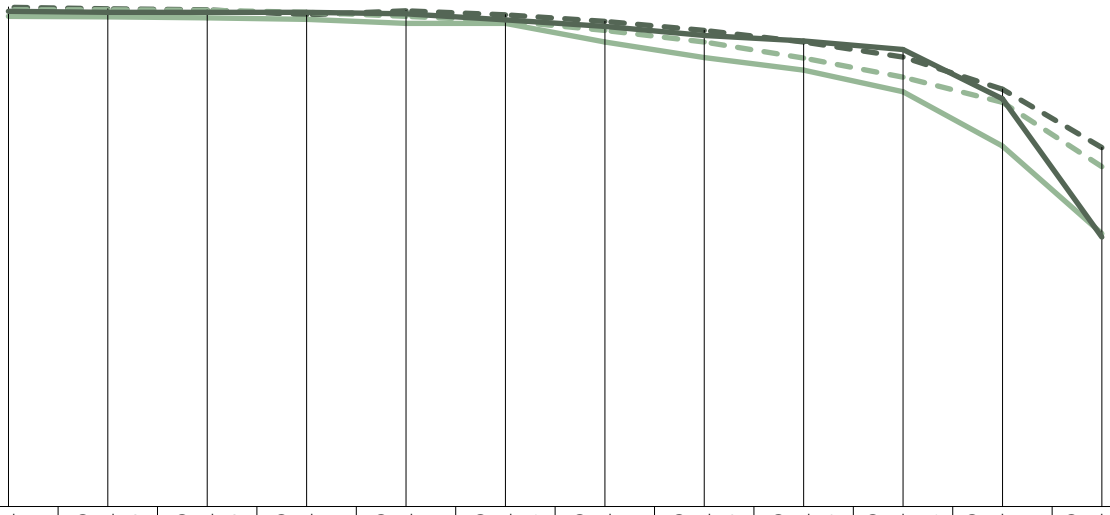
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Lower Basic						Upper Basic				Secondary	
Girls	99.0%	98.7%	98.4%	98.1%	97.7%	96.9%	95.5%	94.4%	92.1%	89.1%	83.3%	72.0%
Boys	98.4%	98.3%	98.1%	97.6%	97.2%	96.3%	94.8%	93.2%	89.9%	87.4%	75.3%	55.6%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Apart from greater access for girls in the final grade of secondary education, girls and boys tended to progress through the educational ladder in 2023 very much as they did nearly a decade earlier in 2012. Access rates at the lower and upper basic levels differed, at most, by 2% between 2012 and 2023 for both boys and girls. Both groups had high retention in the final grade of secondary education, although the rate was higher for girls than for boys. In 2012, a total of 65.7% of girls reached Grade 12, and by 2023, that number was 72%. For boys, 54.1% reached Grade 12 in 2012, and 55.6% did so in 2023.

Both rural boys and rural girls are more likely to progress to the end of upper basic education compared to their urban counterparts. In 2023, 90.9% of rural boys and 89.4% of rural girls reached Grade 10, whereas among urban boys and urban girls, the percentages were 82.5% and 85.4%, respectively (see **Figure 5.8**). Before students enter secondary education, the gender gap in retention is greater for urban children than rural children. In fact, urban girls in 2023 were 2.9% more likely to reach Grade 10 than urban boys, whereas rural boys were 1.5% more likely to reach Grade 10 than rural girls. However, after Grade 10, the number of rural boys accessing schooling dropped drastically (from 90.9% in Grade 10 to 53.6% in Grade 12). This suggests that rural boys face significant structural and social barriers to continuing their education past the upper basic level, owing to the draw of the labour market and the potential need, societal and familial pressure or opportunity to enter the workforce.

Figure 5.8. Probabilistic schooling profile by student gender and location, 2023



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Lower Basic						Upper Basic				Secondary	
Urban Boys	97.5%	97.4%	97.2%	96.9%	96.1%	96.1%	92.4%	89.3%	86.8%	82.5%	71.7%	54.3%
Urban Girls	98.8%	98.8%	98.7%	98.3%	97.5%	96.6%	94.7%	92.4%	89.2%	85.4%	80.4%	67.6%
Rural Boys	98.5%	98.3%	98.3%	98.3%	98.0%	96.8%	95.5%	93.7%	92.6%	90.9%	81.1%	53.6%
Rural Girls	99.3%	99.0%	98.8%	97.8%	98.6%	97.8%	96.5%	94.7%	92.4%	89.4%	83.0%	71.4%

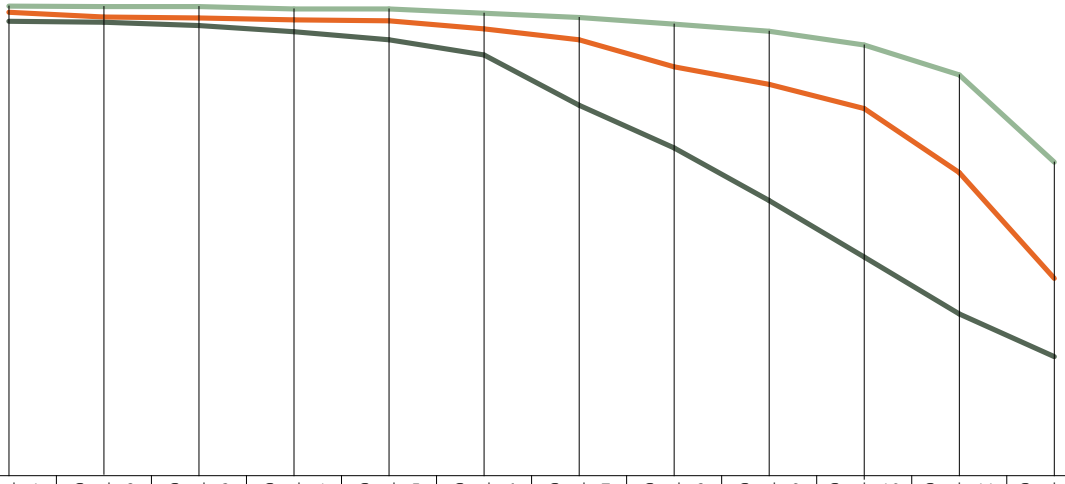
Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Access to and progression along the educational ladder by student nationality and refugee status

Children from ethnic, language and social minorities, as well as refugee, returnee and unregistered children, face increasing barriers in the upper grades of schooling; this is especially true among boys.

Figure 5.9 shows that access and retention along the educational ladder varies substantially by student nationality. Syrian students have lower access to formal schooling compared to Jordanian students across all grades, with the gap widening as learners progress to the higher grades. For example, 95.8% of Syrian students enter Grade 1, compared to 99% of Jordanian students, but there is then a rapid decline in the retention of Syrian students once they reach the upper basic level. By the end of secondary school, this gap grows significantly, with only a quarter (25.1%) of Syrian students accessing Grade 12, compared to about two-thirds (66.1%) of Jordanian students. Students of other nationalities have access rates that are higher than those of Syrian students across all grades at the pre-tertiary level but at least 10% lower than those of Jordanian students beginning in Grade 9.

Figure 5.9. Probabilistic schooling profile by student nationality, 2023

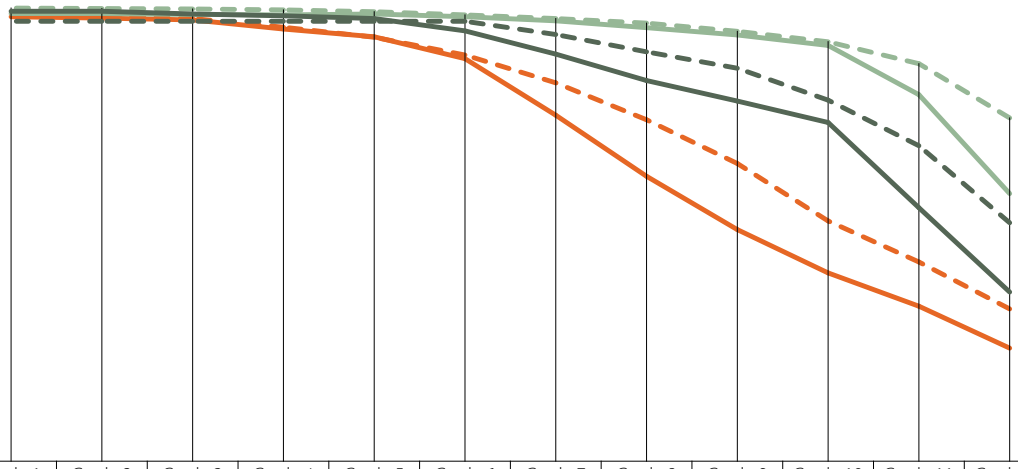


	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Lower Basic						Upper Basic				Secondary	
Jordanians	99.0%	98.9%	98.9%	98.4%	98.4%	97.5%	96.6%	95.2%	93.7%	90.8%	84.5%	66.1%
Syrians	95.8%	95.6%	94.9%	93.6%	91.9%	88.7%	78.1%	69.1%	58.0%	46.1%	34.1%	25.1%
Other Nationalities	97.7%	96.7%	96.5%	96.1%	95.9%	94.2%	91.9%	86.2%	82.5%	77.4%	63.9%	41.6%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Syrian boys face the greatest barriers to accessing and continuing a formal education. Girls have a greater likelihood of progressing through the education system than boys do, regardless of the students' nationality (see **Figure 5.10**). Gaps in access rates are wider between nationalities and narrower between boys and girls within each nationality (girls have slightly higher access rates). Syrian boys consistently have the lowest access rates across grades at the pre-tertiary level, with less than a quarter (24.8%) reaching the end of secondary education, compared to three-quarters (75.3%) of Jordanian girls. Both Jordanian boys and boys of other nationalities experience substantial declines in access to education after completing the upper basic level. The drop in access between Grades 10 and 12 is 32.5% for Jordanian boys and 37.2% for boys of other nationalities.

Figure 5.10. Probabilistic schooling profile by student nationality and gender, 2023



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Lower Basic						Upper Basic				Secondary	
Jordanian Boys	98.2%	98.2%	98.0%	97.9%	98.1%	97.5%	96.6%	95.1%	93.5%	91.2%	80.4%	58.7%
Jordanian Girls	99.4%	99.3%	99.2%	99.0%	98.6%	97.9%	97.1%	96.1%	94.3%	92.0%	87.2%	75.3%
Syrian Boys	97.5%	97.2%	96.8%	94.8%	93.1%	88.3%	75.9%	62.5%	50.8%	41.3%	34.0%	24.8%
Syrian Girls	97.8%	97.7%	97.1%	95.2%	93.3%	89.1%	83.0%	74.9%	65.3%	52.7%	43.7%	33.4%
Boys of Other Nationalities	98.7%	98.7%	98.1%	97.7%	97.1%	94.4%	89.3%	83.5%	79.0%	74.3%	55.6%	37.1%
Girls of Other Nationalities	96.5%	96.5%	96.5%	96.5%	96.5%	96.5%	93.6%	89.8%	86.2%	79.2%	69.2%	52.3%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

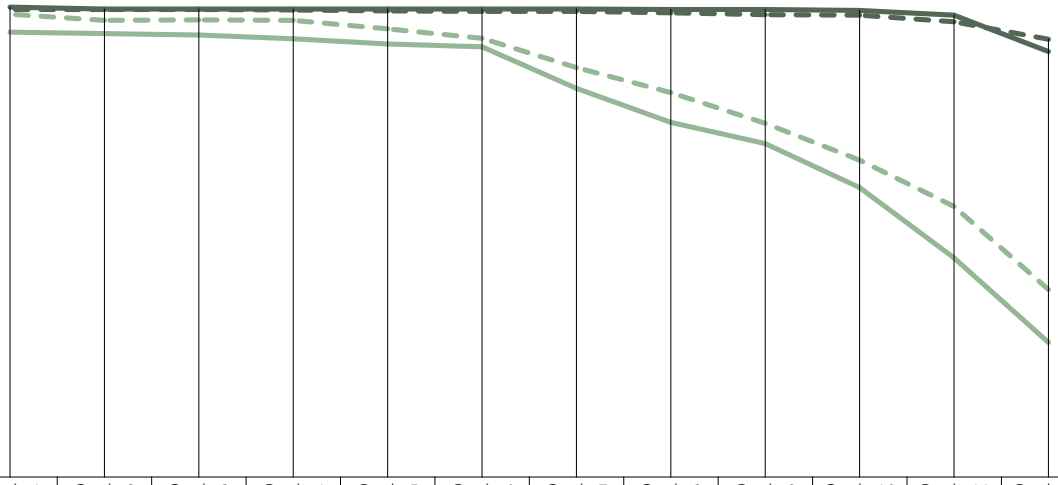
Access to and progression along the educational ladder by student socioeconomic status

Children from lower-income backgrounds face greater struggles than their counterparts from higher-income backgrounds in moving up the educational ladder and completing the full school cycle, with boys most at risk.

Low-income students experience a significant decline in access rates as they progress through school, especially from Grade 6 onward. While access rates for high-income students remain relatively strong throughout their education, those for the students from the lowest income quintile drop drastically, falling to a mere 29% by Grade 12, compared to 88.5% for students from the highest income quintile. This highlights a growing disparity in educational access as students move through the higher grades, with low-income students facing more barriers in continuing their education. While the difference in access and retention between boys and girls in the highest income quintile is marginal across all grades, boys from the lowest income quintile are consistently more likely than girls from the same quintile to exit the formal education system as they progress along the educational ladder (see **Figure 5.11**).

This pattern indicates that income and gender intersect in complex ways to influence educational access. In lower-income households, traditional roles and economic pressures might prioritize girls' education as a means of social mobility, while boys may face expectations to begin contributing to household earnings sooner. Global evidence suggests that, among high-income families, entrenched gender norms and potential biases in resource allocation tend to favour boys, deepening a lack of investment in girls' education despite the availability of resources (Fox and Kaul, 2018; Psaki et al., 2022).

Figure 5.11. Probabilistic schooling profile by student income quintile and gender, 2023



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Lower Basic						Upper Basic				Secondary	
Boys (low-income)	94.2%	93.9%	93.6%	92.8%	91.7%	91.1%	82.3%	75.1%	70.6%	61.3%	46.4%	28.5%
Girls (low-income)	98.0%	96.7%	96.8%	96.7%	94.9%	92.9%	86.7%	81.4%	74.9%	67.1%	57.3%	39.7%
Boys (high-income)	99.5%	99.1%	99.1%	99.1%	99.1%	99.1%	99.1%	99.0%	99.0%	98.8%	97.8%	90.1%
Girls (high-income)	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	98.9%	98.7%	98.6%	98.6%	98.3%	97.9%	97.8%	96.4%	92.7%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

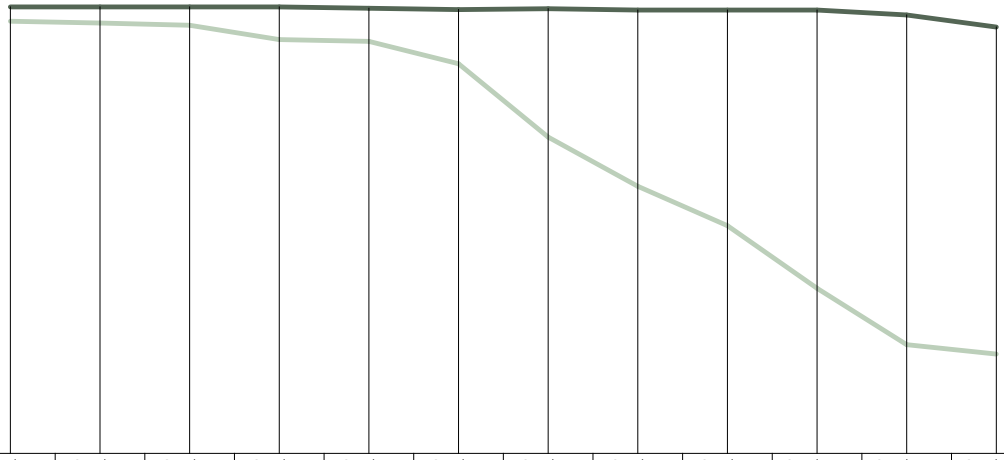
A pathway analysis reveals that the main bottlenecks for children from the lowest income background are in the lower basic and upper basic levels. Disparities in educational access between children from the highest and lowest income backgrounds begin in Grade 1. A study examining the education pathways of secondary school-age children at different levels of education and comparing those of children from the highest (top 20%) and lowest income quintiles revealed two main bottlenecks:

- **Drop-out, repetition and late entry in lower basic:** While 99% of children from the highest income quintile finish lower basic education by age 16–17 years, only 91% of children from the lowest income quintile accomplish the same. Among children from low-income backgrounds, 3% never enter formal schooling, 5% drop out while in lower basic and an additional 1% are still attending lower basic schooling at age 16–17 due to repetition, late entry or a combination thereof.
- **Repetition and drop-out in upper basic:** While 97% of children aged 16–17 from the lowest income quintile complete lower basic schooling, only 86% of them transition to upper basic schooling. Due to a combination of repetition and overage enrolment, 23% of children from low-income backgrounds are still in upper basic schooling at age 16–17 years. Furthermore, 14% of them drop out before finishing the education cycle, compared to less than 1% of children form the highest income quintile. Thus, only 50 out of every 100 children from the lowest income quintile complete the full basic education cycle by age 16–17, compared to 84 out of every 100 children from the highest income quintile.

Intersectionality analysis of access to and progression along the educational ladder

The student profile with the least chance of reaching the final grade of general education in Jordan is a Syrian boy from the very lowest income quintile. The schooling profile presented in **Figure 5.12** compares the probabilistic schooling profiles of the theoretically most advantaged and least advantaged children in the Kingdom: Jordanian girls from high-income backgrounds and Syrian boys from low-income backgrounds. Almost 100% of Jordanian girls from high-income backgrounds will finish all 10 grades of basic education, with 95.3% finishing secondary education as well. Comparatively, only 96.6% of Syrian boys from low-income backgrounds can be expected to even enter Grade 1 and only 87.1% will finish the lower basic cycle. After Grade 6, access rates for Syrian boys from low-income backgrounds drop substantially, reaching a low of 22.2% by Grade 12.

Figure 5.12. Probabilistic schooling profile by student income quintile and gender, 2023



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Lower Basic						Upper Basic				Secondary	
Jordanian girls (high-income)	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.5%	99.2%	99.4%	99.1%	99.1%	99.1%	98.0%	95.3%
Syrian boys (low-income)	96.6%	96.2%	95.7%	92.5%	92.1%	87.1%	70.7%	59.7%	50.9%	36.9%	24.3%	22.2%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Disparities in retention along the educational ladder are greatest between (a) children from the highest and lowest income backgrounds, and (b) Jordanian and Syrian children. Table 5.16 presents the gap in access rates between student groups by grade and equity dimension. Key transition points in the educational ladder are the first and last grades of the three general education cycles. At almost all of these crucial transition points, the largest gap in access rates is between Jordanian and Syrian children. For example, Jordanian children are 18.5% more likely than Syrian children to access the first grade of upper basic education. In comparison, girls are only 0.6% more likely to reach Grade 7 than boys. The income gap is the greatest cause of disparity in access to Grade 12, with a 59.4% difference between children from the highest and lowest income quintiles.

Table 5.16. Percentage point differences in access rates by grade and equity dimension, 2023

Gap	Calculation	Lower basic					Upper basic				Secondary		
		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Location	(rural – urban)	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	1.0%	2.3%	2.8%	3.7%	6.4%	7.3%	7.2%	0.5%
Gender	(girls – boys)	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	1.2%	2.2%	1.7%	8.0%	16.4%
Income	(highest – lowest)	2.7%	2.8%	3.6%	6.2%	8.0%	8.1%	13.1%	19.5%	24.7%	32.9%	46.1%	59.4%
Nationality	(Jordanian – other)	1.3%	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%	2.5%	3.3%	4.7%	9.1%	11.3%	13.4%	20.6%	24.5%
	(Jordanian – Syrian)	3.2%	3.3%	4.0%	4.8%	6.5%	8.9%	18.5%	26.1%	35.8%	44.8%	50.5%	41.0%
Combined	(Jordanian girls, high-income – Syrian boys, low-income)	3.2%	3.7%	4.1%	7.3%	7.4%	12.2%	28.7%	39.5%	48.3%	62.2%	73.7%	73.1%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Notes: The profile of children compared to construct the combined gap does not include location (urban/rural) due to issues with the sample size. For grades 1, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12, cells highlighted in green identify the smallest percentage point differences in access rates, while cells highlighted in red identify the largest.

5.3.3. Trends related to out-of-school children seen through an equity lens

Trends related to out-of-school children and children at risk of drop-out demonstrate gendered and other patterns of inequity, as will be discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

Out-of-school children

Out-of-school children are characterised by multiple, intersecting variables.

Out-of-school rates vary substantially depending on a child's context, socioeconomic status and other key characteristics. Table 5.17 displays the out-of-school rate for children aged 6–15 (the theoretical age range for basic education), demonstrating significant disparities in educational access tied to student characteristics, namely:

- **Children with disabilities have a significantly higher out-of-school rate,** with 36.7% of children with a severe disability and 6.5% of children with a moderate disability being out of school, compared to only 2.9% of children without disability. Over 80% of out-of-school children with a severe disability have never entered formal schooling.
- **Syrian children have a much higher out-of-school rate** than Jordanian children, at 11.6% and 2.8%, respectively. Among Syrian children, those in refugee camps have a lower out-of-school rate (8.9%) than those in host communities (12.2%) and a higher likelihood of having completed lower basic education before dropping out (71.5% as opposed to 45.6% for children in host communities); this reflects the additional challenges of living and accessing education in host communities.
- **Children from lower-income backgrounds are far more likely to be out of school,** with an out-of-school rate of 9.7% compared to 1.3% for children from high-income backgrounds. This suggests that economic barriers are a significant factor contributing to educational exclusion, particularly among children from the lowest income quintile. While the out-of-school rates for children from the bottom two income quintiles increased between 2018 and 2023, those of children from the top three income quintiles decreased over the same period.
- **There is a small, but meaningful gendered difference in the out-of-school rates,** with boys having a slightly higher rate (4.0%) than girls (3.3%). The likelihood that out-of-school girls have never entered formal schooling is slightly higher than that of boys.
- **Children with one or more parents absent have a higher out-of-school rate** (5.4%) than those with both parents present (3.6%). This gap narrowed between 2018 and 2023. Of the out-of-school children with absent parents, over 50% have never entered formal schooling.
- **Children who live in rural and urban settings have similar out-of-school rates.** However, in 2023, out-of-school children who lived in urban settings were slightly more likely to have never entered formal schooling, whereas that was true for rural children in 2018.

Table 5.17. Out-of-school rates by student group and previous exposure to schooling for children aged 6–15 years, 2018 and 2023

		Share (%) of children aged 6–15 years who are:							
		2018				2023			
			of which:				of which:		
		Out of school	Never entered school	Dropped out	Of which: dropped out after lower basic	Out of school	Never entered school	Dropped out	Of which: dropped out after lower basic
Gender	Male	4.2%	46.5%	53.5%	60.5%	4.0%	45.6%	54.4%	52.9%
	Female	3.3%	40.9%	59.1%	69.2%	3.3%	48.1%	51.9%	63.4%
Location	Rural	3.6%	48.3%	51.7%	55.2%	3.6%	41.4%	58.6%	53.5%
	Urban	3.8%	43.6%	56.4%	65.5%	3.6%	47.3%	52.7%	57.9%
Socio-economic status	Poorest	7.7%	36.3%	63.7%	56.1%	9.7%	44.3%	55.7%	55.0%
	Poorer	3.9%	33.7%	66.3%	64.1%	3.2%	37.5%	62.5%	63.3%
	Middle	2.2%	60.5%	39.5%	65.9%	1.4%	63.4%	36.6%	68.1%
	Richer	2.6%	64.2%	35.8%	96.6%	1.0%	47.2%	52.8%	67.7%
	Richest	1.6%	60.5%	39.5%	98.1%	1.3%	77.7%	22.3%	23.4%
Nationality	Jordanian	2.8%	49.2%	50.8%	76.4%	2.8%	45.4%	54.6%	60.1%
	Syrian	5.7%	61.1%	38.9%	54.0%	11.6%	44.4%	55.6%	49.8%
	Other nationality	12.6%	28.5%	71.5%	46.5%	4.6%	79.4%	20.6%	76.4%
Hosting location (Syrians only)	Host community	–	–	–	–	12.2%	46.9%	53.1%	45.6%
	Camp	–	–	–	–	8.9%	27.3%	72.7%	71.5%
Disability status	Has a significant disability	–	–	–	–	36.7%	86.1%	13.9%	58.2%
	Has a moderate disability	–	–	–	–	6.5%	48.5%	51.5%	36.3%
	Without disability	–	–	–	–	2.9%	38.2%	61.8%	59.2%
Familial presence	Both parents present	3.7%	44.1%	55.9%	63.3%	3.6%	46.3%	53.7%	57.2%
	One or both parents absent	5.9%	43.2%	56.8%	87.6%	5.4%	54.9%	45.1%	61.3%

Source: Data from the 2018 and 2023 DHS

Notes: Prior exposure to education can be understood as the amount and type of schooling, if any, a child

experienced before exiting the education system. Familial presence is defined as the child's parents being alive at the time of the survey. Data for out-of-school rates by hosting location and disability status was not available in the 2018 DHS. Estimates presented for 2018 out-of-school rates will not match those in the Jordan Country Report on Out-of-School Children (UNICEF, 2020) due to the 2023 update to the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) methodology for calculating these indicators.

Syrian children, children from the lowest income quintile and girls who marry before the age of 18 are statistically more likely to be out of school. Table 5.18 displays the results of a regression analysis using data from the 2023 DHS to predict a child's likelihood of being out of school at various ages. Results from this econometric analysis confirm findings from the analysis in **Table 5.17**, in which children with disabilities, children from the lowest income quintile, and boys were more likely to be out of school across almost all age ranges. The greatest predictors of being out of school at age 5, a child's theoretical age when finishing pre-school, are as follows: (a) being of Syrian nationality and living in a host community, (b) coming from the lowest income quintile and (c) having a significant disability. Similarly, the greatest predictors of being out of school at age 16–17, a child's theoretical age during secondary school, are: (a) being of Syrian nationality and living in a host community or refugee camp, (b) coming from the lowest income quintile, (c) having a significant disability, and (d) being a girl and having ever been married. Regarding gender inequities, boys are more likely to be out of school across almost all age groups. For children of the prescribed age for pre-school and lower basic, being of Syrian nationality and located in a refugee camp is correlated with a greater likelihood of being in school.

Table 5.18. Linear probability model for being out of school, by age range

Variable	Age 5 years	Age 6–11 years	Age 12–15 years	Age 16–17 years
Is a boy		+	+	++
Lives in a rural area				
Is Syrian, living in host community	+++	+	++	+++
Is Syrian, living in refugee camp	--	-	++	+++
Is of another nationality				++
Is in the lowest income quintile	+++	+	++	+++
Has a moderate disability		+	+	+
Has a significant disability	+++	+++	+++	+++
One of both parents absent			+	+
Currently or ever married				+++
Interaction: currently or ever married is a boy				---
Governorate fixed effects	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Observations	**2,240**	**12,689**	**9,255**	**4,125**
R-squared	**0.09**	**0.08**	**0.11**	**0.21**

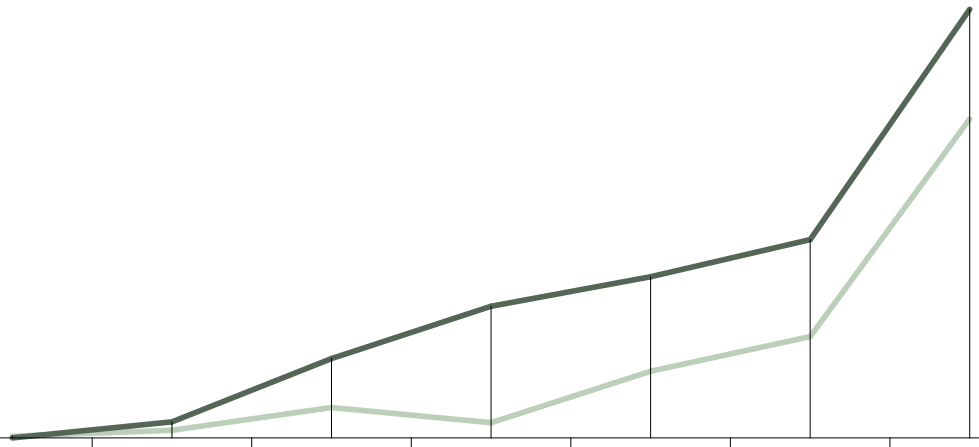
Legends							
+++ 10%+ more likely	++ 5–10% more likely	+ 0–5% more likely	no relation to the likelihood of being out of school	not assessed	- 0–5% less likely	-- 5–10% less likely	--- 10%+ less likely

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the 2023 DHS

Notes: Low R-squared values suggest that while the model captures some trends, other factors not included in the model may well influence the likelihood of being out of school.

A cumulative risk analysis, as shown in Figure 5.13, indicates that the profile most vulnerable to being out of school is a poor Syrian boy, living with a significant disability and located in a host community. Over 37% of children fitting this profile were out of school at the prescribed age for lower basic schooling (6–11 years) and over 50% of these children out of school when at the prescribed age for upper basic schooling (12–15 years).

Figure 5.13. Cumulative risk assessment of children being out of school, 2023



	Profile 1 Girl Not Poorest Jordanian Without Disability	Profile 2 Boy Not Poorest Jordanian Without Disability	Profile 3 Boy Not Poorest Jordanian Without Disability	Profile 4 Boy Poorest Syrian (Camp) Without Disability	Profile 5 Boy Poorest Syrian (Host Community) Without Disability	Profile 6 Boy Poorest Syrian (Host Community) Has a Moderate Disability	Profile 7 Boy Poorest Syrian (Host Community) Has a Significant Disability
Aged 6-11 years	0.2%	0.9%	3.6%	1.8%	7.9%	12.0%	37.8%
Aged 12-15 years	0.0%	1.9%	9.4%	15.6%	19.1%	23.5%	50.8%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS.

Note: A cumulative risk assessment is an analysis that uses a simple line graph to visualize how the probability of being out of school changes based on certain risk factors (e.g. low-income background and other characteristics).

Recent household surveys conducted in Jordan, including the DHS, have not investigated the reasons behind children dropping out or never entering formal schooling. The most recent data collected on reasons for dropping out comes from the 2016 JLMPS. It is essential to regularly monitor the reasons behind students dropping out and the barriers to educational access so that current data accurately reflect the challenges faced by children in Jordan.

Data from 2016 reveals persistent differences in drop-out reasons based on nationality and gender. As shown in **Table 5.19**, the primary factors cited by Jordanian children and children of other nationalities for leaving school in 2016 were a lack of interest in attending or poor school performance. The underlying reasons for not wanting to attend were not explored in the JLMPS. For Syrian children, however, violence and a lack of safety were the leading causes of drop-out. This is likely linked to their experiences before arriving in Jordan, though it may also reflect ongoing security concerns in their current environment. While financial challenges have a minor impact on Jordanian drop-outs, they are a significant factor for Syrian children and children from other nationalities.

Table 5.19. Reason (self-reported) for dropping out before completing upper basic education, by gender, nationality and location

Nationality	Jordanian		Syrian		Other nationalities	
Gender	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Boys**
Drop-out rate	**5.4%**	**8.8%**	**29.3%**	**38.0%**	**3.8%**	**15.0%**
Number of drop-outs	**32,407**	**55,557**	**27,853**	**54,022**	**4,181**	**19,436**
Could not afford school	5.2%	2.7%	7.9%	3.0%	12.3%	7.6%
Had to work	2.1%	7.5%	1.0%	6.5%	0.0%	22.1%
Got married	15.6%	0.0%	6.6%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%
Did not want to attend or did not do well	74.9%	86.2%	26.0%	27.6%	73.9%	62.5%
Violence or lack of safety	0.3%	1.9%	56.2%	62.7%	1.1%	0.8%
No access to school	1.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	11.0%	0.1%
Other reasons	0.6%	1.5%	2.3%	0.2%	0.3%	7.0%

Location	Central Jordan	Southern Jordan	Northern Jordan
Could not afford school	5.1%	4.0%	1.9%
Had to work	4.0%	9.2%	4.6%
Got married	4.9%	5.8%	0.3%
Did not want to attend or did not do well	71.3%	59.1%	90.9%
Violence or lack of safety	11.8%	19.8%	0.0%
No access to school	5.1%	9.9%	6.5%
Other reasons	1.7%	1.1%	2.0%

Sources: Adapted from UNICEF (2020); calculations based on 2016 JLMPS data.

Notes: Reference population is those aged 12–20 who entered basic education but dropped out before completing all 10 grades. The differences among nationalities and geographic locations are statistically significant.

Gender patterns play a significant role in the reasons for school drop-out across nationalities. A larger proportion of boys reported dropping out due to the need to work, whereas girls were more likely to report discontinuing their education due to getting married. Across all nationalities, financial reasons were less commonly reported by boys as a reason for dropping out. The gendered dynamics of non-attendance, such as those relating to early marriage and child labour, are discussed further in **Box 5.2.**

Box 5.2. Gender trends in school non-attendance in Jordan

Economic constraints have a gendered impact on families and the coping strategies they adopt in the face of limited financial resources. Low-income families may choose to send their children (particularly boys) to work or may arrange early marriages, a far more common risk for girls.

Despite reduced numbers in recent years, child marriage in Jordan remains a serious concern for girls, particularly those in refugee settings. The Jordanian Higher Population Council (HPC) reported a decline in the percentage of girls under the age of 18 getting married in Jordan between 2012 and 2022. Across nationalities, these marriages decreased by approximately 5%, from 17% in 2017 to 12% in 2022 (HPC, 2023). A similar decrease was observed among Syrian refugees during the same period, with early marriages among girls dropping from 43% to 38%. Girls who marry before the age of 18 are significantly more likely to experience violence at the hands of their husbands (UNICEF and HPC, 2019). Education was identified as a key preventive factor against child marriage: higher levels of education were linked to fewer marriages among both under-18-year-olds and under-15-year-olds. As refugee girls experience a lack of safety and conflict, going to school becomes burdensome and they quickly lose the protective nature of education; thus, their transition from childhood to the marriage market is accelerated (Jones et al., 2020). Poverty, low educational attainment, cultural beliefs, and societal and familial conflict were identified as the primary drivers of child marriage, with domestic violence emerging as both a risk factor for it and a consequence thereof (Jones et al., 2020; UNICEF and HPC, 2019).

Child labour is more common among boys than girls. Under the Jordanian Labour Law No. 8 of 1996, children below the age of 16 are prohibited from working, except for doing household chores, while those aged 16–17 may work no more than 36 hours per week and are not permitted to engage in hazardous labour (Jordan, MoL, 2019). According to UNICEF (2020), 7.5% of out-of-school Jordanian boys, 6.5% of out-of-school Syrian boys and 22.1% of out-of-school boys of other nationalities reported that their involvement in the labour market had contributed to their dropping out of school. A national child labour survey conducted in Jordan in 2016 shows that the overall percentage of children working in the Kingdom is relatively low, with 1% of children attending school while working, and 0.9% working but not attending school (CSS and ILO, 2017). However, this percentage increases with age, particularly among those over the age of 15. The prevalence of child labour is higher among Syrian refugees than it is within their host community (Stave and Hillesund, 2015; CSS and ILO, 2017).

Transportation is also a gendered issue, with parents expressing concern for the safety of girls traveling to and from school, especially when the school is not nearby. With the gender-segregated schooling system in Jordan, access to a gender-appropriate school can be limited in certain contexts. A recent study has found that having a gender-appropriate school in one's district of birth is associated with an additional 3.0–3.4 years of schooling for girls (Jones et al., 2020). For boys, parents worry about the risk of violence or harassment in the areas surrounding their child's school (Human Rights Watch, 2016; Sieverding et al., 2018; Stave et al., 2017).

Geographic location also influences reasons for school drop-out. For example, financial challenges account for only 1.9% of total school dropouts in the northern region, but this figure rises to over 5% in the central region. While lack of safety is a prominent factor driving school drop-out for children in both the southern and central regions, not a single respondent from the north cited violence as a reason for dropping out.

Children at risk of dropping out

Age is a key factor for children at risk of dropping out but with varying effects for different groups.

Children who are older than the standard age for their current grade level can be at risk of dropping out. Being overage for one's grade can signal several underlying drop-out risk factors, such as late entry to school, school failure or repetition (UNICEF et al., 2023). This is particularly pertinent in the Jordanian context, since current regulations do not allow those who are more than three years older than their peers to enrol in that grade level.

Overage enrolment is a greater issue for some student populations than others. Table 5.20 presents the prevalence of overage enrolment by student characteristics. Various disparities emerge. For example, Syrian students have a significantly higher likelihood of being overage for both lower basic and upper basic education. Syrian students in host communities are more likely to be overage at the lower basic level; however, their peers in refugee camps are more likely to be overage at the upper basic level. Children with absent parents also have a significantly higher likelihood of being overage in lower basic schooling but not in upper basic. Furthermore, students from lower-income backgrounds tend to have increased overage rates compared to their peers from higher-income backgrounds, suggesting that economic challenges are a significant factor in delaying education. Urban students have a stronger chance of being overage compared to their rural counterparts. Children with disabilities are also more likely to be overage than their peers without disability, which increases their risk of drop-out.

Table 5.20. Share (%) of overage students by education level and student group, 2023

		Share of students who are:			
		Lower basic		Upper basic	
		2 years overage	3 or more years overage	2 years overage	3 or more years overage
Gender	Male	2.4%	1.1%	3.4%	2.4%
	Female	2.0%	1.3%	3.9%	2.1%
Location	Rural	1.3%	0.9%	2.6%	1.6%
	Urban	2.4%	1.3%	3.9%	2.4%
Income quintile	Lowest	3.7%	2.4%	7.9%	4.6%
	Lower	1.8%	0.5%	3.3%	2.4%
	Moderate	0.9%	0.7%	1.3%	0.1%
	Higher	1.2%	0.3%	1.3%	0.6%
	Highest	0.2%	0.9%	1.1%	0.7%
Nationality	Jordanian	1.3%	0.7%	1.9%	1.3%
	Syrian	5.4%	3.1%	13.5%	7.0%
	Other nationalities	3.3%	0.7%	2.6%	3.2%

		Share of students who are:			
		Lower basic		Upper basic	
		2 years overage	3 or more years overage	2 years overage	3 or more years overage
Hosting location (Syrians only)	Host community	6.1%	4.1%	12.8%	6.6%
	Refugee camp	4.6%	2.0%	14.4%	7.6%
Disability status	Without disability	2.1%	1.2%	3.5%	2.2%
	Has a moderate or significant disability	4.2%	1.3%	5.6%	2.7%
Familial presence	Both parents present	2.1%	1.2%	3.7%	2.3%
	One or both parents absent	7.2%	2.7%	3.4%	1.6%

Source: Data from the 2023 DHS

Notes: Presence is defined as the child's parents being alive when the survey was conducted.

Enrolment of out-of-school children in non-formal education and other support programmes

Out-of-school children are increasingly enrolling in non-formal education (NFE) through multiple pathways.

The Non-Formal Education Department of the MoE organizes five main NFE programmes to support children who have never entered or have dropped out of formal schooling. These include:

- **Adult Literacy and Education:** An adult education programme focused on reducing the national illiteracy rate and providing learners with basic knowledge and technical skills, delivering the academic content expected normally covered at the basic level in Grades 1–6 to illiterate adolescents and adults who are over the age of 15. The programme is split into two stages, each lasting for two years. The Grade 6 equivalency certificate awarded to participants upon completion of the programme does not allow reintegration back into formal education; rather, it is simply an acknowledgement that the holder possesses learning outcomes equivalent to those of a Grade 6 student in formal education (Nasrallah, 2022).
- **Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs:** Beginning in 2004 with four centres, the programme aims to support children (males aged 12–18 and females aged 12–20) who dropped out of formal schooling, providing them with the skills to find suitable employment and positively contribute to society. The duration of study in the programme is two years, after which the student can obtain a Grade 10 equivalency certificate enabling them to enrol in a Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) programme or complete their studies through the Home Studies programme.[122]
- **Remedial Education:** Also known as the 'Catch-Up programme', the Remedial Education programme was established by the MoE to support children aged 9–12 years who are not in school, providing them with the knowledge and skills covered in the six grades of lower basic

122 Refugee students who attend and complete the Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs programme within a refugee camp often struggle to continue their education afterwards due to difficulties in accessing the resources and support needed to study independently under the Home Studies programme. It would be worthwhile to explore and establish alternative pathways for students in refugee camps to continue their secondary education after completing the Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs programme.

schooling over the course of three academic years. Graduates of the programme can transition back into the formal education system at the start of upper basic (or enter another NFE programme).

- **Home Studies:** This is a programme that enables children who have exited the formal education system to continue their education through self-learning. Those who enrol can sit for exams in public schools at the end of each semester and, if they pass, can then enrol in the subsequent grade in a formal education setting.
- **Evening Studies:** This programme is exclusively for children at juvenile education and rehabilitation institutions who have not yet finished basic education. It covers academic content from the national curriculum for Grades 7–12. Due to the disproportionately larger share of males held in the Jordanian juvenile justice system, the programme is currently offered only in juvenile education and rehabilitation institutions for boys. Girls can participate in other formal and NFE programmes available to institutionalized youth, as specified in Section 5.2.8.

Sessions of the Adult Literacy and Education, Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs, and Remedial Education programmes are hosted at government schools and staffed by government-appointed and trained teachers. The Adult Literacy and Education programme may also hold sessions at mosques and charities affiliated with the MoSD.

Almost all NFE programmes have seen a growth in enrolment over the past eight years, though it varies by gender. Available enrolment data from all five NFE programmes, collated in **Table 5.21,** show that most programmes have seen sizeable growth since the 2016/2017 academic year, most notably the Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs, Home Studies and Remedial Education programmes, with average annual growth rates of 11.3%, 9.6% and 8.6%, respectively. The Adult Literacy and Education programme has seen the number of male learners increase significantly, at an average rate of 16.1% per year. The Evening Studies programme has experienced a decline in enrolment between 2016/2017 and 2023/2024, potentially due to an overall decline in the population at juvenile education and rehabilitation institutions.

Table 5.21. Enrolment in NFE programmes, 2016/2017 through 2023/2024

Programme	Gender	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024	Average annual growth rate
Adult Literacy and Education	All students	1,330	1,823	1,956	2,125	1,721	1,729	1,896	2,021	6.2%
	Male	301	306	306	328	316	388	352	856	16.1%
	Female	1,029	1,517	1,650	1,797	1,405	1,341	1,544	1,165	1.8%
Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs	All students	1,902	3,361	3,996	4,723	4,806	4,550	4,290	4,034	11.3%
	Male	1,257	2,105	2,509	2,739	2,692	2,436	2,329	2,336	9.3%
	Female	645	1,256	1,487	1,984	2,114	2,114	1,961	1,698	14.8%
Remedial Education	All students	763	–	–	–	763	861	1,484	1,361	8.6%
	Male	466	–	–	–	466	473	865	806	8.1%
	Female	297	–	–	–	297	388	619	555	9.3%
Home Studies	All students	3,591	3,591	5,929	6,215	5,840	6,680	6,228	–	9.6%
	Male	2,182	2,182	4,025	4,050	3,463	3,849	3,282	–	7.0%
	Female	1,409	1,409	1,904	2,165	2,377	2,831	2,946	–	13.1%

Programme	Gender	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024	Average annual growth rate
Evening Studies	All students	336	224	212	138	138	128	131	181	-8.5%
	Male	336	224	212	138	138	128	131	181	-8.5%
	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	–

Source: MoE, Non-Formal Education Department, 2016/2017 through 2023/2024

Although disaggregated NFE enrolment numbers are not consistently available for all programmes, the data at hand suggest that certain student groups are more likely to participate in NFE options rather than formal schooling (Figure 5.14). Aside from the Adult Literacy and Education programme, boys constitute a greater proportion of those enrolled in NFE, highlighting a gender disparity in participation. Non-Jordanians (Syrians and children of other nationalities combined) represent the majority of enrolments in the Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs and Remedial Education programmes. While children with disabilities make up only 0.9% of enrolments in the formal education system (basic and secondary cycles only), they constitute 4.6% and 4.3% of enrolments in the Remedial Education and Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs programmes, respectively. Furthermore, Syrian children and children of other nationalities make up a combined 1% of all enrolments in basic and secondary formal education. Comparatively, 7.4% of the children enrolled in the Remedial Education and Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs programmes are of other nationalities (over 18 times more than their share in the formal education system) and 45.8% are of Syrian nationality (over 65 times more than their share in the formal education system). This suggests that children with disabilities and children of Syrian and other nationalities are being diverted to NFE rather than being integrated into mainstream formal schooling.

Without reliable and disaggregated population data, it is impossible to assess whether the distribution of participation in NFE programmes reflects the proportion of vulnerable populations within the overall population.

Figure 5.14. Share of enrolment in formal and non-formal education by student group, 2022/2023



Source: MoE, Non-Formal Education Department, 2022/2023

Note: Certain demographic information related to participants in the Adult Literacy and Education, Home Studies and Evening Studies programmes was not available for this analysis.

Research into the quality of NFE programming in Jordan shows promising results; however, the studies are either quite outdated, small-scale or focused on adult education. The MoE has worked closely with research partners to conduct studies on the accessibility, quality and relevance of its adult education programmes (Al Qorom and Assaf, 2022; European Training Foundation, 2025). However, research on its NFE programming for children and adolescents is more limited. A pilot study of the Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs programme conducted in 2010 found that participation in the programme led to positive changes in the behaviour, social skills and emotional well-being of participating out-of-school children (University of Oxford, 2011). An evaluation in 2014 found that most NFE programme participants were able to pass the equivalent of the Grade 10 final examinations and enter either vocational training or formal secondary education (Al Nasser, 2013). There is a need for more current research into the quality and impact of the Kingdom's alternative education pathways.

In the 2023/2024 academic year, 846 NFE students (479 male and 367 female) out of the 5,395 students participating in the Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs and Remedial Education programmes were referred to the formal education system (Jordan, MoE, 2025). Among the students referred, 56.9% were of Syrian nationality. Furthermore, an additional 82 NFE students enrolled in VTC programmes in the 2023/2024 academic year.

Out-of-school and vulnerable children in Jordan also benefit from the existence of non-governmental alternative education programmes. For example, Makani ('my place') is a UNICEF programme that began in 2015 to address the urgent needs of Syrian children during the refugee crisis and has since evolved into a comprehensive response for all vulnerable children, regardless of nationality, as part of the national social protection response under the MoSD (Presler-Marshall et al., 2022). Through the Makani programme, the following services are available:

- Toddlers and pre-schoolers can join learning readiness courses to help prepare them for starting school.
- School-aged children have access to centres offering learning support classes and community-based child protection resources.
- Students in early adolescence can attend courses focused on transferable life skills, such as communication, critical thinking and negotiation. For those in mid-adolescence, the courses are expanded to include financial and computer skills, and leadership development.
- Caregivers are offered courses focused on parenting and literacy skills.

The Makani programme also plays a key role in identifying out-of-school children and referring them to partners who can help them enrol in formal education or NFE programmes. Makani facilitators are also able to refer children and their families to other services as needed.

5.4. Inclusion and diversity in learning

Disparities related to a range of contextual factors that are external to the school system can nevertheless have a significant impact on children's skill acquisition and learning outcomes. Such factors may include the student's gender, their family's socioeconomic status, their parents' education level, where they live, and their family's ethnic and linguistic background. These create an uneven playing field that impinges on the quality of a child's learning and points to a need for targeted policy interventions to narrow and eliminate existing gaps.

This section focuses on the nexus between equity and quality, analysing student learning outcomes and how different student groups performed in various learning assessments, including large-scale international and national assessments, and examinations, such as the tawjihi (General Secondary Education Certificate Examination).

Additionally, this section will evaluate to what extent the quality of schooling and the learning environments in Jordan differ for the various groups of students served. This entails a review of school infrastructure, access to teaching and learning resources, such as libraries and computers laboratories, and the prevalence of school-based violence.

The results presented below should be interpreted with a degree of caution. To a certain extent, learning outcomes are influenced by individual effort. From an equity perspective, if one group spends more time studying than another, it is reasonable and fair for that group to obtain better academic results. An issue of equity arises when individuals are subject to contextual factors, learning environments and other conditions that are inconducive to learning. However, the availability of data on children's academic effort is limited. As a result, it is not possible to determine to what extent differences in academic outcomes are driven by differences in individual effort among learners.

5.4.1. Student performance in international assessments seen through an equity lens

Results from international assessments indicate wide disparities between student learning outcomes but are generally low for all groups.

Table 5.22 offers a summary of disparities, along with parity indices, across the various international assessments from primary school through upper basic schooling. While Chapter 4 describes the different types of international assessments in which Jordan has participated, the following are broad observations regarding disparities in learning outcomes in relation to equity dimensions.

- **Girls outperform boys in all international assessments and in almost all assessed subjects, although the magnitude of the gap varies.** As often seen in education research, girls systematically outperformed boys in reading and literature, registering a startling 2.29 GPI in the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In mathematics and science, assessed in the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the 2022 PISA, girls also outperformed boys. In the 2023 TIMSS, student performance did not differ significantly by gender.
- **Socioeconomic status consistently predicts performance on international assessments, with socioeconomically advantaged students outperforming disadvantaged students.** There is a stark contrast in academic performance between students from the lowest and highest income quintiles. For example, in the 2022 PISA, only 8.5% of low-income students achieved minimum proficiency in reading, compared to (a still mediocre) 38.3% of high-income students. Higher socioeconomic status is associated with, among other elements, parents

having a higher level of education and well-paid professions, thus leading to the availability and use of more educational resources (books, games, etc.) at home.

- **Students from rural areas generally perform more poorly than their urban peers in all subjects.** The urban-rural divide is an important factor affecting children's academic achievement, though it may be compounded by other factors such as the income and education level of their parents, and the quality of local schools. For example, in the 2022 PISA, 11.1% of rural students achieved minimum proficiency in mathematics compared to 17.9% of urban students, showing a rural-urban performance gap that is substantial though less pronounced than the income-based differentials. This trend is consistent across other assessments, with the exception of the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) results, which highlights the significance of geographic disparities in determining learning outcomes.
- **A language-based gap, favouring native Arabic speakers over other linguistic groups, exists across all subject areas in both lower and upper basic grades.** Students who speak Arabic at home tend to perform better than those who do not at all levels of basic education. For example, in the 2021 PIRLS, nearly half (47.9%) of students who spoke Arabic at home achieved minimum proficiency in reading, compared to 39.1% of those who dis not.

Table 5.22. Proportion of assessed students achieving minimum proficiency levels on international assessments, with associated parity indices and student characteristics

Assessment	Year	Grade	Indicator	Gender			Location			Income			Speaks Arabic at Home		
				Female	Male	GPI	Rural	Urban	PI	Lowest	Highest	PI	No	Yes	PI
PIRLS	2021	4	Minimum proficiency in reading, %	52.4%	40.7%	1.29	52.3%	46.4%	1.13	31.4%	66.1%	0.48	39.1%	47.9%	0.82
TIMSS	2019	8	Minimum proficiency in mathematics, %	31.3%	24.0%	1.31	19.6%	27.9%	0.70	8.7%	32.7%	0.27	–	–	–
			Minimum proficiency in science, %	55.5%	34.8%	1.60	33.9%	45.2%	0.75	28.0%	65.1%	0.43	32.7%	45.3%	0.72
PISA	2022	10	Minimum proficiency in reading, %	28.1%	12.2%	2.29	11.2%	21.5%	0.52	8.5%	38.3%	0.22	15.7%	21.3%	0.74
			Minimum proficiency in mathematics, %	19.6%	14.5%	1.35	11.1%	17.9%	0.62	8.7%	32.7%	0.27	10.8%	17.8%	0.61
			Minimum proficiency in science, %	38.8%	22.8%	1.70	21.3%	32.2%	0.66	20.3%	49.2%	0.41	23.6%	32.0%	0.74

Source: Author's calculations based on the World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE).

Notes: Parity indices highlighted in red fall outside of the 0.97–1.03 range typically categorized as 'parity'. At the time of this report, 2023 TIMSS results had yet to be integrated into the WIDE. Available data sets for the PIRLS, PISA and TIMSS did not contain information related to student disability status.

Regression models, which analyse learner performance in relation to various student characteristics (as previously discussed in Chapter 4), reveal statistically significant disparities in learning outcomes on international assessments. Selected results from these models are presented in **Table 5.23**. Across the 2023 TIMSS, 2021 PIRLS and 2022 PISA, female students performed better across all subjects when all other individual-, teacher- and school-related characteristics remained constant. Students from more privileged socioeconomic backgrounds and whose parents had achieved higher levels of education also performed better across all subjects in the 2019 TIMSS, 2021 PIRLS and 2022 PISA. Being of Jordanian nationality was also positively correlated with performance on the mathematics, reading and science components of the 2022 PISA.

Table 5.23. Summary of key factors affecting learning outcomes on international assessments in Grades 4, 8 and 10

Variable	Grade 4 students (Score in reading, 2021 PIRLS)	Grade 8 students (Aggregated score in maths and science, 2023 TIMSS)	Grade 10 students, age 15 years (Aggregated score in maths, reading and science, 2022 PISA)
Student level			
Female student	(+++)		(+++)
Student attended kindergarten	(+++)		
PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS)	(+++)	(+++)	(+++)
Of Jordanian nationality			(+++)
Student's parent has at least a university level of education*	(+++)	(+++)	(+++)
Teacher level			
Teacher has a master's degree or equivalent	(+)		(++)
School level			
Use of digital resources for over 2 hours at school (maximum 3 hours)		(++)	
Public school			(---)
Student feels completely unsafe at school			(---)

Source: Author's calculations based on econometric analysis.

*Notes: (+++) indicates a positive effect that is statistically significant at the 1% level. (++) indicates a positive effect that is statistically significant at the 5% level. (---) indicates a negative effect that is statistically significant at the 1% level. (--) indicates a negative effect that is statistically significant at the 5% level. (-) indicates a negative effect that is statistically significant at the 10% level. *For the 2022 PISA model, data on the education level of the student's parent were limited to their mother only. Available data sets for the PIRLS, PISA and TIMSS did not contain information related to student disability status.*

Regression analysis also found that student performance on international assessments is positively affected by attending schools that are safer and have more resources – a privilege that is enjoyed by some students but not others. For example, schools where students used digital resources for 2-3 hours per day, schools where students felt safe, schools having greater access to teachers with master's degrees and private schools all performed better on one or more of the above-mentioned international assessments.

Children who attended kindergarten, a trend more common among those from higher-income backgrounds and those of Jordanian nationality, performed better on the 2021 PIRLS, all other factors being held constant.

5.4.2. Student performance on national assessments and examinations seen through an equity lens

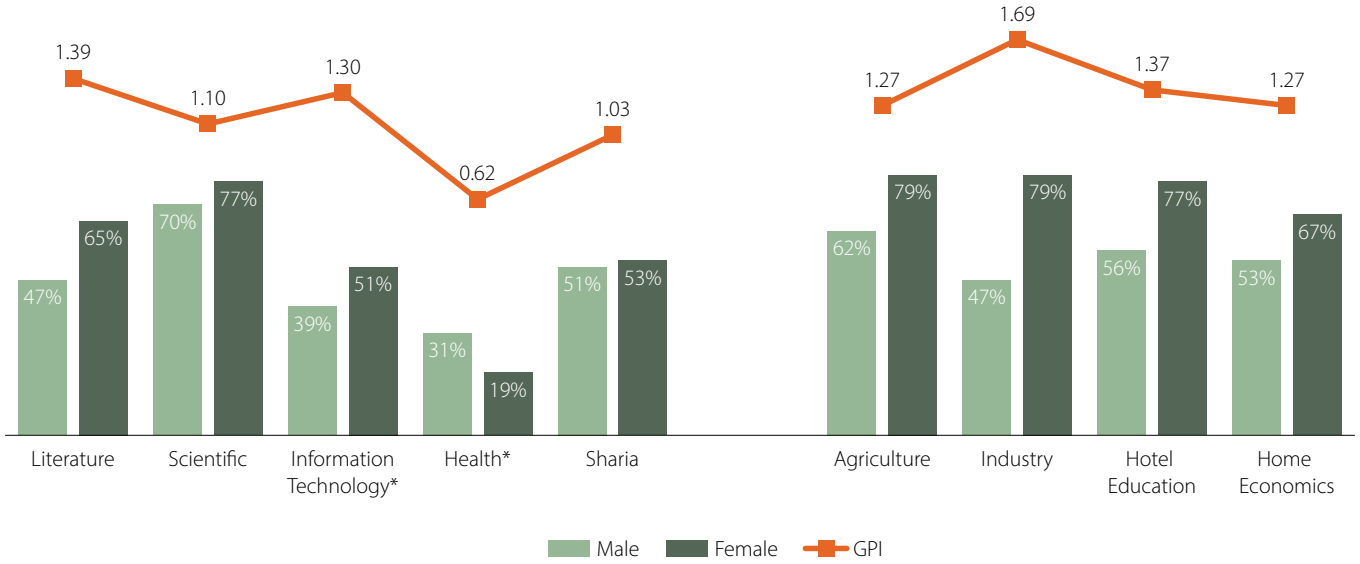
An in-depth analysis to evaluate student performance on national assessments and examinations through an equity lens has been hampered by data limitations.

A lack of disaggregation in national assessment data has prevented Jordan from identifying and monitoring disparities in learning outcomes according to student characteristics. As discussed in Chapter 4, Jordan has, in recent years, implemented several assessment systems nationally to evaluate and monitor student learning levels in Arabic and mathematics. These nclude: (a) the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) for Grades 2 and 3, and (b) Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) for Grades 2 and 3. While both assessments provide sex-disaggregated learning results, showing the superior performance of girls in literacy and boys in numeracy, the lack of other disaggregated data makes it impossible to properly map disparities by other equity dimensions (Jordan, MoE, 2021; Bani Hamad, 2023).

Student performance on national assessments and examinations by student gender

There are significant gender disparities across several streams of the tawjihi examination. Figure 5.15 demonstrates that girls tend to outperform boys academically at the secondary school level, as shown by the differences in pass rates across the various streams assessed in the 2022/2023 tawjihi examination. For example, in the literature and science streams, females have a higher pass rate than males. Conversely, in the health stream, males far outperform females, with a 31% of males passing compared to 19% of females. Only in the sharia stream is gender parity met in terms of pass rates.

Figure 5.15. Pass rates and gender parity indices for tawjihi examinations by stream (academic path: left; vocational path: right) and student gender, 2022/2023



Source: MoE, Directorate of Examinations and Tests, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023

*Note: * indicates pass rates from the 2021/2022 academic year*

Student performance on national assessments examinations by disability status

Students with disabilities have much lower tawjihi pass rates than their peers; female students with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged. Comparisons between students with and without disabilities can be made by looking at the share of students enrolled in Grade 12 who passed the tawjihi examination. **Table 5.24** presents the number of Grade 12 students with and without disabilities in 2022/2023, those who passed the tawjihi and the resulting pass rates. As shown, students with disabilities have a pass rate that is less than half of the overall student population pass rate. This suggests that (a) fewer students with disabilities register for the tawjihi, (b) fewer pass it, or (c) fewer register and fewer pass. Among students with disabilities, girls are less likely than boys to register for and pass the exam.

Table 5.24. Number of eligible Grade 12 students, and students who passed the tawjihi, by disability status and gender, 2022/2023

		Grade 12 students	Grade 12 students who passed the tawjihi (all streams)	Pass rate (students who passed/ enrolled students)
Children with disabilities	**Total**	**1310**	**365**	**27.9%**
	Male	613	198	**32.3%**
	Female	697	167	**24.0%**
All students	**Total**	**132,295**	**78,232**	**59.1%**

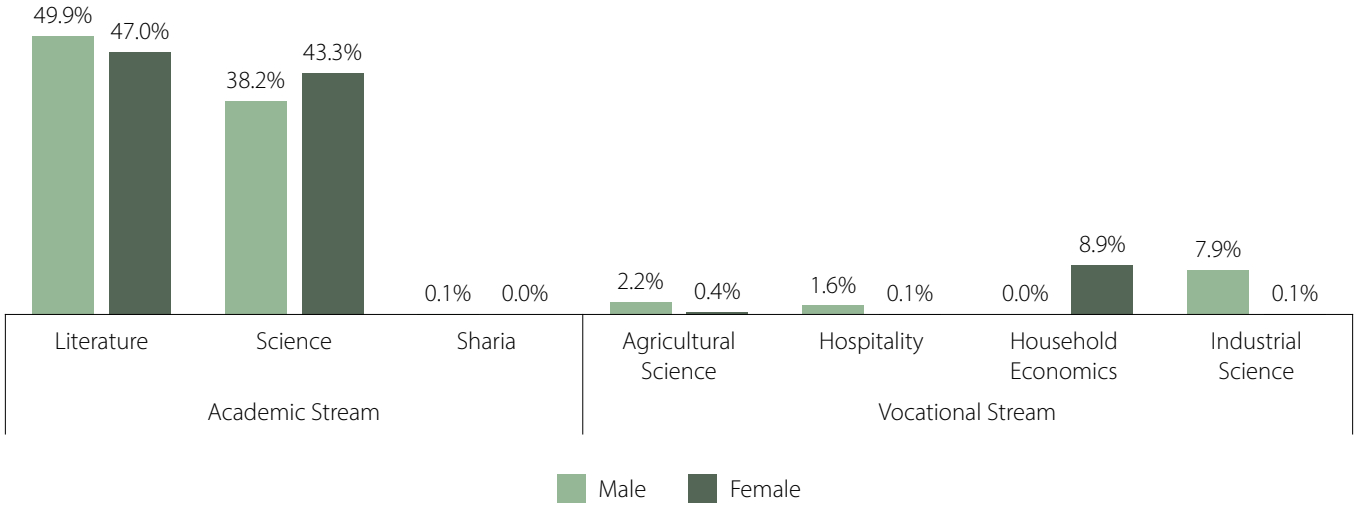
Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023; MoE, Directorate of Examinations and Tests, 2022/2023

Note: Numbers presented in this figure exclude private candidates.

5.4.3. Secondary level stream choices seen through an equity lens

Stream choices at the secondary level are highly gendered, with specialist options strongly reflecting traditional gender roles. Stream choices influence a child's future educational opportunities and subsequently, their labour market prospects. As measured by enrolment numbers from the 2022/23 academic year, **Figure 5.16** demonstrates that boys on the academic path are slightly less likely to participate in the science stream, while girls on the academic path are slightly less likely to participate in the literature stream.

Figure 5.16. Percentage of secondary students by stream choice and gender, 2022/2023



Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023

On the vocational path, traditional gender roles are strongly reflected in the streams that girls and boys pursue, with boys primarily studying industrial science and girls studying household economics. Boys on the vocational path are also more likely than girls to pursue studies in agricultural science and hospitality, although these differences are not as extreme. Education in household economics provides girls with potential vocational opportunities that are feasible but tend to be in the low-income quintile, whereas the more technically oriented training pursued by boys provides a far higher earning potential.

Table 5.25 demonstrates that gendered trends in stream selection persist across student nationality. Among Jordanians, Syrians and students of other nationalities, almost 90% of both boys and girls enrol in either the literature or the science streams of the academic path. Across all nationalities, boys are more likely to pursue the vocational path streams of agricultural science, hospitality and industrial science, while most girls enrol in household economics. Syrian girls are the only group of female students to not have any enrolments in the vocational path streams of agricultural science, hospitality and industrial science.

Table 5.25. Share (%) of secondary school students by gender, nationality and stream choice, 2022/2023

Student Nationality	Student Gender	Academic path			Vocational path			
		Literature	Science	Sharia	Agricultural science	Hospitality	Household economics	Industrial science
All	Male	49.9%	38.2%	0.1%	2.2%	1.6%	0.0%	7.9%
	Female	47.0%	43.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	8.9%	0.1%
Jordanian	Male	50.3%	37.3%	0.1%	2.4%	1.7%	0.0%	8.2%
	Female	46.5%	43.3%	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%	9.4%	0.2%
Syrian	Male	47.1%	51.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	1.0%
	Female	54.6%	44.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%
Other nationalities	Male	42.4%	48.3%	0.0%	0.8%	1.2%	0.0%	7.3%
	Female	50.2%	43.7%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	5.6%	0.1%

Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023

Notes: Before the introduction of the BTEC programme, a student's enrolment in the vocational or academic paths at the secondary school level depended on their score in upper basic examinations. For each stream, cells highlighted in green identify the largest shares of secondary students, while cells highlighted in yellow identify the smallest shares.

5.4.4. School learning conditions seen through an equity lens

Learning conditions and resources in Jordan vary significantly by context and school type, creating disparities in the quality of learning experiences among different learner groups.

As discussed in Chapter 4, many schools lack facilities that enrich learning. **Table 5.26** presents data on the availability and quality of various school resources, such as teachers and learning facilities, by school location, building tenure and other defining characteristics. Noteworthy disparities in learning conditions and access to educational resources by school context and type include:

- Pupil/teacher ratios range from 13:5 in rural schools and schools without refugee students to 26:1 (nearly twice as high) in UNRWA schools. As discussed in Chapter 4, pupil/teacher ratios vary greatly by education level and governorate.
- On average, private schools have the lowest education levels among their teaching staff, with only 76.4% of teachers holding at least a bachelor's degree. In contrast, almost all teachers in UNRWA and refugee camp schools have obtained at least a bachelor's degree.
- Overcrowding is most prevalent in UNRWA schools, double-shift schools and schools in refugee camps, which all have average pupil/classroom ratios over 30:1. Conversely, private schools and schools without refugees have a lower pupil/classroom ratio between 16:1 and 17:1.
- Girls' schools have the greatest access to additional educational facilities, including libraries (62.3%), assembly halls (26.9%), computer laboratories (73.1%) and science laboratories (48.4%). Comparatively, schools in refugee camps are the less likely to have these additional facilities.
- Over 50% of private schools are located in rented buildings, in other words, in buildings that were not meant to be schools. The classrooms are often of different sizes and not appropriately designed for learning, outdoor space is limited and washroom facilities are insufficient and inaccessible.

Table 5.26. Schools and learning conditions by school characteristics, 2022/2023

		Number of schools	Proportion of all schools	Pupil/ teacher ratio	Proportion of teachers with a bachelor's degree or higher	Pupil/ classroom ratio	Rented	Has a library	Has an assembly hall	Has a computer laboratory	Has a science laboratory
School location	Rural	2,910	38.8%	13.5	95.2%	20.6	26.3%	39.8%	9.5%	62.9%	33.0%
	Urban	4,595	61.2%	16.0	85.1%	22.1	37.3%	41.0%	15.5%	56.2%	29.8%
School ownership	Public	4,110	54.8%	14.9	97.7%	24.9	18.8%	55.9%	19.6%	75.6%	42.8%
	Private	3,234	43.1%	14.5	76.4%	16.6	51.2%	23.7%	5.9%	41.2%	18.1%
	UNRWA	161	2.1%	26.1	99.1%	34.3	32.9%	–	–	–	–
Refugee inclusion	Evening school	204	2.7%	17.3	97.2%	35.9	6.4%	52.4%	23.8%	81.9%	2.9%
	Host community	4,920	65.6%	15.5	91.6%	23.4	28.9%	49.5%	16.9%	69.2%	38.9%
	Refugee camp	77	1.0%	24.1	99.4%	31.9	24.7%	11.8%	0.0%	15.7%	7.8%
	School without refugees	2,304	30.7%	13.5	82.0%	16.5	44.6%	21.4%	4.9%	36.5%	16.1%
School gender makeup	Female	525	7.0%	17.6	97.5%	28.5	21.7%	62.3%	26.9%	73.1%	48.4%
	Male	1,671	22.3%	14.9	97.3%	26.7	13.9%	57.5%	16.4%	79.9%	40.0%
	Mixed-gender	5,309	70.7%	14.8	85.5%	19.2	40.2%	33.1%	10.8%	50.9%	26.5%

Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023

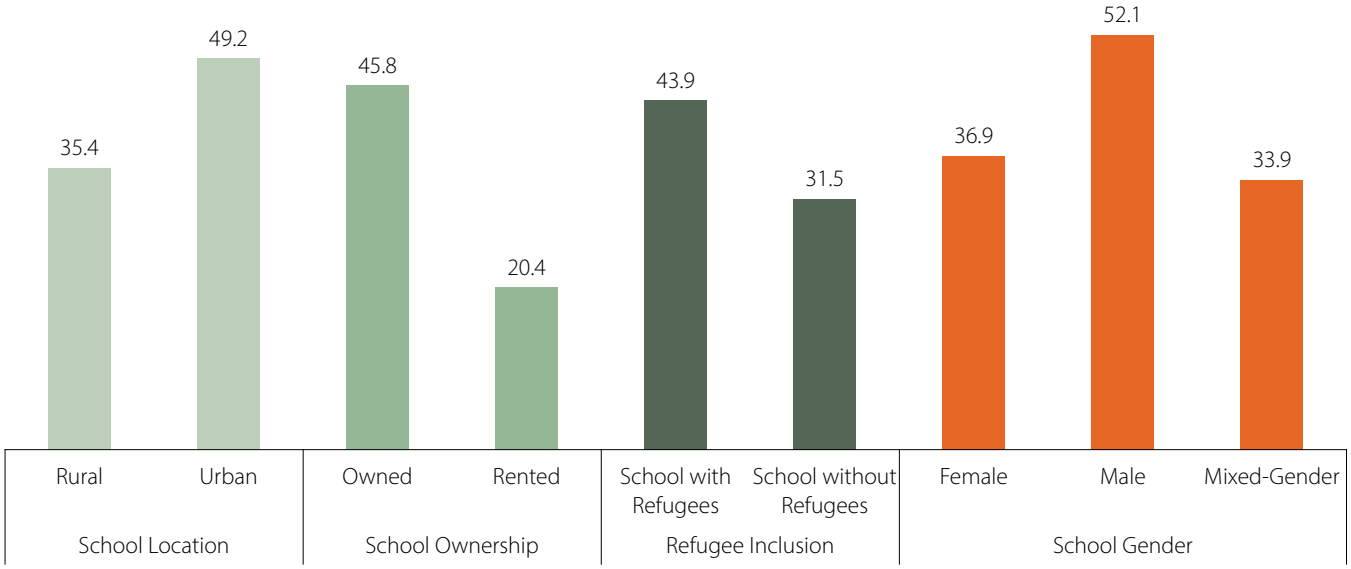
Notes: Minimum values are presented in red font. Maximum values are presented in green font.

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) amenities also differs by school type. According to data collected in 2020, there is an overage of one washroom per 45 female students, compared to one washroom per 75 male students. In general, the girls' washrooms are cleaner and more suitable for use than the boys' washrooms. The majority of girls' schools lack the necessary supply of feminine hygiene products, which may lead to recurring absenteeism among girls (USAID, 2020).

As introduced in Chapter 4, the Enhancing School Management and Planning (ESMP) Facility Audit Report (2023) identified school safety risks and flagged infrastructure issues based on severity. Accurate, up-to-date school building data is critical for informed school maintenance planning. The report was supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and assessed the maintenance needs of 3,557 government schools, categorizing the maintenance issues across educational facilities using a risk-based approach and assigning 'flags' to each school based on the risk level of certain issues. For example, red flags identified immediate safety concerns, orange flags identified urgent issues with the potential for further damage and yellow flags identified potential maintenance that would have cost-saving benefits.

The quality and integrity of school infrastructure, and thus school safety, varies by school context. Figure 5.17 shows the average number of "flags" received by sample schools in the ESMP Facility Audit Report based their context and other characteristics. A higher average number of flags indicates more extensive safety and infrastructure integrity issues faced by the school. The largest numbers of maintenance issues were identified at boys' schools, schools with buildings that are not rented, urban schools, and schools that serve both refugee and non-refugee students. As stated in Chapter 4, the Facility Audit Report also highlights that schools in the central region of Jordan face more pronounced deficiencies in their basic facilities and learning spaces compared to schools in the north and south of the country (USAID, 2023).

Figure 5.17. Average number of school maintenance issues flagged in the ESMP Facility Audit Report by school type, 2022/2023



Source: EMIS data from 2022/2023; ESMP Facility Audit Report (2023)

In Jordan, the National Building Codes, pursuant to the National Building Law No. 7 of 1993, regulate standards for facilities, roads and buildings (including schools), as well as access standards for persons with disabilities (Jordan, MPWH, 2018). In 2018, Jordan adopted a revised set of building codes to address the needs of persons with disabilities, which was issued by the National Building Council under the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MPWH) and which mandated the integration of universal design for learning principles into the construction of any new school.

The ESMP Facility Audit Report also revealed significant shortcomings in the accessibility provided to individuals with physical disabilities. Findings suggest that the accessibility standards mandated under the revised building codes had not been fully implemented across the Jordanian education system, affecting the integrity of school infrastructure and the inclusiveness of schools for children and staff with disabilities. The Facility Audit Report findings pertaining to these school accessibility concerns include:

- **Inaccessible school entrance corridors:** Nearly half (1,519, or 49.9%) of schools with entrance corridors lack access ramps for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, 29.7% of the 1,521 external access ramps (where these are in place) lack handrails or balustrades, a crucial safety feature for persons with disabilities.
- **Limited availability of functioning elevators:** The survey identified only 505 elevators available among the 3,557 participating schools (14%).[123] Of these, 83 required maintenance to ensure they functioned properly, 16 were in such poor condition that they needed replacement and 97 were deemed unsuitable for individuals needing accessibility assistance to reach classrooms. This highlights the urgency of making essential modifications to improve accessibility.
- **Lack of accessible washroom facilities:** Out of the 7,077 washrooms located within main school buildings, the vast majority (6,340 or 89.8%) were not designed to be accessible for individuals with disabilities, indicating a lack of WASH facilities for students and staff with special access needs. Furthermore, 2,644 of the 3,577 schools surveyed (74.4%) had washrooms located outside of the main school building. All such washrooms were deemed unusable by individuals with special

123 The Facility Audit Report did not indicate how many schools had multiple floors or which classrooms were not at ground level. Therefore, of the 3,052 schools found to not have elevators, it is not possible to ascertain what proportion actually require elevators to access to all teaching and learning spaces.

needs, indicating a further lack of accessibility for people with disabilities. Additionally, out of the 2,390 public drinking fountains in the 3,557 schools surveyed, over three-quarters of them (1,846, or 77.2 %) were not accessible for people with special needs due to height or wheelchair constraints.

The Ten-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education features 'accessibility and reasonable accommodation' as one its components for the realization of inclusive education. In line with 2018 revised building codes for persons with disabilities, the Ten-Year Strategy recommends starting with construction projects, such as installing ramps and elevators, and considering the use of rental premises to be inadequate for meeting accessibility standards. It also recommends constructing 300 new, disability-accessible school buildings for boys and girls education over the next five years to serve Syrian refugees and students with special needs. As stated in the ESP 2022–2018, two schools per year, including kindergartens, are expected to be renovated with ramps and washroom s so as to be more accessible for children with disabilities. This work is to be carried out under the responsibility of the Department of Special Education and in coordination with the School Mapping Unit and the General Education Directorate.

5.4.5. The prevalence of school-based violence seen through an equity lens

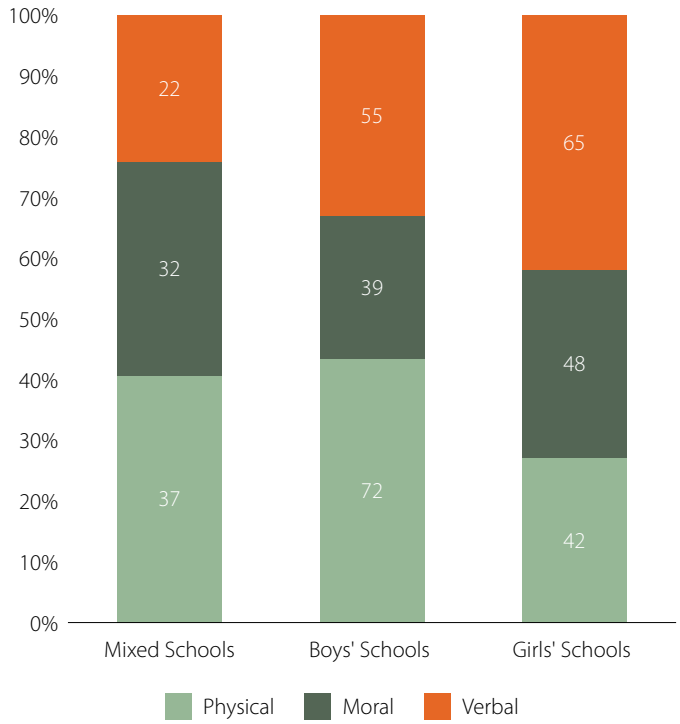
Jordan has established confidential reporting mechanisms for students to safely disclose issues of violence, both within and outside of school. The National Policies and Guidelines document and the National Standard Procedures Manual have defined the obligations, predicated on principles of confidentiality and privacy, with which all sectors working on child protection issues must comply (UNICEF and Jordan, MoE, 2023). The MoE has set up a hotline through the Protection and Safe Environment Section as one of the national mechanisms for reporting violence cases. At the school level, students fill out a questionnaire during the third week of every month to answer survey questions about the safety of their school environment and record any instance of violence against them, whether at school or within their family. This questionnaire is completed in confidential, safe manner that allows the student to be free to report any violence to which they were exposed.

As discussed in Chapter 4, while boys have historically reported higher levels of school-based violence than girls, reported cases of violence among girls are increasing. School-based violence has risen significantly for all students over the past seven years, albeit not evenly, with a 3.7-fold increase in violence among girls compared to a 2.1-fold increase among boys. When accounting for the size of the student population, girls' schools report the highest rates of school-based violence (at 4.3 cases per 10,000 students in 2022/2023), although the rate of violence in boys' schools is also worrisome (at 1.7 cases per 10,000 students in 2022/2023). Mixed-gender schools have consistently reported the lowest levels of school-based violence (at 0.2 cases per 10,000 students in 2022/2023). This may be due to the fact that such schools have a greater proportion of kindergarten- and lower basic-aged students. When considering how to target ministerial efforts to eliminate school-based violence, the rapid rise in violence among girls warrants increased attention on all-female schools.

Physical violence is more common in boys' and mixed schools, while girls' schools tend to face more issues with verbal and psychological abuse. According to the cases reported in the 2022/2023 academic year, approximately 43.4% and 40.7% of school-based violence reported in boys' and mixed schools, respectively, was physical, compared to 27.1% in girls' schools (see **Figure 5.18**). On the other hand, 41.9% of violence cases reported in girls' schools in the 2022/2023 academic year were verbal in nature, compared to 33.1% in boys' schools and 24.2% in mixed schools. These results indicate that ministries seeking to reduce school-based violence will need to tailor their

approach to the particular school environment and the most common type of violence experienced there. However, this analysis should be interpreted with caution as differences in the quantity and type of reported violence cases may be driven by sociocultural understandings of what constitutes violence.

Figure 5.18. Number of violence cases reported by type of violence and school type, 2023/2024



Source: MoE, Protection and Safe Environment Section, 2023/2024

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the second National Study on Violence against Children in Jordan (2019–2020) has shown that violence against children is widespread in the Kingdom across all levels of education, age groups and gender. The study, which included qualitative data collection as well as a quantitative national survey of students aged 8–17 years and caregivers, incorporating various economic, social and demographic determinants (UNICEF and Jordan, NCFA, 2020), found that Syrian refugee camps are a high-risk setting for teacher violence, with boys particularly at risk of physical violence. Other notable findings include:

- Individuals aged 8–17 years who resided in Syrian camps were 12.1% more likely than those in the national sample to identify teachers as perpetrators of physical violence against children and 7% more likely to identify teachers as perpetrators of psychological violence.
- Gender is among the most significant contributing factors demonstrated to increase a child's risk of exposure to violence. Males are more vulnerable to violence than females, especially to physical violence. However, females were more affected by other types of violence.

The MoE Protection and Safe Environment Section, which is responsible for addressing complaints of abuse in schools, received 450 complaints in 2023 through hotline calls and written notices. Of these, 150 were solved amicably and without formal action thanks to the heads of guidance departments in the field. In 2023, Section staff participated in continuing professional development related to gender-based violence and child protection against sexual exploitation and abuse so as to strengthen their capacity to tackle these issues.

5.5. Resources, services and programmes to support inclusion and diversity in education

This section outlines the various quality inputs aimed at promoting greater inclusion and diversity in education. These resources include specialized staff, financial assistance programmes and psychosocial services. There are also efforts to introduce professional development programmes for teachers, curriculum design, pedagogical methodologies and instructional aids, all of which are tailored to the unique needs of the children identified as most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education.

While these resources, services and programmes have helped significantly advance inclusive education efforts within the Kingdom, their implementation has been skewed towards urban and more well-resourced areas. Implementing these policies and programmes in marginalized and rural areas is considerably more challenging. Obstacles include limited access to specialized resources, insufficient staff capacity and logistical difficulties, all of which hinder the effective delivery of support to every student, particularly those in underserved communities. A lack of sufficient training and guidance for local staff and teachers in inclusive education practices exacerbates the challenge, as many educators in rural, under-resourced schools may not have the tools or expertise to effectively support diverse groups of learners. In addition, services provided by other government agencies tend to be more limited in remote areas, applying additional pressures on schools to monitor and support a broader set of their students' needs. Collectively, these challenges contribute to the persistent inequities in education access and quality for marginalized students in Jordan.

5.5.1. Specialized staff

Recruitment of specialized staff has increased dramatically under ongoing inclusive education initiatives. In 2023, under the second phase of the Accelerating Access to Education Initiative (AAI 2.0), a pilot programme was launched in 60 schools to support children with disabilities and learning difficulties. The AAI 2.0 recruited and deployed 120 specialized units in schools to support this inclusive pilot programme. The units, termed **multidisciplinary teams (MDTs),** consist of four specialists in (a) physiotherapy, (b) occupational therapy, (c) visual rehabilitation, and (d) speech and language support or rehabilitation. There are plans to expand the MDTs to also include specialists in auditory rehabilitation, nursing and educational psychology, which school counsellors are tasked with, for now. The objective of the MDTs is to support inclusive education processes inside schools by facilitating the learning of students with disabilities (including learning difficulties), ensuring the participation and interaction of these students and providing them with opportunities to improve their abilities (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2020, pp. 36). Each field directorate has a special education supervisor or advisor, who is responsible for managing the MDTs.

In the 2022/2023 academic year, 196 specialists were appointed to 42 MDTs across all education field directorates. The unavailability of specialists for certain functional positions has left vacancies in some field directorates, requiring MDTs to depend on support from national-level agencies like the MoE, MoSD and Ministry of Health (MoH), as well as universities, and other teaching and research institutions. MDT support is not yet provided at the kindergarten level, as it is not yet a compulsory educational stage (Jordan, MoE, 2025).

The role of learning support teachers (also referred to as 'inclusive education coordinators' or "special education teachers") is to curate an inclusive learning environment for all students. They do so by facilitating the

inclusion of students with disabilities alongside their peers without disability and by providing personalized and essential educational resources. Learning support teachers are responsible for conducting a comprehensive assessment of all students within their field directorate to assess individual learning challenges before then developing and implementing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students in need of support. While learning support teachers engage directly with students, they are also tasked with observing, training and advising teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders at the school. In the 2022/2023 academic year, 461 learning support teachers were appointed to 198 inclusive schools. Over the past seven years, learning support teachers have been mostly, if not exclusively, female.

Some specialized staff for inclusive education serve only students in specialized schools, such as those for children with disabilities. This group of children has traditionally been, and continues to be, the main focus for specialized support staff. For example, specialized schools for children with hearing challenges are supported by sign language interpreters. In 2023, the MoE had 27 sign language interpreters on its payroll, representing a slight increase from three years prior when there were only 24 sign language interpreters at the MoE. While northern and southern regions of the country both have access to 11 sign language interpreters, the middle region only has 5 such interpreters.

The prevalence of familial escorts for children with disabilities has grown in recent years; however, numbers remain low, and the role has remained heavily gendered. Schools in Jordan allow parents or other family members to accompany their children at school if they have a disability. In 2023, there were 168 familial escorts registered with the MoE (61 male and 107 female). Similar to learning support teachers, the role of familial escorts is quite gendered, with 64% of familial escorts in 2023 being female.

Gender focal points are also currently active in each MoE field directorate, where they are responsible for supporting the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the GEAP+.

5.5.2. Financial assistance programmes

Both public and private schooling in Jordan involve costs for families, limiting access to education. For 14 years, royal decrees have exempted Jordanian and Syrian students in public schools from annual fees (3.15 Jordanian dinars (JOD) plus the cost of textbooks). However, other costs, such as transportation and meals still hinder access. Private schooling can sometimes a better option for families, depending on the location or learning environment, but it remains inaccessible due to high tuition fees. The government has implemented several financial assistance programmes to eliminate financial barriers and increase access to education at the general education level.

Cash assistance

Jordan has the largest social protection system in the MENA region when it comes to coverage for the poorest populations (Ridao-Cano et al., 2023); this can also help families free up resources to invest in their children's education. Programmes include the World Bank-supported cash assistance programmes of the Jordanian National Aid Fund (NAF), which more than doubled their budget and coverage between 2018 and 2023, reaching 220,000 households in total (World Bank, 2024). The NAF operates six programmes providing targeted support to Jordanian households for children without parental care, incarcerated persons, persons with disabilities, missing persons, divorced women and female-headed households. Cash benefits are also

provided to the Kingdom's poorest communities through the Zakat Fund.

The Hajati programme, managed by UNICEF, provides unconditional cash transfers to help vulnerable households access education. Although the cash transfers are unconditional, the Hajati programme uses communication efforts to encourage spending on education. A 2018/2019 survey found that the programme helps families afford school supplies, transportation (especially for girls) and basic household needs, reducing reliance on child labour (UNICEF and ODI, 2021). Although it was launched in 2017 with 55,000 children, the Hajati programme now supports only 15,585 children from 5,533 households as at January 2021 due to funding constraints (UNICEF, 2021).

The Al Aman Fund for the Future of Orphans, founded by Queen Rania in 2003 and registered as a non-profit charitable organization in 2006, supports orphans after they turn 18 and leave government care. The Fund helps orphans avoid poverty and access education, healthcare and training by providing them with housing, self-development courses, scholarships, health insurance and a monthly allowance.

Food assistance

School feeding programmes have alleviated some of the financial burden carried by families in impoverished areas. School feeding efforts began in the 1970s, aimed at addressing the food insecurity of vulnerable citizens so as to increase school attendance rates and enrolment at literacy centres in remote areas of Jordan. Relaunched in 2021, the National School Feeding Programme (NSFP), as stipulated in the National School Feeding Strategy (2021–2025), focuses on delivering meals to schools in impoverished areas. As part of the NSFP, over 430,000 students in 2,314 schools in vulnerable areas across the country receive date bars or high-protein biscuits as a school meal every day.

Food insecurity remains a major concern for refugees in Jordan. Although food security has improved slightly since the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerable groups, such as female-headed households, unemployed persons and persons with disabilities still resort to extreme coping strategies, including withdrawing their children from school and sending them into the labour market (WFP, 2023). Stable employment, a key predictor of food security, remains scarce. Although the World Food Programme (WFP) provides 310,000 refugees with monthly food assistance, equivalent to 21 United States dollars (US$) per person in December 2024, greater access to sustainable employment is needed to strengthen self-sufficiency. The Government of Jordan and the WFP have developed a new monitoring matrix to track food security, complementing the quarterly monitoring conducted by the WFP.

Transportation assistance

The lack of adequate transportation services for children with disabilities has been identified as one of main challenges in delivering effective, inclusive education. A government programme launched in 2022/2023 provided transportation allowances to 4,116 students with disabilities in public schools. In 2023/2024, support was limited to only students with physical disabilities, reducing the beneficiaries to 2,000 students. Total payments have increased from JOD 271,656 in 2022/2023 to circa JOD 1,056,000 in 2023/2024.

Students enrolled in NFE programmes also receive assistance in the form of daily stipends to cover meals and transportation costs. Students in the Cultural Promotion for Drop-Outs programme (4,034 beneficiaries in 2023/2024) and the Remedial Education programme (1,361 beneficiaries in 2023/2024) receive a meal and transportation allowance (JOD 3 for children outside of refugee camps; JOD 1.5 for those within refugee camps) for every day the child attends.

Private school tuition assistance

Some children with disabilities are also granted exemptions from private school tuition, though that is more common for boys than for girls. In 2022/2023, tuition fees were waived for a total of 1,895 students with disabilities (1,318 male and 577 female) to enable their enrolment in private educational institutions. Also in the 2022/2023 academic year, the Association of Public and Private Schools was formed, deepening collaboration around and expansion of inclusive education programmes.

5.5.3. Psychosocial support

Conflict-related violence and ongoing displacement have had a lasting impact on the mental health of Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan, worsening existing mental disorders and triggering new psychosocial problems. A review of 28 studies published between 2010 and 2023 highlights wide variations in trauma prevalence among children in Jordan, with rates ranging from 7.1% to 73.8% for depression, 16.3% to 46.8% for anxiety, and 16.2% to 65.1% for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Despite methodological differences between the studies, Syrian refugee adolescents consistently show higher rates of anxiety and PTSD than do Jordanians (AlHamawi et al., 2023; Achilli, 2015).

In recent years, the MoE has invested heavily in school-based interventions for psychosocial support as a more accessible and sustainable avenue for reaching large populations of children. Key examples of interventions include: (a) implementing school-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programmes, and (b) training and sensitizing teachers and school leaders on mental health and psychosocial support issues. The latter is executed by the Educational Counselling Section of the MoE and its cadre of educational counsellors, who provide prevention and intervention services to promote student well-being, for example, by delivering psychosocial support, facilitating exam preparation, addressing absenteeism and underachievement, and supporting students with disabilities. They also deliver awareness-raising sessions on various issues, including family violence, child protection and school violence (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2020). As of the 2020/2021 academic year, all new educational counsellors are trained in psychosocial support, supported by a cadre of safe school coordinators and psychosocial support trainers (see **Table 5.27**).

Table 5.27. Number of counsellors trained in psychosocial support by territory and school type, 2020/2021 through 2023/2024

Academic year	Territory			Counsellor gender		Total	Safe school coordinators and psychosocial support trainers
	South	Middle	North	Male	Female		
2020/2021	380	902	801	876	1207	2,083	1,917
2021/2022	425	978	859	956	1306	2,262	1,864
2022/2023	533	1,055	940	1,082	1,446	2,528	1,496
2023/2024	545	1,099	959	1,121	1,482	2,603	1,467

Source: MoE, Educational Counselling Section, 2020/2021 through 2023/2024

Teacher competencies for providing psychosocial support appear sufficient, but

linkages with families and communities stand to be improved. A 2024 study of teachers' approaches to providing MHPSS found that most educators reported a high level of knowledge in different areas related to providing psychosocial support and possessed a positive attitude toward doing so (Abu Khudair et al., 2024). However, teachers reported not consistently collaborating or following up with parents, school administrators and other community resources on issues of student well-being. The main perceived barriers included a lack of parental understanding of teachers' role in providing psychosocial support, a lack of integration of psychosocial support into the curriculum, and a high number of students per classroom. In general, the gaps identified went beyond the level of individual teachers. Thus, any psychosocial support intervention needs to identify, support and bring along champions at the individual, relational, familial, community and societal levels across the education system.

The MoE Educational Counselling Section is currently implementing the following additional programmes in an effort to foster safe learning environments and support the psychosocial wellfare of children:

- **Together, Towards a Safe School Environment:** Established by the MoE in 2009, this programme aims to reduce violence in schools. Violence is identified through the application of an electronic survey questionnaire every month for students in Grades 4–11. In 2023, the programme had trained educational counsellors and teachers in host community schools (1,384), refugee camps (150) and UNRWA schools (82) on topics related to psychosocial support, school-based violence, domestic violence, child protection and safe school environments.
- **School Bullying and Violence Reduction:** Launched in 2017, the programme aims to empower educational counsellors and teaching staff with preventive methods to reduce bullying and school violence and leverage the role of the school, family, and community to reduce this problem. In 2023, the programme trained educational counsellors and teachers in host community schools (84) and refugee camps (459) on topics related to behaviour management and modification, and school-based violence.
- **Healthy Schools:** Implemented in 2021, the programme aims to build the capacity and awareness of educational counsellors and teachers regarding early detection of students with mental health issues. In 2023, the programme trained a group of 40 educational counsellors and school principals on topics related to student mental health.
- **Providing Opportunities with Education for Students in Jordan (POWER-J).** The programme, started in 2018, introduces cognitive behavioural therapy as a mechanism to enhance students' social and emotional skills.
- **The 'Immunization' initiative:** Through this programme, aimed at protecting young people from drug addiction and smoking, 75 educational counsellors have been trained in drug awareness and prevention.

To date, there have been no impact evaluations conducted on any of the above-mentioned psychosocial programmes.

5.5.4. Early identification, screening and assessment

Early diagnosis is recognized as a critical requirement for the successful implementation of inclusive education programmes in Jordan, as affirmed in the Ten-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education, which seeks to establish a multidisciplinary approach for assessing and identifying children with disabilities.

Medical reports are used to define special education needs and determine access to education, as highlighted in the National Strategy for Human Resource Development (2016–25). The HCD is responsible for issuing individuals with an

identification card when a diagnostic assessment confirms a disability.[124] These cards enable holders to receive a range of services, including access to the Early Intervention Units (EIU), provided by the MoH and MoSD, which can grant access to therapeutic services and assistive devices.

The MoH is responsible for establishing student health profiles. Specifically, Grade 1 students in government schools undergo a comprehensive medical examination, and vaccinations are delivered health centres according to the national vaccination programme (MoE and HCD in Jordan, 2020). Periodic clinical examinations are also given to students in Grades 4, 7 and 10. For children enrolled in nursery and kindergarten, the MoH conducts various screenings for impairments and developmental delays, theoretically on an annual basis. Students experiencing symptoms can undergo laboratory medical tests and are referred to specialized clinics if necessary.

At present, five diagnostic centres are operated by the MoH and the MoSD. There are also accredited private and government centres for assessment and diagnosis that provide diagnostic services for children with disabilities. To better assess the special needs of students, the MoE plans to establish its own educational diagnostic centres, including three regional centres and two mobile units to operate in refugee camps. Once a child with disability has a certified report by one of the MoH or MoSD diagnostic centres or an approved diagnosis report for the HCD identification card, they can pursue enrolment in the schools and specialized educational institutions mentioned above. Some children may undergo screening and assessment in the course of their registration at mainstream schools. This occurs if their disability status has not been previously determined, in which case school leadership or a learning support teacher works with families to arrange a comprehensive assessment by the specialists of the MDT. Classroom teachers are also now equipped with a guidebook offering indicators to help identify students who may have disabilities in the classroom. The guidebook lists of observable indicators related to academic and cognitive disabilities to support the early identification of student disabilities or learning difficulties that may have been missed at registration (MoE and HCD in Jordan, 2020).

5.5.5. Curriculum development, pedagogical methodologies and instructional aids

Efforts to improve inclusion and diversity in the Jordanian curriculum have mainly focused on promoting gender equality. The National Strategy for Jordanian Women (2013–2017) included a commitment to portray a more balanced, active view of women in diverse roles in school textbooks and curricula. In 2013, evaluation frameworks and outputs for the curriculum were developed with consideration for gender equality. Beginning in 2019, the National Centre for Curriculum Development (NCCD) began gradually modifying the curriculum to be more gender-responsive. The Gender Equality and Strategic Partnerships Division at the MoE has developed a revision tool and begun the gender-responsive revision of textbooks in several subject areas. So far, 345 Jordanian curricular documents, teaching guides, exercise books and textbooks have been reviewed for their gender-responsiveness, an overall process carried out by 118 trained ministerial employees (56 male; 62 female). Field visits have found that both teachers and students recognize and appreciate a greater integration of a more equitable gender representation in teaching and learning materials. Girls, in particular, expressed the feeling that the material directly addressed their perspective. As of 2022/2023, nearly half (46%) of the curricula are deemed sensitive to the concepts of gender and human rights.

Efforts to promote disability-inclusive curricula have yet to materialize to the same extent. Although a review of the curricula from a disability lens was one of the priorities of the 2010–2015 National Strategy for Persons with

124 A child with disability is allowed to enrol in any educational level at any time during the semester. The identification card has now replaced the medical report that students with disabilities were previously expected to carry (Jordan, MoE, 2025). The identification card system is limited to Jordanians.

Disabilities, the Ten-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education recognizes that the existing curriculum still creates a non-inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities. Therefore, the Ten-Year Strategy reiterates the need to develop curricula, teaching and learning materials and assessments to meet the requirements of inclusive education, for instance, by developing standardized procedures for the adaptation of the curricula and using assistive technology.

Some advancements are being made in increasing the accessibility of teaching and learning materials for students with auditory or visual impairment. The HCD has recently established a committee to standardize the sign language terminology across all MoE curricula (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2020). In 2024, the MoE and the NCCD began the production of videos featuring texts from Arabic language support materials in both sign language and audio format, significantly improving accessibility for students with hearing disabilities. While the Mada Centre in Qatar has developed the 'Unified Arabic Braille' code that covers non-technical and technical content for use in schools (Mada, 2023), such a system is not yet being used in Jordanian schools.

UNRWA is demonstrating how the curriculum, and other school activities, can advance students' understanding of human rights and tolerance. The Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) programme has been key in all UNRWA schools since 1999. In 2013, an HRCRT toolkit was developed to help teachers create and sustain a culture of human rights in their classrooms and schools in accordance with the HRCRT Policy. As part of the HRCRT programme, school parliaments of students are elected to represent all students and support their local communities. In 2016, the first field-level student parliament was elected in UNRWA Jordan and in the following year, student parliamentarians from across the country participated in the Jordan Model Parliament (JMP) Conference. The JMP Conference has been held annually since its inception, with the ninth edition taking place in February of 2024.

Efforts have been invested into building the capacity of schools and the broader education system to provide remedial learning opportunities for students who have fallen behind the pace of the curriculum. In 2023, a three-year National Plan for Remedial Education was developed with the intention of institutionalizing the remedial efforts of the MoE, as informed by a diagnostic assessment of student learning. The National Plan has led to the distribution of revised teaching and learning materials that reinforce priority skills and learning gaps in the priority subjects of Arabic and mathematics. These remediation materials complement existing materials by focusing on foundational concepts and skills that help students catch up in their learning without adding more class time. Students who have fallen behind may also receive individual student remedial plans and remedial classes as part of the National Plan. Addition aspects of the National Plan include institutionalizing diagnostic studies, integrating remedial learning efforts in school improvement plans, integrating social and emotional learning principles into the teaching and learning materials, updating the curriculum to meet the needs of learners, closer monitoring of student assessment and education quality accountability, and improving the school environment to ensure social inclusion.

5.5.6. Specialized teacher professional development

Currently, there is no requirement for teachers to have qualifications in inclusive education, and there is limited in-service training on special education needs. While specialized teacher training opportunities have been developed with a focus on promoting inclusion and diversity, these training efforts have yet to become mandatory for teachers who are not working in special needs education. The Ten-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education has identified the need to review pre-service teacher training and professional development so as to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education.

Greater gender awareness among teachers is being developed through new, institutionalized training opportunities. In recent years, a new teacher training manual and professional development course focused on gender-equitable practices in education spaces, entitled 'Gender equality mainstreaming in education and school environments', has been developed and rolled out. A total of 168 supervisors (84 male; 84 female) were recruited to serve as trainers for the new course, with 11,679 teachers (3,626 male; 8,053 female) having been trained in the programme between 2021 and 2023. This training package is included in the professional career pathway for teachers and allows for advancement in the professional ranks.

In-service training for disability-inclusive education is still limited, but opportunities are increasing. In the 2022/2023 academic year, a 200-hour teacher training programme was designed and integrated into the national career development curriculum for disability-inclusive education. So far, 1,457 teachers (510 male; 947 female) have been trained in these practices. As part of the Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education in Jordan (PROMISE) programme, a resource pack with seven orientation tools and a Practical Manual for Facilitating and Cascading Inclusion and Diversity in Education have been developed and introduced in Jordanian schools, covering topics such as positive classrooms, behavioural management, and learning difficulties. The guidebook with indicators to identify students who may have disabilities in the classroom has also been distributed to mainstream schools. It explains teaching methods that teachers can use in the classroom to support individual student learning needs and offers practical recommendations regarding how to prepare the environment and available resources to support student learning (Jordan, MoE and HCD, 2020).

Specialized MHPSS training has also been introduced to assist teachers when confronting issues related to students' psychosocial health. This is highly pertinent for teachers working with significant populations of refugee students, who often have direct experience of trauma.

The Jubilee Centre for Excellence in Education supports capacity development for teachers of gifted students, offering a range of training programmes for assessing and developing gifted and talented students. The Centre also collaborates with the MoE and other educational institutions to promote innovative practices in mathematics, science and humanities, supporting secondary school teachers in Jordan (Shahin, 2010).

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

Jordan has a commitment to inclusion and diversity in education that is firmly anchored in international and national declarations and backed by strong national strategies. Most notable is the Jordan Declaration on Inclusion and Diversity in Education, endorsed at the highest level in 2022, which identifies the 10 groups of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education in Jordan. These include: (a) children affected by drugs and substance abuse; (b) children experiencing gender inequality; (c) children from ethnic, language and social minorities; (d) children from low-income backgrounds; (e) children (including orphans) suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse; (f) children who are understimulated and disengaged; (g) children with disabilities; (h) institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement; (i) out-of-school children; and (j) refugee, returnee, and unregistered children.

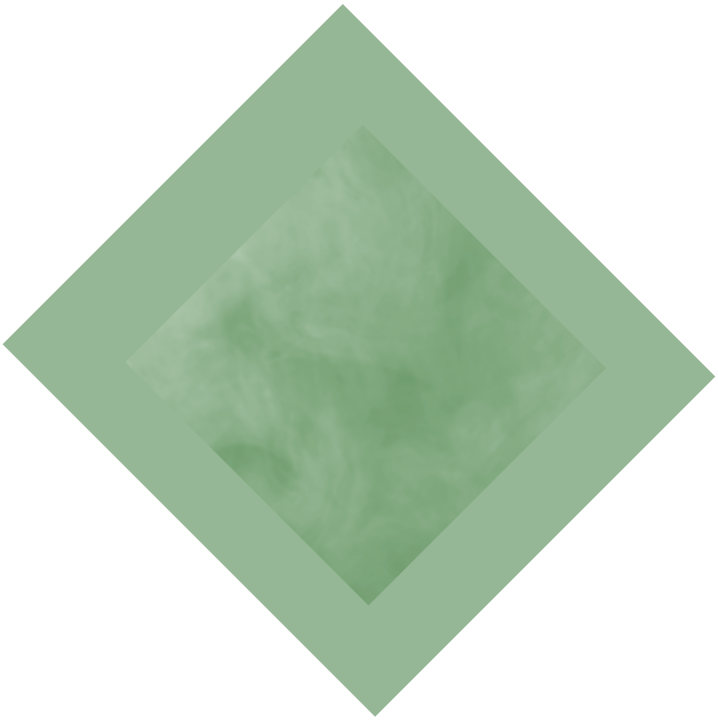
Despite improvements in aggregate enrolment at the general education level, there are significant disparities in access to formal education in Jordan across multiple equity dimensions. Children from lower-income backgrounds, orphaned children, children with disabilities and Syrian refugee children have lower net attendance rates, particularly at the kindergarten and secondary school levels. Syrian boys from low-income backgrounds face the greatest barriers to accessing schooling and moving up the educational ladder. While gender parity in attendance has been reached at all levels of general education, boys, particularly those from rural areas and lower-income backgrounds, experience higher dropout rates and lower access to education in the upper grades compared to girls.

Out-of-school rates vary substantially depending on a child's context, socioeconomic status and other defining characteristics. Children with significant disabilities, those from the lowest income quintiles and Syrian refugee children, especially those in host communities, have the greatest likelihood of being out-of-school. Girls who marry before the age of 18 are also statistically more likely to be-out-of-school. A larger proportion of boys report dropping out of formal schooling due to the need to work, whereas girls are more likely to report discontinuing their education due to being married. The extent to which safety concerns and financial pressures hinder school attendance varies geographically in Jordan, disproportionately affecting children in the central and southern regions.

Learning data from international assessments, national assessments and national examinations show wide disparities in learning outcomes between groups. Girls outperform boys in all international assessments in almost all assessed subjects, although boys still demonstrate greater mathematics competencies on national assessments. Students from lower-income backgrounds and rural areas tend to underperform compared to their more economically advantaged and urban peers. Other variables associated with academic performance include access to digital technology, a kindergarten education, parents' academic background, teachers' academic background and students' sense of safety. These factors can all vary from one child to the next, depending on their circumstances.

Learning conditions vary significantly by school. Boys' schools, urban schools and schools that are inclusive of both refugee and non-refugee students have the greatest issues with basic utilities and learning spaces. While boys report a higher number of cases of violence, school-based violence among girls is rising sharply.

Jordan has invested heavily in support systems, services and programmes to help marginalized groups of students. Each MoE field directorate in the country is now staffed by a diverse team of specialists, equipped with the relevant training to support children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Several financial assistance programmes have been established to eliminate financial barriers and increase access to education at the general education level. School-based psychosocial programming and support is being rolled out nationwide by the MoE through the its cadre of school counsellors. Teacher capacity development in inclusive education strategies and practices is being fostered and monitored through new, institutionalized training opportunities. Despite a multipronged strategy to promote inclusion and diversity in education across the Kingdom, implementation of these policies and programmes in marginalized and rural areas still faces considerable challenges.



CHAPTER 6:
Early Childhood Education and Development

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education and development (ECED) is widely recognized as one of the highest-return investments a society can make, providing children with the best possible start in life and laying the groundwork for producing the healthy, skilled workforce necessary for a productive economy (Heckman, James J., 2012). Pre-school education can advance children's cognitive skills and social-emotional skills before entering primary school. Crucially, these advantages provide the solid foundation for successful learning as children progress from Grade 1 through the school cycle (Holla et al., 2022).

High-quality ECED services – including early learning opportunities, responsive caregiving, good health, adequate nutrition and safe, secure environments – contribute to long-term benefits such as improved educational outcomes, higher productivity and stronger economic growth (World Health Organization, 2018).

Conversely, studies estimate that failing to provide a comprehensive multisectoral package of services to young children can result in societal costs between 8 and 19 times higher than the cost of investing in early childhood care and development (Nores, Milagros et al., 2024). The early years of life are a critical period for children's development, and deficits that emerge during this stage tend to grow over time. Addressing these developmental lags later in life is both less effective and more costly than ensuring a strong foundation from the outset.

The Economic Modernisation Vision of Jordan (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022a), the Kingdom's blueprint for national development, emphasizes early childhood education and development and includes key priorities on achieving full absorption in early childhood education and ensuring quality in early education and care programmes.

Investments to date have yielded positive results, with children who attend kindergarten (KG) demonstrating higher levels of school readiness and better academic performance in primary school (see Section 6.3.1, Developmental outcomes and school readiness indicators). The country has made notable progress in expanding access to early childhood education and aims to achieve full absorption of children in KG2 by 2033 in preparation for making it a mandatory stage of education (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022a). Jordan has also established a strong governance framework for ECED, including quality assurance and regulatory measures, as well as professional development programmes for early childhood educators.

Despite these achievements, persistent challenges remain. The multisectoral nature of ECED and service providers from both the public and private sectors may complicate governance, implementation and monitoring efforts. Sectors work in a complementary manner within the national strategic frameworks, such as the Economic Modernisation Vision. Despite recognition of the importance of the earliest years of life, government spending on ECED in Jordan remains relatively low. In recent years, the public unit cost has dropped significantly, hindering the expansion and improvement of services. Challenges also persist in ensuring equitable access, particularly for children from groups covered by inclusion and diversity, and in enhancing the quality of early learning environments.

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of ECED in Jordan, providing a holistic view of the sector's progress, challenges and future directions. It begins with an overview of key government commitments and institutions involved in ECED service provision. It then explores access to early childhood education, including coverage, equity and support for children with disabilities. Subsequent sections examine the quality of ECED outcomes and consider how these are affected by contextual factors, including children's health, nutrition, developmental status and home learning environments, as well as ECED inputs and processes. The governance and management of schools and nurseries are discussed, followed by an analysis of ECED cost and financing. A summary overview of major ECED programmes in the country is included in annex to this chapter.

6.1 Overview of the ECED subsector

Jordan defines early childhood as birth through age 9, or the third year of lower basic education, although administrative and institutional responsibilities for this age group are divided among different government departments.[125] Institutionally, however, responsibility for the age groups is subdivided, with Grades 1–3 placed within the basic education unit of the Ministry of Education and mandatory stage of education, and kindergarten within the Kindergarten Unit, and not currently mandatory stage of education. This chapter focuses primarily on the kindergarten level (KG1 for 4-year-olds, and KG2 for 5-year-olds) and some programmes that are implemented at both the kindergarten level and in basic education Grades 1–3. It also covers nurseries, which serve children from birth through age 4 years and 8 months and are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development.

Kindergarten is divided into two levels: KG1, for children approximately 4 years old, and KG2, for children approximately 5 years old. Kindergarten classes are provided by public schools, which children can attend for free, if a spot is available, and private kindergartens, which require tuition fees. Private kindergarten fees can vary substantially, from as low as JOD 30 per month up to JOD 1,000 per month for the most expensive schools.

6.1.1. Legal and policy framework: international and national commitments

Jordan has committed to key international rights frameworks for young children. These include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[126] and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. **Table 6.1** illustrates the country's progress on achieving SDG 4.2 on access to quality early childhood education. In 2023, the proportion of children aged 24–59 months who were developmentally on track was 84%, with slightly higher rates for girls than for boys. The proportion of children attending one year of education prior to the start of primary school education was 67%, with girls attending at slightly higher rates than boys.

Table 6.1. Progress of Jordan on SDG 4.2

	SDG 4: Quality education	SDG target	2023	Boys	Girls
4.2.1	**Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track**	unclear	84.1%	82.4%	85.9%
4.2.2	**Participation rate in organized learning one year before primary entry**	100%	67.3%	65.6%	69.2%

Source: Department of Statistics, 2023; 4.2.2 from UNESCO UIS

125 This contrasts with the definition of early childhood used by UNESCO, which uses the period from birth to age 8, and UNICEF, which encompasses the period from conception to primary school entry.

126 Jordan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. The Convention recognizes childhood as a distinct period from adulthood (starting at age 18) and recognizes that children are entitled to a broad set of rights, including education, health, safety, nationality, a home and protection from violence and exploitation. Jordan also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, which recognizes that all persons with disabilities have full human rights and freedoms, including rights to access to services and participation in society (see Chapter 5 for further details).

At national level, the blueprint for development of Jordan, the Economic Modernisation Vision (2022), also recognizes early childhood care and education as a strategic priority. The Vision calls for integrated, equitable, just and child-centred early childhood education and health care for all children in Jordan by 2033 (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022a). Priorities include initiating holistic programmes on parenting and developing a skilled workforce to identify and care for young children with disabilities. Proposed initiatives include: the establishment of a unified early childhood care and development (ECCD) council and streamlined ECCD database; development of appropriate curricula for early learning; reducing licensing burdens for ECCD service providers; making ECCD and health care accessible for all children below age 6; incentivizing the private sector to provide ECCD services; establishing nurseries and kindergartens in the workplace; and encouraging families to support early childhood development at home.

The main guiding framework for early childhood education in Jordan is articulated in the National Strategy for Human Resources Development (2016–2025). The strategy calls for all children to have access to early childhood learning by 2025. This includes access to nurseries, KG1 and KG2. Expansion in access to KG1 and nurseries is to be encouraged through enrolment in private institutions (National Committee for Human Resource Development, 2015). Other strategic objectives call for improvements in the quality of the ECED curriculum and workforce, strengthening accountability and coordination in ECED, leveraging technology to improve ECED and mobilizing parents to more effectively support their children's development (National Committee for Human Resource Development, 2015).

The National Strategy for Human Resources Development is a comprehensive multisectoral strategy from which several sectoral strategies have emerged. These include the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2018-2025, the National Social Protection Strategy and the National Youth Strategy. Each strategy includes multisectoral activities and indicators. Each ministry and government institution seeks to implement the strategy according to its mandate while networking and coordinating with other ministries to achieve indicators and implement activities. **Jordan is currently developing its first interministerial policy on childcare for children aged 0–9.** The policy, funded by the World Bank, will cover childcare provision at nurseries, as well as childcare for school-aged children after school hours and during summer holidays. It will also cover family-friendly workplace policies. A technical committee, coordinated by the National Council for Family Affairs and comprising several ministries and government institutions, with technical guidance from the International Rescue Committee, has developed draft pillars for the policy, with implementation plans yet to be formulated.

A comprehensive National Strategy for Early Childhood Development was developed in 2001 with support from UNICEF. The strategy established institutional responsibilities for early childhood care and development in the country, including establishing the role of the National Council for Family Affairs (UNICEF, 2001a). The strategy covered planning and administration, legislation, pre-natal health care, childcare in nurseries, pre-school education, Grades 1 through 3 in primary education, childrearing in the family and community, children with disabilities, curricula and programmes, health services, children's culture, role of the media in early childhood development, human resources and social security. Further investigation is needed to clarify to what extent the provisions of the strategy remain valid.

The National Social Protection Strategy (2019–2025) further promotes equitable access to early childhood education. Strategic Objective 3 includes announcing transparent criteria for the expansion of early childhood education with a focus on access for the poor and residents of remote areas. The strategy does not provide specific plans on how this will be achieved and does not mention young children. A new social protection strategy will be developed in 2025.

The 2022 Declaration on Inclusion and Diversity in Education by Jordan commits to providing

inclusive education for children from categories of inclusion and diversity.[127] The declaration establishes a clear definition of inclusion and diversity in education: "Systems, political will, and commitments by all key partners and stakeholders are in place to guarantee that all students regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and circumstances have equal and equitable access to quality education in their home or host communities, with learning environments that embrace diversity and support their participation and achievements towards reaching their full social, emotional, physical, and cognitive potentials." (Jordan, 2022).

Jordan enacted its first children's rights law in 2022, the Child Rights Act (Act No. 17 of 2022), which enshrines children's rights to health and social care, free education and protection from violence. It explicitly provides for the right to free public education for children with disabilities.

The Gender Equality Action Plan (2023–2025) of Jordan commits to gender equality in early childhood care and education. The plan's strategic objectives include: ensuring equal access to quality and affordable ECED for girls and boys; promoting the integration of gender-sensitive and inclusive standards across public and private kindergartens and facilitating transparency in accreditation procedures; implementing readiness programmes designed to equip girls and boys who did not have access to ECED with the necessary knowledge and skills to transition seamlessly into primary education; mainstreaming gender in ECED training, programmes and assessment frameworks; ensuring equal opportunities in care, play and learning in ECED programmes and environments, based on gender equality; and advocating for holistic care for girls and boys, covering health, nutrition, social protection and early learning, while engaging educators, caregivers and parents.

Key country strategies and commitments aim to achieve compulsory and universal kindergarten enrolment in the future. The Education Act (Act No. 3 of 1994) affirmed that early childhood education is not compulsory. The Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2018–2025 targets expansion of access to kindergarten, and at the Transforming Education Summit in 2022, Jordan stated its commitment to achieving free, compulsory and universal kindergarten. This commitment is to be implemented gradually, according to capacity, with KG2 to become compulsory once the system has the capacity to absorb universal enrolment.

6.1.2. Key government institutions and ECED service providers

This section outlines the main institutions involved in overseeing and delivering services within the ECED subsector, along with their roles and responsibilities.

The early childhood subsector in Jordan has benefited from the continuous support of His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein and Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah. Queen Rania's chairing of the National Council for Family Affairs and the King's high-level advocacy for improving early childhood education has helped to raise awareness of the importance of the early childhood stage of development.

Many government and non-governmental institutions play a role in ECED, making coordination a key priority (as elaborated in 6.1.3 below). Government ministries and institutions have clear roles and responsibilities, and MoE officials affirm that there are strong channels of communications with other ministries. Communication channels between government institutions and private actors appear to be less well-established, however.

127 This declaration covers 10 specific groups: 1. children affected by drugs and substance abuse; 2. children experiencing gender inequality; 3. children from ethnic, language and social minorities; 4. children from income poor backgrounds; 5. children suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse, including orphans; 6. children who are understimulated and disengaged (including first generation learners, children who are not supported by their families and those who are often referred to as "gifted" and "talented"); 7. children with disabilities; 8. institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement; 9. out-of-school children (i.e. children who dropped out of school, never enrolled in formal education, and street and working children); and 10. refugee, returnee and unregistered children (i.e. children who were never registered at birth or may be registered in another country).

Most children enrolled in kindergarten attend private kindergartens, making the private sector a key service provider in the delivery of early childhood education services. The majority (59%) of students attending kindergarten (KG1 and KG2) in 2023 attended private institutions, which include for-profit, non-profit, community-based and religious institutions.

The MoE has separate divisions for overseeing public and private kindergartens and oversees public kindergartens. The Division of Early Childhood supervises kindergarten in government schools and consists of the Kindergarten Department and the Accreditation and Equipment Department. It oversees KG2 classes in government schools and manages furniture, equipment and learning materials. It is also responsible for creating new public kindergarten classes. It develops policies and frameworks regulating quality standards in public kindergartens and conducts monitoring and evaluations. The Department of Educational Supervision and Training supervises pre- and in-service professional development programmes for public school kindergarten teachers offered by service providers such as the Queen Rania Teacher Academy and Jordanian universities. Officials from the MoE work at the central, governorate, district and school level in operations, monitoring and evaluation. The Division of Private Kindergartens within the MoE Department of Private Education is responsible for overseeing the private kindergarten sector and sets quality standards, provides licensing, regulates the establishment of kindergartens and conducts quality assurance.

The MoE also oversees national and international assessments to evaluate children's readiness for learning. The MoE also cooperates with the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities to facilitate the integration of young children with disabilities into schools. The MoE also implements several early childhood programmes, as summarized in annex to this chapter.

The National Center for Curriculum Development prepares the curriculum framework and learning outcomes for kindergarten curricula, among other responsibilities for other levels of education. Made up of a team of specialists, the National Center for Curriculum Development helps to prepare curriculum materials, teacher training manuals and any other printed education materials. It is also responsible for revising materials based on teachers' input, in accordance with its legislative framework. In 2023, with support from UN Women, the Gender Equality and Strategic Partnerships Division at the MoE worked together with the National Center for Curriculum Development to review curriculum materials from a gender perspective, but due to budget constraints, these materials have not been distributed.

The Queen Rania Teacher Academy develops teacher training programmes and prepares training manuals for kindergarten teachers and supervisors for kindergartens in cooperation with the MoE. It also evaluates training programmes to ensure quality and measure impact.

The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) is responsible for regulating, supervising and monitoring nurseries providing care for children from birth through age 4. Under the Nurseries Act (Act No. 6 of 2024), the MoSD is responsible for establishing licensing procedures and issuing licences to all nurseries, including private, workplace and home-based nurseries, to ensure children's safety. MoSD officials at the governorate and district level conduct nursery inspections to ensure adherence to licensing standards and safety measures and conduct training courses for nursery caregivers. The MoSD does not provide nursery services itself, apart from services for the children of its staff. In addition to supervising nurseries, the MoSD is responsible for the welfare of vulnerable children, including children with disabilities, children experiencing family disintegration and orphans. It also offers the "Takaful" Programme, which provides financial support to low-income families, and oversees a small number of kindergartens.

The Higher Council for People with Disabilities drafts legislation and policies on the integration of children with disabilities in public and private kindergartens and nurseries. It develops training materials and offers awareness-raising workshops related to inclusive kindergartens and

nurseries, ensuring that environments and learning materials are appropriate for children with any type of disability. The Higher Council for People with Disabilities also formulates general policy regarding early intervention programmes and monitors their enforcement with the MoSD. Moreover, it provides technical support to other government institutions and partners regarding inclusive early childhood programmes.

The National Early Childhood Development Team within the National Council for Family Affairs is responsible for coordination between community, public and private actors, international NGOs and UN agencies. Established by decree in 2001, and chaired by Her Majesty Queen Rania, the National Council for Family Affairs is an autonomous body that is independent of any ministry. It formulates policies on early childhood through the National Early Childhood Development Team, established in 2018, which is chaired by the Secretary-General of the National Council for Family Affairs. The National Early Childhood Development Team maps early childhood activities in the country, determines priorities, proposes legislation and policies and identifies ways to address challenges in the subsector. It monitors and advocates for early childhood at the national, regional and international levels and works to raise awareness of early childhood issues. It is also tasked with monitoring early childhood indicators and preparing an annual national report on the state of early childhood in the Kingdom. The team meets once a month and includes representatives from 32 national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions.[128] Individuals with expertise in early childhood development can apply for membership and serve a one-year term if a majority of members approve their application. The team also serves as a technical resource for other ECED institutions in Jordan.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) cooperates with the MoE to provide doctors and dentists to conduct annual health examinations in schools, including kindergartens. It is unclear whether there are established mechanisms for referrals and communications between nursery and kindergarten officials regarding children who may need early intervention services. Therapists who work with children with health and developmental problems are employed by the MoH, but do not provide these services within schools.

MoH officials are well-positioned to engage with parents in supporting their children's development from birth. As the primary and most frequent point of contact for young children and their families, the health sector is beginning to leverage these opportunities to monitor children's holistic development.

Government health clinics provide free growth monitoring and immunization services, offering a crucial touchpoint for early childhood interventions. In the light of this, the MoH's Division of Child Health has started training nurses and midwives to include important messages for parents during such visits. These messages emphasize the importance of play and reading, balanced nutrition and responsive feeding, food safety and home safety, fostering a more comprehensive approach to child development. This information is typically well-received by parents.

Each child has a file at a health clinic that records their vaccinations and physical development. A new addition to the file in 2024 is the "Ages and Stages Questionnaire", which asks parents questions to assess whether their child is developmentally on track. Children who may not be reaching developmental milestones are referred for further evaluation. These visits are well-attended by children under the age of 2, but attendance drops off sharply once they have received all their vaccinations. Clinicians are working to encourage

128 Members of the National Early Childhood Development Team include representatives from: Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Endowments [Awqaf] and Islamic Affairs, Ministry of Health, Municipality of Amman, Queen Rania Teacher Training Academy, Queen Rania Award for Teaching, Madrasati Initiative, Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development, Jordan River Foundation, Institute to Support Family Health, Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development, National Center for Human Resource Development, Iman Center for Early Education, Islamic Center Charitable Organization, Relief International, Islamic Relief Worldwide, War Child, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), International Rescue Committee, UNICEF, Save the Children, Humanity and Inclusion, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Hashemite University, Anera, Royal Society for Health Awareness, Public Statistics Bureau, Plan International and National Council for Family Affairs.

parents to continue their regular clinic visits beyond this point, so that their children's development can continue to be monitored throughout the crucial pre-school years.

However, though parenting skills and holistic approaches are critical to healthy child development, these dimensions traditionally fall outside the health sector's primary mandate. As a result, their importance is not universally acknowledged within the MoH. While some health clinics have recently introduced parenting courses, limited funding has prevented the widespread training of clinicians for these new programmes, so coverage remains variable. Securing financial resources for these initiatives is also often challenging, and there is currently no established monitoring framework to assess their impact.

Several other ministries and government institutions are also involved in ECED in some capacity. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) oversees schools, including kindergartens, for the children of military staff. MoD schools in remote areas may also enrol local children from non-military families who would otherwise lack access to education. These schools adhere to MoE quality standards and follow the MoE curriculum. The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) provides physical space for kindergartens. The Department of Public Security, through the Family Protection Department, is responsible for cases of domestic violence involving children.

Local and international NGOs implement programmes and provide ECED services with the permission of the relevant government ministries in accordance with their regulations. NGOs must follow government regulations and receive approval from the MoE, MoSD or MoH to conduct programmes. The Development Coordination Unit within the MoE liaises with development partners who fund much of the ECED work in the country (see Section 6.5 below).

6.1.3. ECED coordination and leadership

No single institution or individual has a leadership position over the other key ECED institutions. Each of the government institutions described above has its own mandate and responsibilities, but no single body holds an overarching mandate for leadership and coordination of the other actors. It should be noted that the Economic Modernisation Vision assumes the leadership and coordination role in the field of early childhood by following up on the implementation of early childhood priorities and activities by the various ministries. **The National Council for Family Affairs plays an active role in coordinating the various sectors and actors in the ECED field.** While monthly meetings at the National Council for Family Affairs provide an opportunity for sectors and actors to share information, no single actor is responsible for ensuring overall coherence, alignment and efficiency. This could result in gaps in the scope and coverage of services to young children and their families. The Economic Modernisation Vision mandates the establishment of a unified ECCD council to develop and monitor cross-ministerial ECCD plans (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022a), which suggests that the National Council for Family Affairs does not currently play this role.

The Strategy on Human Resources Development strategic objective 3.2 calls for the establishment of a single body to coordinate all ECED activities and decision-making, which also suggests that the National Council for Family Affairs does not have this mandate at present (National Committee for Human Resource Development, 2015).

The National Council for Family Affairs can propose policy recommendations, but these are not always – or swiftly – adopted as legislation. As the board of the National Council for Family Affairs includes representatives from key ministries and follows a consultative approach in policy development, its recommendations are not generally met with resistance. However, the responsibility for securing funding and implementing these policies falls on individual ministries.

Even though private kindergartens enrol roughly half of the kindergarten students in the country, it is not clear that there is adequate representation or coordination between the private sector and the government and donors. One clear weakness is that there may not be strong representation of private kindergartens on the National Council for Family Affairs. While there are informal networks of private kindergarten administrators (such as WhatsApp groups), there is no formal organization representing or advocating for private kindergartens. It should be noted that private kindergartens are represented through the Department of Private Education in the MoE, and representatives of private kindergartens are eligible to apply to join the National Early Childhood Development Team of the National Council for Family Affairs.

6.2 Access to ECED

While access to kindergarten has increased in recent years, including in public kindergartens, most of the children enrolled attend private institutions that charge tuition fees, especially at the KG1 level.

6.2.1. Enrolment trends

Enrolment in kindergarten has increased in recent years. Except for a drop of 25,000 students between the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 school years, coinciding with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, enrolment in kindergarten has witnessed a steady increase from 128,035 in 2017/2018 to 162,071 in 2022/23 **(Table 6.2).**

Table 6.2. KG enrolment by nationality and year (public and private).

Nationality	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	Average annual growth rate
All students	**128,035**	**134,733**	**145,189**	**119,828**	**140,928**	**162,071**	**4.8%**
Jordanian students	119,212	125,979	135,128	111,206	130,984	149,109	4.6%
% Jordanian	93%	94%	93%	93%	93%	92%	
Syrian students	4,974	5,394	6,389	6,726	6,934	9,102	12.8%
% Syrian	4%	4%	4%	6%	5%	6%	
Other students	3,849	3,360	3,672	1,896	3,010	3,860	0.06%
% Other students	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	

Source: EMIS 2017/2018–2022/2023

The enrolment of Syrian children has increased faster than the enrolment of Jordanian children, at an annual growth rate of 12.9% and 4.6%, respectively, over the period. Syrian children comprised 9,102 of all kindergarten students during the 2022/2023 school year (6% of all children), compared to 4,974 (4%) in 2017/2018.

Under the Jordan Response Plan for the Syrian Crisis, which provides basic services to Syrian refugees, the MoE is expanding the development of kindergartens in communities hosting Syrian refugees to provide early childhood education services to all children living in those areas.

Development partners such as the World Bank, GIZ, USAID and the European Union have funded classrooms equipment and provided learning materials to support access to education for these children. The MoE is a key partner for ministries and other institutions in planning educational projects and programmes aimed at providing education and psychosocial support to Syrian refugee students in host communities and Syrian refugee camps. The MoE oversees public kindergartens in Zaatari and Azraq camps. Charities may also operate in camps to provide pre-school education. Most refugee services include kindergarten, either within or outside camps.

Table 6.3. Kindergarten enrolment by gender (includes KG1 and KG2, public and private)

Gender	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	Total percent change	Average annual growth rate
Male	60,156	62,300	65,403	68,913	74,316	60,813	71,445	82,478	37.1%	4.6%
Female	55,404	59,876	62,632	65,820	70,873	59,015	69,483	79,593	43.7%	5.3%

Source: EMIS 2015/2016–2022/2023

Kindergarten enrolment has increased for both girls and boys in recent years, with the annual growth rate slightly higher for girls than for boys. Between the 2015/2016 and 2022/2023 school years, the average annual growth rate in enrolment was 4.6% for boys and 5.3% for girls (see **Table 6.3**). Kindergarten classes are typically mixed gender, in contrast with only single-gender classes in public schools as of Grade 4.

Most pre-school students attend private kindergartens, although the proportion of those who attend public kindergartens has increased in recent years. During the 2022/2023 school year, out of the 162,071 students enrolled in kindergarten, 59.4% (96,202) were enrolled in private schools, compared with 77.9% in 2015 (see **Table 6.4**). This follows a major push for enrolment in public kindergartens, which has grown at a much faster rate than enrolment in private kindergartens (14.5% annually versus 1% annually between 2015 and 2023). In contrast to kindergarten, most students enrolled in lower basic, upper basic and secondary level education attend public schools (67.3%, 76.4% and 85.7%, respectively).

Table 6.4. KG1 and KG 2 enrolment by sector (public and private)

Level	Type	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	Average annual growth rate
KG1 + KG2	Public	25,569	30,830	34,055	37,421	42,481	67,461	67,907	65,869	14.5%
	Private	89,991	91,346	93,980	97,312	102,708	52,367	73,021	96,202	1.0%
	Total	115,560	122,176	128,035	134,733	145,189	119,828	140,928	162,071	5.0%
	% Private	77.9%	74.8%	73.4%	72.2%	70.7%	43.7%	51.8%	59.4%	n.a.
KG1	Public	305	21	25	33	33	5	44	41	-25.0%
	Private	24,951	24,150	25,358	28,297	29,582	10,322	18,967	26,522	0.9%
	Total	25,256	24,171	25,383	28,330	29,615	10,327	19,011	26,563	0.8%
	% Private	98.8%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	100.0%	99.8%	99.8%	n.a.
KG2	Public	25,264	30,809	34,030	37,388	42,448	67,456	67,863	65,828	14.7%
	Private	65,040	67,196	68,622	69,015	73,126	42,045	54,054	69,680	1.0%
	Total	90,304	98,005	102,652	106,403	115,574	109,501	121,917	135,508	6.0%
	% Private	72.0%	68.6%	66.8%	64.9%	63.3%	38.4%	44.3%	51.4%	n.a.

Source: EMIS 2015/2016–2022/2023

Box 6.1: Challenges to public provision of kindergarten classes in Jordan

At the KG1 level, enrolment is almost entirely in private schools, with more than 99% of children enrolled in private schools at this level in 2023. The situation is more balanced at the KG2 level, with slightly more than half of students enrolled in private kindergartens. This disparity reflects the government's strategy to focus first on achieving universal enrolment in KG2, before shifting focus to KG1 once this goal has been reached.

The number of children who are eligible to register for public kindergarten exceed the number of available spaces, so not all children receive a spot in a class. In accordance with Kindergarten Instructions No. 2 (2015), the opening of new public kindergarten classes is announced by the school principal through media and public advertisements. Children who will turn five between 1 January and 31 December that year are eligible to register for KG2. The registration period runs throughout the month of May and a birth certificate is required for registration. After the registration period closes, a committee formed by each school, consisting of the head teachers, two teachers from the area and a member of the Directorate of Education, selects students for admission based on the school's capacity. Priority for enrolment is given to children who reside nearby and children from underprivileged backgrounds, as indicated by their family's participation in the "Takaful" Programme and their financial circumstances. Twenty per cent of spaces are allocated to school staff. Children who are not offered a space are placed on a wait-list.

Some children who do not receive a spot in a public kindergarten and cannot attend a private kindergarten can participate in the Learning Readiness Programme. This programme was developed to mitigate the effects of a shortage of public kindergarten spaces in some areas of the country. It consists of a 120-hour programme for pre-school-aged children, covering foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, in the summer prior to Grade 1 entry. It also includes sessions for parents to help them prepare their children for school.

The programme has been supported by GIZ, though fluctuations in funding mean that the scale of the programme varies year to year. During the 2020/2021 school year, 5,833 children and 5,641 parents and caregivers benefited from it; in 2021/2022, 7,346 children and 6,500 parents and caregivers benefited from it; and in 2022/2023, 3,102 children and 2,900 parents and caregivers benefited from it. One limitation is that the programme is only offered if there is a minimum number of students who would like to attend, so that some children may not receive any formal learning prior to Grade 1 entry.

The MoE states that one of the main obstacles facing kindergarten expansion is the lack of physical space to add new classrooms, particularly in densely populated areas, though the target of adding 142 kindergarten classrooms per year in public schools is being met. This target was determined based on the priorities of the MoE as well as donor allocations. Expansion could be through the construction of new classrooms, using existing classrooms in schools, or renting additional spaces. Some public kindergartens operate in double shifts to accommodate more children, while other kindergartens work on a flexible system to accommodate more children. Insufficient funding is also cited as a constraint to capacity expansion. Currently, donor support includes the World Bank (kindergarten expansion), USAID (kindergarten construction) and GIZ (provision of supplies and equipment).

The MoE is working in cooperation with the World Bank within the Modernizing Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms (MASAR) Operation to prepare a plan to expand public kindergartens. Expansion will target the most densely populated areas and areas in which demand for kindergarten spots exceeds supply. Head teachers may nominate schools that currently have wait-lists for kindergartens, but at present there is no agreed mechanism for determining where new classrooms will be established.

Source: Ministry of Education

Fees at private kindergartens may be unaffordable for many families. The MoE has not established a limit on the fees that private kindergartens may charge. Kindergartens and parents agree to an established fee in a contract, which must be honoured, according to the MoE. A survey of low-fee private kindergartens (defined as KG2 programmes with monthly fees of JOD 50 or less) found that the average monthly fee was JOD 38, with community-based organizations charging the lowest fees (JOD 30 per month) and private kindergartens charging the highest fees (JOD 39 per month). For Jordanian households, the average fee represents 9% of the average household income. For Syrian refugees, the proportion rises to 15% of average monthly income, and for non-Syrian refugees, the figure increases even further, amounting to 17% of the average monthly income (Pylvainen et al., 2024). These figures highlight that funding private kindergarten education is likely to be well beyond the means of many families, particularly non-Jordanians.

Low-fee private kindergartens operate on tight margins and often face financial challenges. A survey of administrators of low-fee private kindergartens found that over half (55%) cited financial issues as their biggest challenge, due to factors such as low revenues, high operating costs and difficulties collecting fees from parents. The schools are reluctant to raise fees, as many families already struggle to pay the existing rates, and some families fail to make their final payments. Some administrators also stated that the expansion of free public kindergartens was an additional factor forcing them to keep their fees low (Pylvainen et al., 2024).

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) between the MoE and private kindergartens with spare capacity offer an opportunity to expand access to pre-school, but clear mechanisms and modalities have not yet been identified. Several studies are slated to examine the possibilities for implementing PPP models. The Queen Rania Foundation is currently conducting a feasibility study that explores potential financial and non-financial barriers to attendance. These include parental perceptions of the importance of pre-school learning, stigmas around kindergarten attendance for children with disabilities and hidden costs associated with attendance, such as transportation. **During the 2025/2026 school year,** the World Bank will conduct a pilot scheme that provides vouchers to economically disadvantaged families to enrol their children in private kindergartens. The vouchers may cover all or some of the fees depending on the school. The World Bank will also pilot providing subsidies directly to private kindergartens to enrol more children. The kindergartens will be able to use the funds for any purposes they choose. In order to participate in the pilot schemes, the kindergartens must be licensed, meet minimum quality standards and be in a target area. Results from these studies will help inform the development of PPP policy going forward (Social Finance, n.d.).

6.2.2. Equity patterns in access to kindergarten

Disparities in kindergarten attendance are affected by family wealth, nationality and disability status and are particularly marked between Syrians living in camps and those living in host communities. The dimension of household wealth is associated with the highest degree of inequity, followed by nationality (Jordanian or Syrian) (see **Table 6.5** below). There is little difference in attendance rates between girls and boys.

Table 6.5. Adjusted net attendance rates in kindergarten and associated parity indices, by sub-population, 2023

		Kindergarten
Gender	Female	46.2%
	Male	46.4%
	GPI	1.00
Location	Rural	44.9%
	Urban	46.5%
	PI	0.97
Wealth	Poorest	31.2%
	Richest	64.1%
	PI	0.49
Nationality	Syrian	30.7%
	Jordanian	48.5%
	PI	0.63
Syrians' Hosting Location	Camp	51.9%
	Host Community	26.4%
	PI	1.96

Source: Author's calculation based on the Department of Statistics' 2023 data.

Overall patterns

Girls and boys attend kindergarten at the same rate. The adjusted net attendance rate in 2023 was 46.2% for girls and 46.4% for boys (Department of Statistics, 2023). This indicates that there is gender parity in pre-school attendance, though patterns diverge at later stages in the school cycle.

Children in rural areas attend kindergarten at slightly lower rates than children living in urban areas, though the disparity is minimal. In urban areas, 46.5% of children attend kindergarten, compared to 44.9% in rural areas (Department of Statistics, 2023).

There are substantial differences in attendance rates in organized learning at age 5 by governorate. The governorate with the highest adjusted net attendance rate for 5-year-olds in 2023 was Ajloun (97%), followed by Jerash (96%) and Tafiela (95%). The governorates with the lowest rates were Ma'an (74%), followed, perhaps surprisingly, by Amman (73%) (Department of Statistics, 2023).

Children from the wealthiest families are far more likely to attend kindergarten than children from the poorest families. Children whose families are in the highest income quintile have a kindergarten attendance rate of 64.1%, more than twice the rate of children from families in the lowest income quintile (31.2%) (Department of Statistics, 2023).

Jordanian children attend kindergarten at higher rates than Syrian children. The adjusted net attendance rate for Jordanian children in kindergarten was 48.5% in 2023, while for Syrian children it was only 30.7% (Department of Statistics, 2023).

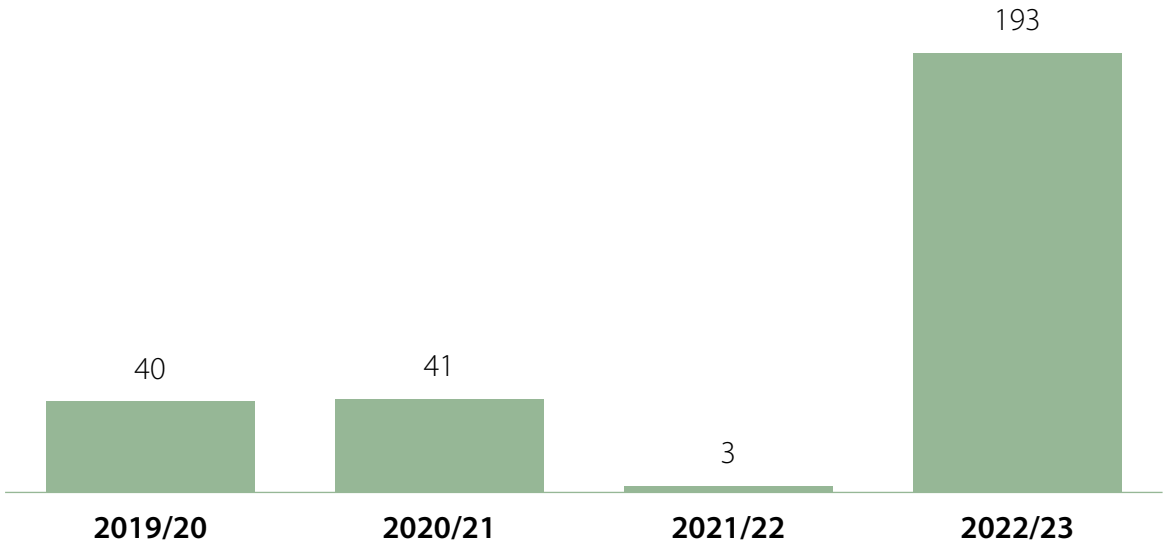
Syrian children living in camps attend KG at nearly twice the rate of Syrian children living in host communities. Slightly more than half of Syrian children in camps (51.9%) attended kindergarten in 2023. However, only just over a quarter (26.4%) of children in host communities did so, indicating that access to pre-school is nearly twice as high for Syrians residing in camps. Syrian children in camps attend kindergarten at a higher rate than Jordanian children on average (Department of Statistics, 2023).

Trends in access for children with disabilities

The Act on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Act No. 20 of 2017) mandates public kindergartens to admit children with disabilities and provide inclusive education, as reflected in the 10-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education of Jordan. This obligation contrasts with patterns in many countries, where children with disabilities may be less likely to access pre-school education than other children, even though attending pre-school and receiving appropriate services is particularly beneficial for the long-term development of this specific group (UNESCO, 2020).

The number of children with disabilities enrolled in kindergartens has increased substantially in recent years but remains low in absolute terms. During the 2019/2020 school year, 40 children with disabilities were enrolled in kindergarten. The number dropped to only 3 in 2021/2022, but then grew to 193 in 2022/2023 for an average annual increase over four years of 69%. Despite this rapid increase, children with disabilities represent barely 0.12% of total kindergarten enrolment **(Figure 6.1).** During the 2022/2023 academic year, there were 119 boys and 74 girls identified as having disabilities enrolled in kindergartens.

Figure 6.1. Number of children with disabilities enrolled in kindergartens



Source: EMIS 2019/2020-2022/2023

Lack of specialized teacher capacity, cost and social stigma factors constrain the enrolment of children with disabilities in private kindergartens. Private kindergarten administrators state that they do not enrol many children with disabilities because the teachers do not have the skills to adequately support these children (Pylvainen et al., 2024). Another possible explanation for the low enrolment is that the parents of children with disabilities may be reluctant to send their children to private kindergartens because they would be required to pay additional fees to cover the extra expenses of having their child in the school, such as extra support staff. Social norms which stigmatize children with disabilities also play a role.

A new procedural guide for inclusive education in kindergarten is a key milestone for expanding education rights in the subsector. In 2023, in cooperation with the Higher Council for People with Disabilities, the MoE developed a teacher training programme for the inclusion of children with disabilities in kindergartens, together with an extensive training manual. Children with disabilities in public kindergartens are assigned an assistant teacher to help them, though it is difficult to assess whether they receive this support in practice. It is unclear whether the MoE provides extra funding to schools to fund the staff and equipment necessary to accommodate students with disabilities.

A diagnostic system is in place to identify disabilities and determine the type of support needed for inclusion in pre-school. The Quality Assurance System includes an indicator on the application of screening for disabilities and developmental delays. All children must have a completed health card before entering Grade 1, which may help to identify disabilities and developmental challenges early on and identify needs for additional learning support.

Trends in access to nurseries

Nursery programmes providing child care from infancy through age 4 are offered in government, private, in-home and workplace-based centres. Some nurseries (and kindergartens) offer "waiting services" or extended hours to provide child care during parents' working hours and some periods when schools are closed

Very few young children in Jordan attend nurseries, and private service providers are the most common. In 2021, there were 1,179 licensed nurseries, serving a total of 11,815 children. Of those, 517 nurseries operated within public schools to provide child care facilities for school employees. Other types of nurseries include non-profit (30 centres), nurseries based at private workplaces (72 centres) and nurseries based at government workplaces (50 centres). Roughly 67% of children in nurseries attend private, for-profit nurseries, rather than those based at their parents' place of work.

Capacity in licensed nurseries is extremely limited, limiting access to child care for many. A World Bank study found that licensed nurseries in Jordan can serve less than 3% of the population of 1.48 million children below the age of 5, with capacity for only 33,378 children (World Bank, 2024a). A survey of 51 low and middle-income districts found that 11 districts had no formal child care centres (World Bank, 2024a)[129] Supply is unevenly distributed relative to the size of the local population of young children. Despite this general lack of supply, some nurseries have underused capacity, often due to family concerns over cost, distance and quality. This lack of child care options may have implications for the very low participation of women in the labour force in the country, which has been roughly 15% in recent years (World Bank, 2025), compared to the global average of 50%. In a 2023 survey of mothers of children below the age of 6 in Jordan who do not currently use formal child care, 80% reported that they would be willing to work, open a business or work more hours if they had access to free child care (Redaelli and Anukriti, 2023), suggesting that the provision of free child care could increase women's labour force participation.

129 These districts are Bani Kenanah, Aghwar Shamaliya, Wasatiya, Rwaished, Shoonah Janoobiyah, Dhieban, Faqo'e, Ayy Qasaba, Mazar Janoobee, Qatraneh and Huseineyia.

6.3 Quality of ECED services

As detailed in **Chapter 4,** the conceptual framework for assessing quality in education takes into account four main components: the quality of learning outcomes (such as skills, competencies and equity), the role of contextual factors (such as family and student characteristics), as well as the quality of inputs (such as infrastructure, facilities, teaching and learning materials and teachers) and processes (such as curricula, learning environments, teachers' professional development and supervision) (see **Figure 4.1**).

This section follows this structure, first analysing school readiness outcomes based on two national assessment tools, then considering contextual factors relating to children's developmental status and home environment and examining kindergarten facilities and resources, teachers and curricula.

6.3.1. Developmental outcomes and school readiness indicators

Teachers conduct assessments of individual students in public kindergartens. Every child in public kindergartens is assessed annually on their religious and moral dimensions, their social skills, spoken language, reading, writing, health practices, gross motor skills and cognitive skills.

The lengthy assessment also looks at the children's knowledge of earth sciences and the environment, biology, technology, math, visual arts and dramatic play. In addition, two sample survey instruments, the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA), have been used to gain a representative profile of children's learning development outcomes in the early years across the country (see **Box 6.2** below).

Data from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessment have also been analysed to examine the relationship between early childhood education and students' performance in the early years of primary school, with a particular focus on their kindergarten experiences.

The EDI data (2023) show that children who attended kindergarten had higher mean scores than those who did not attend kindergarten. The effect sizes of kindergarten attendance were moderate to large across domains, with 89% of children participating in the survey attending kindergarten within the previous year. The analysis of kindergarten attendance did not control for children's backgrounds, such as family income and parents' education.

Gender, family wealth and education level are key correlates of scores on the EDI. Mean scores were higher across all domains for children with family incomes at or above JOD 300 per month. Mean scores were also higher for children whose parents' education level was higher than primary. Scores were also higher for children with no or one sibling compared to those with two or more siblings. Scores for girls were higher than for boys across all five domains. Average girls' scores exceeded boys' scores the most in the emotional maturity (7.96 for girls and 7.54 for boys) and language and cognitive development (8.87 for girls and 8.48 for boys) domains.

For the IDELA data (2024) (see **Box 6.2** below), **average scores were relatively high overall, indicating that most children are on track developmentally.** The vast majority of students assessed (87.3%) were found to be on track in terms of growth, according to the criteria determined in consultation with experts from the MoE, Jordanian universities, international and local organizations.

Box 6.2: Assessing early learning skills in Jordan: the EDI and IDELA.

The **EDI** was implemented in Jordan in 2018 and 2023. The EDI is a population-level survey to assess young children's holistic development. The tool has 103 items, looking at five developmental domains: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development and communication skills and general knowledge.

The 2023 EDI in Jordan surveyed 5,426 children (similar number of girls and boys) from across all 12 governorates. The average age of participants was 6.76 years old, which corresponds roughly with Grade 1 (Janus, Magdalena et al, 2023). The youngest participant was 4.56 years old, and the oldest was 10.78 years old. (It is not clear why a 10-year-old was surveyed.) Children were given a score from zero to 10 on each of the test domains. The highest average scores were in physical health and development and language and cognitive development. The lowest average scores were in emotional maturity and communication skills and general knowledge. It is difficult to compare the data for Jordan with other countries' data, as there are no benchmarks or minimum standards established for child development based on the instrument.

Scores for children who attended kindergarten were higher across all five domains; effect sizes were largest for language and cognitive development (.58), followed by communication skills and general knowledge (.54). The effect size of kindergarten attendance was lowest on the emotional maturity domain (.37).

The **IDELA tool** is a globally available instrument for assessing school readiness, developed by Save the Children and adapted for Jordan under the USAID-funded Early Grade Education Activity (ASAS) Programme. The Queen Rania Faculty at the University led the adaptation of the tool and associated training. IDELA is an easy to administer, direct assessment tool that has been used in more than 100 countries to measure readiness for primary school, covering four developmental domains: motor development, emergent literacy, emergent numeracy and social-emotional development.

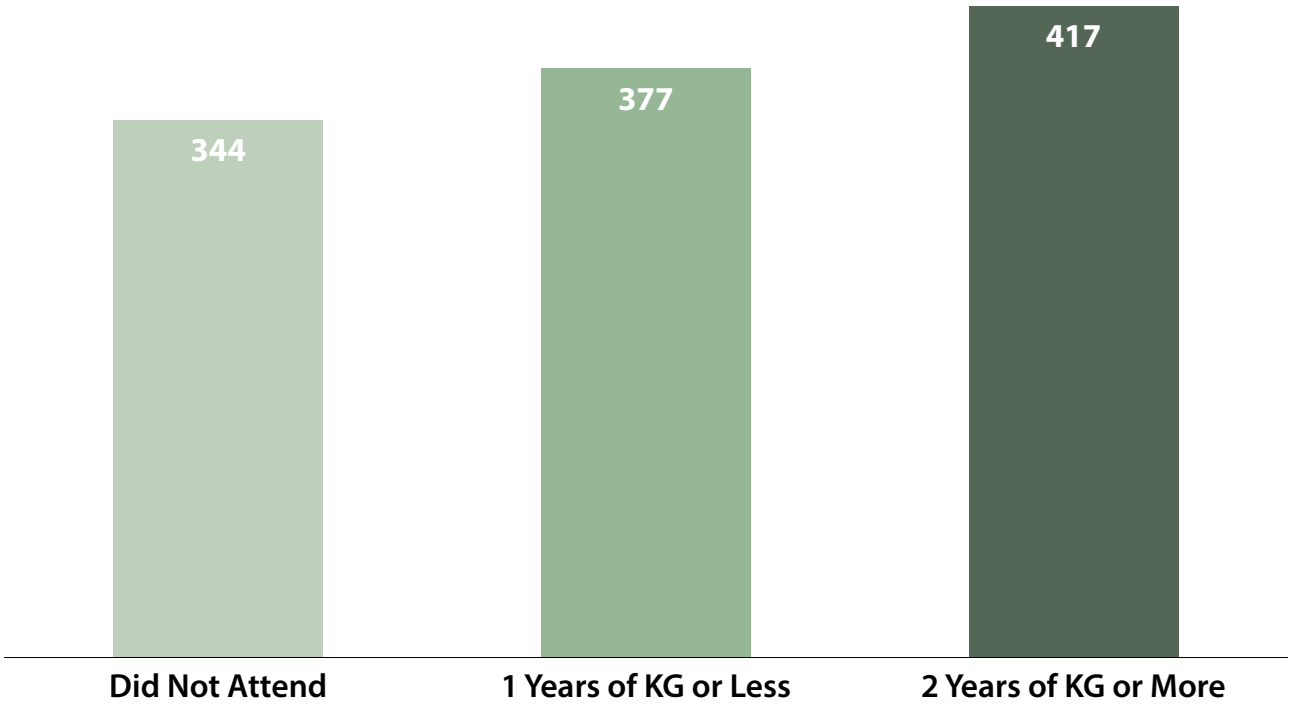
In Jordan, the IDELA tool was used in a sample of 72 schools (6 schools from each governorate), targeting 1,425 students (about 20 students per school). This sample size was calculated to provide an estimate of the nationally representative score for school readiness, disaggregated for boys and girls. Thirty-six supervisors from the MoE were trained as enumerators over a four-day training in early 2024. Trainees split into six teams to visit the selected schools in May 2024. At each school, the evaluators selected a sample of 20 students from KG2 by selecting every second student in the enrolment record.

Now that the tool has been adapted, validated and benchmarked for Jordan, it is anticipated that the use of IDELA will expand.

Kindergarten experience positively impacts learning in the early years of primary education.

Students who have attended kindergarten perform better in reading in Grade 4. As noted in Chapter 4, PIRLS data modelling shows that two years of kindergarten are associated with higher reading achievement.

Figure 6.2. Grade 4 students' performance (score) in reading according to kindergarten experience



Source: Author's calculation based on PIRLS 2021 data.

Two or more years of kindergarten have a greater impact on students' reading achievement than one year. The average reading score for Grade 4 students with two years of kindergarten was 417, while those with only one year had an average score of 377, a statistically significant difference of 40 score points (see **Figure 6.2**). The PIRLS data model shows a statistically significant difference in reading scores in Grade 4, with students gaining 0.399 standard deviation points for two or more years of kindergarten compared to 0.169 points for one year (see **Table 6.6**).

Table 6.6. Impact of kindergarten experience on reading performance in Grade 4

	Standardized score in reading by performance quintile					
	Average effect[130]	Effect on the first quintile	Effect on the second quintile	Effect on the third quintile	Effect on the fourth quintile	Effect on the fifth quintile
Students attended KG for 1 year or less	0.169**	0.168***	0.166**	0.205**	0.069	0.070
Students attended KG for 2 years or more	0.399***	0.354***	0.425***	0.416***	0.314***	0.275***
Difference between KG 2 years and 1 year	0.230***	0.186***	0,259***	0.211***	0.245	0.205

Source: Authors, using the PIRLS 2021 multivariate model.
**** Statistically significant at 1% level; ** Statistically significant at 5% level; * Statistically significant at 10% level*

130 This average effect is estimated using ordinary least squares. However, the terminology does not convey the same meaning as that commonly used in the causal inference literature.

In terms of gender, regardless of the number of years of kindergarten, there is a slightly larger gain in reading in Grade 4 for boys than for girls. Two or more years of kindergarten are associated with an increase of 0.386 standard deviation points in reading for boys and 0.331 for girls.

Particularly for girls, the kindergarten experience has a greater impact on the lowest performers (0.403 standard deviation points for two or more years of experience) than on the highest performers (0.267 standard deviation points for two or more years of experience), highlighting the extent to which kindergarten improves performance in the early grades. In addition, two or more years of kindergarten experience has a greater impact on reading in Grade 4 than one year of kindergarten experience for girls (see **Table 6.7**).

As for girls, kindergarten appears to have a greater impact on reading achievement when students attend for at least two years.

Table 6.7. Impact of kindergarten experience on girls' reading achievement in Grade 4

	Standardized score in reading by performance quintile					
	Average effect	Effect on the first quintile	Effect on the second quintile	Effect on the third quintile	Effect on the fourth quintile	Effect on the fifth quintile
				Male		
Students attended KG for 1 year or less	0.143**	0.109	0.190*	0.262**	0.098	0.119
Students attended KG for 2 years or more	0.386***	0.305***	0.445***	0.465***	0.356***	0.303***
Difference between KG 2 years and KG 1 year	0.243***	0.196	0.255***	0.203***	0.258	0.184
				Female		
Students attended KG for 1 year or less	0.139***	0.200***	0.263**	0.153	0.050	0.040
Students attended KG for 2 years or more	0.331***	0.403***	0.467***	0.330**	0.314**	0.267***
Difference between KG 2 years and KG 1 year	0.192***	0.203***	0.204***	0.177	0.246	0.227

Source: Authors, using the PIRLS 2021 multivariate model.

6.3.2. Children's developmental status and home environment

Child development

Children's development is generally on track, despite disparities linked to children's background characteristics. The Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) survey found that 84% of children aged 24–59 months are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being (Department of Statistics, 2023). Gender was not identified as a significant determinant, with 86% of girls found to be on track, compared to 84% of boys. However, children are less likely to be developmentally on track if they are Syrian, live in Syrian refugee camps, have mothers with low levels of education or are from families in the lowest income quintile.

Home environment and support for learning in the home

Many parents of young children do not engage in basic activities that support foundational literacy and numeracy. A survey of parents of children aged 0–5 in Jordan found that only 6.3% of parents reported reading to their child within the past 3 days, and less than 1% (0.3%) read to their child on a typical day. Fifteen per cent reported counting objects with their child within the past three days. Less than 6% of parents reported telling their children stories (O'Donnell Weber et al., 2021), an activity that significantly benefits children's development and can be done even by parents who are illiterate or lack access to children's books.

Almost all parents of young children place a very high value on their children's education. When asked to choose from a list of things they want most in life for their children, nearly 82% of parents of young children surveyed chose a good education (O'Donnell Weber et al., 2021). The discrepancy between the high value placed on education and the extremely low frequency of engaging in crucial activities to promote children's school readiness suggests that parents may not know that reading, storytelling and counting are among the most important ways to prepare children for success in school.

Parents of young children may choose to read books infrequently themselves, let alone read to their children. Parents may also lack competency in Modern Standard Arabic, and children may enter kindergarten with limited exposure to it (Ministry of Education, Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2023). A survey of parents of young children found that many parents do not have access to books, due to the cost or a lack of bookshops or libraries nearby (O'Donnell Weber et al., 2021).

Several programmes aimed at encouraging parents to support their children's development have been established, but coverage is limited. Programmes such as Our Happy Home, Parent Involvement in Kindergarten and Grades 1-3, and *Iqrali* ("Read to me") (described in annex to this chapter) are building parents' knowledge and skills to strengthen family relationships and promote their children's learning at home. The data presented above indicate that expanding these types of programmes to ensure higher coverage rates would leverage the role parents can play in fostering their children's cognitive and socio-emotional development. Engagement with families as early as possible – during the prenatal period or at birth – would further leverage impact.

6.3.3. Quality of inputs in kindergartens

Kindergarten facilities and resources

Public kindergartens are required to meet MoE quality standards. Children in government kindergartens attend school five days a week, for four hours a day, typically from 8 a.m. until 12 p.m. Schools that offer two shifts a day have slightly less class time, with one group of children attending 3.5 hours in the morning and another group attending 3.5 hours in the afternoon. Public kindergarten classes follow the same calendar and have the same number of total school days as basic and secondary levels. Public kindergarten classrooms must have a minimum of one square metre of space per child, and one and a half square metres of space per child in an outdoor play area. The maximum number of children in a kindergarten classroom is 25, with 1 teacher per class. Kindergartens must have appropriate facilities for children with disabilities, and classrooms are required to have books and reading corners.

However, not all kindergartens and primary schools have libraries, and those that do may not be equipped with books that are engaging and appropriate for young children. EMIS data indicate that among schools that offer kindergarten only, just 2.6% have a library within the facility. For schools that offer kindergarten and basic education, less than half (49%) have libraries,[131] and among these, it is not clear whether books appropriate for kindergarten-aged children are available. While kindergartens are required to have books and reading corners, it is not possible to assess the quantity and quality of these resources or how they may be used in the classroom.

Quality of kindergarten teachers

Public KG teachers

Kindergarten teachers in the government sector must meet extensive pre-service qualifications requirements. Prospective public kindergarten teachers must hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child education. They must also complete either a high diploma or pre-service and in-service training offered by the MoE. The high diploma is a one-year course in early childhood education that includes a practicum component, working in classrooms under supervision. Those without a high diploma undergo a 180-hour pre-service training programme provided by the MoE. In additional, all new teachers at the MoE at any level (i.e. not just kindergarten) must complete a 40-hour "new teachers" course. Compliance with these qualifications requirements is very high, with UNESCO UIS data for SDG 4.c.1 indicating that 100% of pre-primary teachers possess the required qualifications for their positions (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2025).

Early childhood education graduates may not be well-prepared to deliver the kindergarten curriculum using child-centred pedagogy. The current university degrees on early childhood education do not train prospective kindergarten teachers on the MoE kindergarten curriculum. There is a practicum component during the final year of the degree, but it may not be sufficiently long or adequately monitored and supported by university professors. University courses for early childhood education are perceived as being highly theoretical, doing little to prepare students for the reality of the classroom. At present, public kindergarten teachers receive training on implementing the kindergarten curriculum only as part of their in-service training, rather than during their pre-service university courses. This means that some kindergarten teachers may be teaching without having received any prior training on the curriculum.

The pre-service curriculum for prospective kindergarten teachers has been revamped at several universities to better prepare graduates to enter the classroom upon graduation. With USAID support, the NGO International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) has partnered with

131 IIEP calculation based on EMIS data for 2022/2023.

three public universities to upgrade the existing pre-service university programmes, which are perceived as being extremely outdated. Launched in 2024, the new content prepares students doing bachelor's degree programmes in early childhood education to use child-centred approaches and covers topics such as technology use and universal design for learning. A major change is a practicum requirement, which provides students with 1,000 hours of kindergarten classroom experience over their 4-year degree programme, so that when they graduate, they are well-prepared to step into schools and effectively manage their classes. It is anticipated that the three participating universities will reach most university students specializing in early childhood education. Vanderbilt University is partnering with the universities to support this transition.

Public kindergarten teachers are required to participate in periodic in-service training. These training courses may cover topics such as the curriculum, parent participation and inclusive education. Training may last several hours or several days. In 2024, with USAID support, IREX helped the MoE to initiate compulsory 9-month in-service training for public teachers from KG2 through Grade 3 in selected districts which have low levels of academic achievement. It differs from the "one-off" in-service training that is typically offered and encourages teachers to use child-centred approaches with an emphasis on developing reading skills. The training includes coaching and classroom observation so that teachers can try out the new skills being presented. The first cohort is currently in training.

Public kindergarten teachers also benefit from donor-supported in-service training. The World Bank-funded Education Reform Support Program-for-Results supported in-service training for 500 public kindergarten teachers in 2024. The training encourages teachers to see themselves as "facilitators" of learning and to shift to a child-centred approach. This training will be rolled out to more teachers going forward.

Private kindergarten teachers

Private KG teachers are also required to have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related subject. Private kindergarten teachers typically attend the same university programmes as public kindergarten teachers. In contrast to public school teachers, however, private kindergarten teachers must also obtain a teaching licence from the MoE. Private kindergartens are required to submit an annual report confirming the qualifications of the teachers in their institutions.

Teachers in private kindergartens may not receive in-service training. Unlike in public kindergartens, in-service training in private kindergartens is at the discretion and expense of each school and is not financially supported by either the MoE or development partners. As a result, private kindergarten teachers may lack opportunities for continuous professional development. Administrators in low fee kindergartens have expressed interest in in-service training for teachers, particularly training on inclusive education for children with disabilities (Pylvainen et al., 2024).

6.3.4. Quality of kindergarten curriculum

The National Center for Curriculum Development is currently developing a curriculum for use in KG1.

The official KG2 curriculum supports children's holistic development and foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Implementation of the "developed curriculum" began in 2022 after an experimental phase. Developed by a team at the National Center for Curriculum Development, the curriculum structures activities around a list of 210 learning acts, covering all areas of child development. It is a subject-based curriculum, organized around eight learning units that children are familiar with, such as animals, families, plants, friends and the country. The unit subject provides the framework through which integrative learning processes are used to promote children's holistic development.

The curriculum uses play as the main method of learning. Children follow a daily routine of a morning circle, activity tables and learning corners, lunch, outdoor playtime, more activity tables and learning corners and a closing circle. Stories, songs and activities related to the theme help build letter recognition, letter writing and numeracy skills. Jordanian poets and writers were recruited to write poems and stories for the curriculum. Each week a value is presented to the children, such as cooperation, respect for elders and accepting others. Parents receive a newsletter on every unit to keep them informed of what their children are learning.

Instructional materials include depictions of children with disabilities to promote inclusion. There is an activity guide for teachers and activity books for students. The curriculum is intended to be flexible, allowing teachers to adapt it, depending on the size of the class, available facilities and characteristics of the local community. The curriculum is considered to be developmentally appropriate and cultivates key skills in children. As discussed in Section 6.3.3, kindergarten teachers may not be well-prepared to implement it.

The KG2 curriculum is publicly accessible, including for use in private kindergartens (National Center for Curriculum Development, n.d.). A survey of low-fee private kindergartens found that 35% of the schools follow the MoE official curriculum, while 23% follow a curriculum issued by a private publisher. Only 2% of the private kindergartens surveyed do not follow any curriculum (Pylvainen et al., 2024).

6.4 Governance in ECED

This section analyses governance arrangements for ECED: first, of kindergartens (public and private) and, second, of the nursery subsector, looking at quality assurance, inspection and monitoring, licensing and human resource management in each case.

6.4.1. Governance of kindergartens

Quality assurance

Implementation of the MoE's new quality assurance system for kindergartens has begun in 500 schools, and all public and private schools will participate in the coming years.

The system was developed in 2023 and its roll-out began during the second semester of the 2023/2024 school year. It has been implemented in 400 public schools and 100 private schools so far. The MoE plans to implement the quality assurance system in all government schools within three years, with each school receiving an evaluation every three years going forward. Participation is also mandatory for private school. The kindergarten quality assurance system consists of six main areas: management and leadership, environment, curricula and educational materials, teachers, children's learning, evaluation and partnerships. Each area is measured through a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators ('Quality Assurance System and Tools for Kindergartens', n.d.). There are seven data collection tools: the school observation tool, the classroom observation tool the head teacher interview tool, the parent interview tool, the teacher interview tool, the child direct assessment tool and the teacher report tool. An electronic database for the quality assurance system has also been established. **The MoE has developed a unified evaluation measure for kindergartens based on the system indicators.** The score is calculated as a percentage and benchmarked to a five-level scale, indicating if the school is model (80–100%), implemented (70–79%), needs development (60–69%), minimum (50–59%) or below minimum (below 50%). Schools that receive scores of minimum or below minimum receive remediation plans and follow-up from the MoE.

Monitoring quality

MoE systems for follow-up and monitoring of public and private kindergartens enhance accountability. At the district level, kindergarten evaluators employed by the MoE conduct supervisory visits to evaluate the learning environment and teachers' performance according to a standard template. Visits may be scheduled or unscheduled. Reports are shared with the school head teacher, district education department and the department responsible for addressing any problems identified. A kindergarten official evaluates the needs of kindergartens and coordinates with relevant departments within the MoE to ensure that their needs are met. The official also collects data related to kindergartens to send to the central Ministry.

At the central level, the MoE Division of Early Childhood also conducts monitoring visits to kindergartens to assess the physical environment, assess needs, review records and monitor progress. Evaluation teams consist of three members: one from the Education Quality and Accountability Unit, a kindergarten supervisor for the district and a member of the Internal Monitoring Unit of the MoE. Monitoring and evaluation of private kindergartens is conducted by a private school liaison officer in each district in addition to kindergarten evaluators as assigned by the Division of Private Kindergartens.

A survey of low-fee private kindergartens found that most meet minimum service delivery requirements. The survey found that most of these institutions had acceptable teacher/child ratios and met the minimum space requirements under MoE regulations. Almost all the schools reported having adequate storybooks and textbooks, writing implements, bookshelves and appropriately sized furniture. However, the survey found that teacher-centred, rather than child-centred, methods predominated in most private kindergartens (Pylvainen et al., 2024).

Licensing

Licensing requirements for private kindergartens were revised in 2023 to simplify the process, but a new requirement for increased space per child has created challenges. Private kindergartens are subject to the 2015 Kindergarten Institutions Policy that established quality standards for all kindergartens in Jordan. They are also subject to licensing requirements and quality standards established by the MoE.

In 2023, the MoE revised the licensing procedures and requirements for private kindergartens under Policy 17 in order to make the process easier and more efficient, with the goal of encouraging more private kindergartens to open, and to obtain and maintain licences. Under the previous licensing system, kindergarten administrators were required to visit multiple government institutions to acquire signatures and pay fees. Private kindergartens were also subject to fines for procedural violations. Instead of renewing the licence annually, schools can now get a permanent licence with the submission of an annual report. Thus far, however, the revisions do not seem to be having the intended effect of making licensing easier for private kindergartens. One part of the revisions included increasing the minimum space required from 1.5 square metre per child in each classroom and in the outdoor play space to two square metres per child, which is not realistic for many schools.

Human resource management in kindergartens

All applicants for public kindergarten teaching positions must take the civil service exam. Applicants may be offered an interview with an MoE hiring committee based on their secondary school and university grades, as well as their score on the civil service exam. Applicant may be offered a position depending on the number of kindergarten teachers that the MoE needs to hire.

The supply of qualified candidates appears steady. While data are not available to examine this in depth, this trend may be attributable to the steady stream of university graduates with the required degrees more so than to low turnover within the profession.

Starting salaries for teachers in public kindergartens are the same as they are for teachers at the basic education level. The starting salary is JOD 380 per month, with the possibility of additional allowances to attract candidates to positions in rural areas, as well as potential salary increases.

Salaries for teachers in private sector kindergartens and nurseries are typically lower than in public kindergartens. Private institutions must adhere to Jordan's minimum wage law (JOD 260 per month). This low pay rate may not be attractive to university graduates, and staff turnover can be a challenge, particularly of nursery staff in rural areas. Research indicates that low salaries and a lack of opportunities for career progression can be a barrier to attracting and retaining staff in early childhood centres (OECD, 2020). Frequent staff turnover can be detrimental to children's development (OECD, 2006).

6.4.2. Governance of nurseries

Quality assurance

Nurseries do not currently apply a comprehensive quality assurance system. Licensing standards and safety monitoring procedures have been established, but there is no quality monitoring framework currently in use for in-home or centre-based nurseries. The National Council for Family Affairs has developed a comprehensive quality assurance system with support from donors, but it has not been implemented, and it is not clear how well it aligns with the kindergarten quality assurance system. A future quality monitoring framework could complement existing standards on infrastructure to include an emphasis on more qualitative dimensions, such as caregiver interactions with children. Jordan is currently participating in an international survey evaluating quality in childcare centres in cooperation with the World Bank.

Monitoring

The MoSD has developed a checklist and observation form for use by the Nurseries Monitoring Team in private nurseries, primarily gathering administrative information and structural quality indicators. The form collects information on enrolment, safety and sanitation of facilities, equipment and staff qualifications. It contains a yes/no checklist, which includes items such as displaying the nursery licence clearly and functioning surveillance cameras. It ensures that the number of registered children meets the capacity specified in the nursery's licence and that staff/child ratios are met. It reviews records of children's registration, enrolment contracts and documentation on any health issues the children may have. The checklist also asks for any observations that might suggest abuse, neglect or unsafe practices. At the end of the monitoring visit, the monitor presents the observations and checklist results, with the right to review surveillance recordings to verify any findings. The checklist does not measure process quality indicators, such as the interactions between caregivers and children.

Licensing

The MoSD developed licensing and quality standards for nurseries in 2023 and 2024 with support from the World Bank. The Nurseries Act (Act No. 6 of 2024) revised licensing procedures. In the past, the process involved four ministries but is now more streamlined, with fewer redundancies, and approval from only the municipality and civil defence department required.

Publicity about the changes to encourage centres that were already operating, particularly in-home centres, to apply for licences seems to be having the intended effect. Since the changes came into effect in February 2024, 91 nurseries have been licensed, which is an increase over previous years. Initial licences cost JOD 200, and nurseries must meet licensing requirements focusing primarily on physical infrastructure and safety, such as minimum space requirements. Centre-based nurseries must have 1 caregiver for every 8 children below the age of 1, and 1 caregiver for every 10 children between the ages of 1 and 4.8 years. In 2025–2027, grants funded by the World Bank will be offered to in-home and centre-based nurseries to enable them to meet licensing standards.

Human resource management of nursery staff

Operations and management for private, in-home and workplace-based nurseries follow MoSD guidelines. Training guides for nursery staff describe children's developmental needs at various ages of infancy, toddlerhood and early childhood. The guides give examples of appropriate activities and interactions to support children's development but are not considered a curriculum. The guides also include examples of specific ways to support children with various kinds of disabilities, developmental delays and health problems and promote their integration in classroom activities.

The qualifications requirements for nursery caregivers were recently amended to be more readily achievable. Previous pre-service qualifications were extremely difficult to obtain, requiring 700 hours of training in courses that were frequently inaccessible. Only roughly 10% of nursery caregivers met those requirements. The new regulations require just 100 hours of training, which can be done in the evening and/or online, resulting in a professional certificate. Every nursery caregiver must complete the new training in 2025. Other caregiver requirements include being at least 18 years old and completion of Grade 10. All staff must complete a background check certifying a clean criminal record. Nursery directors in centre-based facilities must have a bachelor's degree in early childhood development or a similar degree, but no university degrees are required for directors of home-based nurseries.

The MoSD offers some in-service training for nursery caregivers. In 2024, the MoSD trained 70 nursery caregivers on child development and inclusion. It plans to expand this training to improve access to nurseries for children with disabilities.



6.5 Cost and financing of ECED

Providing a comprehensive overview of public financing for ECED in Jordan is challenging, as oversight is divided between two ministries. While kindergartens (KG1 and KG2) fall under the MoE's mandate, nurseries are managed by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). In this section, the MoSD nurseries-related expenditures have been excluded from the analysis, as it is difficult to segregate the nursery-specific spending from the broader MoSD budget for family and childhood care programmes, which covers other activities and projects unrelated to nurseries. Therefore, the following analysis focuses exclusively on financial data from the MoE's budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023.[132]

The analysis begins by examining intra-sectoral budget trade-offs and their evolution over time to assess the relative priority given to pre-school education with public funding. It then evaluates budget execution performance to understand the MoE's ability to utilize the domestic resources allocated for pre-school education. Finally, the analysis explores the evolution of pre-school education costs per student over time.

6.5.1. Intrasectoral trade-offs: pre-school education allocations over time

Pre-school education remains a low priority in public funding despite recent increases. While Jordan has expressed a strong commitment to expanding early childhood education, public budgetary allocations to the pre-school subsector remain minimal. In 2016, allocations to pre-school education amounted to just JOD 6.1 million (at 2023 prices), representing just 0.5% of total education allocations (see **Table 6.8**). This share remained stagnant at 0.5% in 2020 (with a slight decline to JOD 5.7 million). By 2023, however, public funding for pre-school education more than doubled to JOD 13.1 million, marking an impressive 114% growth over the 7-year period. However, despite this significant increase, the pre-school share of the total education budget remains critically low at just 0.9%.

Pre-school budget allocations have grown faster than the overall education budget but remain marginal. Between 2016 and 2023, total public allocations to education increased by 25% (from JOD 1,178 million to JOD 1,470 million), with an average annual growth rate of 3%. In contrast, pre-school funding grew by 114% over the same period, averaging a 12% annual increase (from JOD 6.1 million in 2016, at 2023 prices, to JOD 13.1 million in 2023). While this suggests an encouraging effort to improve early childhood education, the level of public investment in the subsector remains disproportionately low.

132 For re-estimated allocations, data are retrieved from the MoE's budget laws for the fiscal years 2017, 2021 and 2024.

Table 6.8. Public allocations[133] to education by level (2016, 2020 and 2023, in JOD million and per cent)

	2016		2020		2023	
Education level	Allocations (JOD million)	Share (%)	Allocations (JOD million)	Share (%)	Allocations (JOD million)	Share (%)
Pre-school education	6.1	0.5%	5.7	0.5%	13.1	0.9%
Basic education	830.0	70.5%	914.4	72.7%	1,080.7	73.5%
Secondary education	127.6	10.8%	153.2	12.2%	188.8	12.8%
TVET	74.5	6.3%	62.9	5.0%	75.7	5.1%
Adult literacy and education	0.8	0.07%	0.6	0.05%	1.8	0.12%
Higher education	139.1	11.8%	121.2	9.6%	110.1	7.5%
Total	**1,178**	**100%**	**1,258**	**100%**	**1,470**	**100%**

Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department Budget laws for the fiscal years 2017, 2021 and 2024 to retrieve budget allocations re-estimations.

*Notes: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here. (2) MoSD nurseries-related spending is not taken into consideration.*

Intrasectoral budget distribution reflects a continued prioritization of compulsory education, which does not include pre-school. Despite remarkable growth in pre-school allocations, funding distribution continues to heavily favour compulsory education levels. In 2023, pre-school education accounted for less than 1% of total education allocations, while 86% of resources were absorbed by basic and secondary education. Within the constraints of overall public education funding, this distribution hampers efforts to redirect resources toward early childhood education for scaling up the subsector and allows very little fiscal space for quality improvements.

6.5.2. Budget execution in pre-school education: Trends and challenges

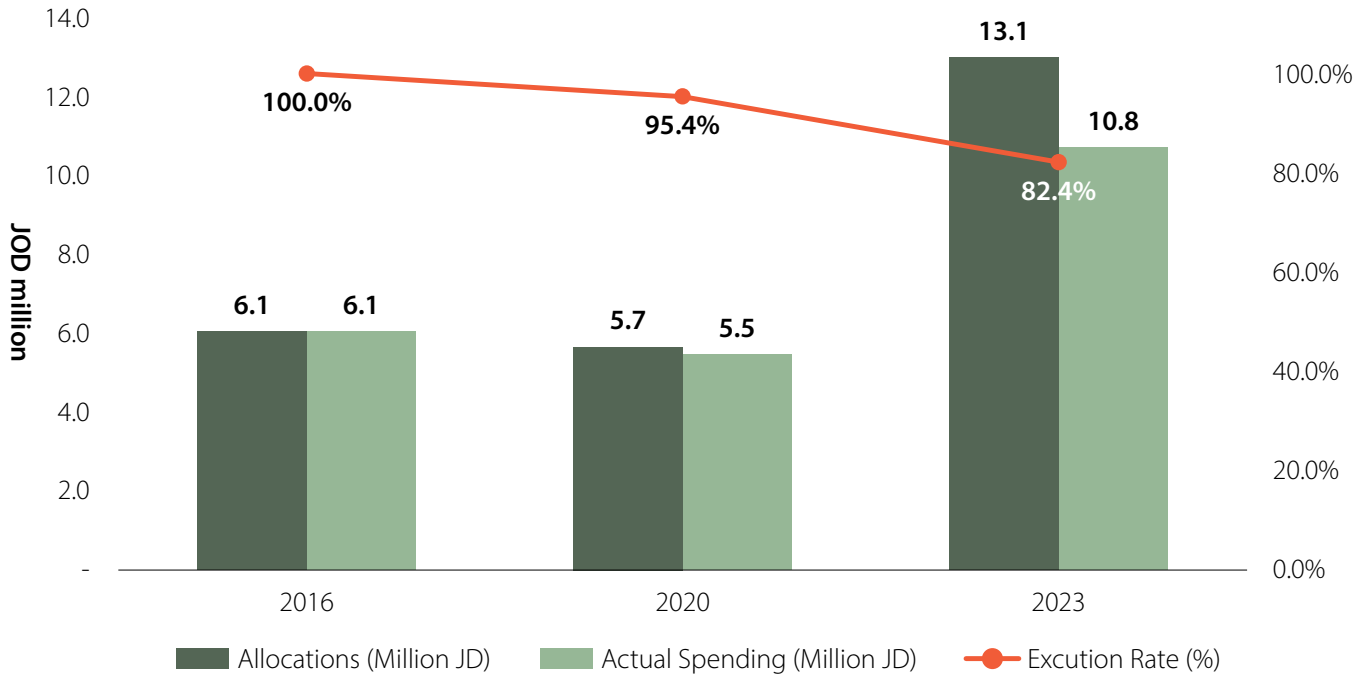
In general, budget execution[134] in the education sector has declined over time. Between 2016 and 2023, the education sector's ability to fully execute budgetary allocations has weakened. In 2016, the execution rate of budgetary allocations stood at 100%, ensuring full disbursement of budgetary allocations. However, this rate dropped to 94.9% in 2020 and further declined to 87.1% in 2023, reflecting growing challenges in financial execution and resource utilization in recent years.

With increased allocations, pre-school level education faces similar execution challenges. While budgetary allocations for pre-school education have significantly increased, the MoE has faced growing difficulties in fully disbursing the available resources. In 2016, the MoE successfully disbursed 100% of its revised budget for pre-

133 We consider the revised budgeted allocations to account for in-year budget reallocations.
134 For the execution rate calculation, we compare actual spending (expenditures outturn) with revised budgets to account for in-year budget revisions.

school education. However, execution rates for the subsector fell to 95.4% in 2020 and further dropped to 82.4% in 2023, marking a 13 percentage-point decline in just 3 years (see **Figure 6.3**). This trend suggests that persistent bottlenecks in budget execution at the pre-school level are hindering the effective use of the limited resources available to expand early childhood education in Jordan.

Figure 6.3. Budget allocations vs actual spending and execution rate for pre-school level (2016, 2020 and 2023, JOD million and per cent)



Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department Budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

*Notes: (1) the notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here. (2) MoSD nurseries-related expenditures are not taken into consideration.*

Construction and capital budget execution pose significant obstacles. One of the main reasons for the declining execution rates at the pre-school level is the difficulty in implementing capital and infrastructure projects. Regulatory constraints, including the lack of an approved construction and licensing system for kindergarten classrooms (Jordan Ministry of Education, 2023e), along with lengthy and cumbersome tendering processes, continue to slow down spending and hamper efforts to expand early childhood education facilities.[135]

135 "Diagnosis for Strengthening Results-Oriented Budgeting and Planning in Jordan" UNESCO Jordan, Forthcoming 2025.

6.5.3. Recurrent unit costs in public pre-school education: Trends and insights

Pre-school education public unit costs have declined significantly over time. Between 2016 and 2023, the unit cost for educating a pre-school student in public institutions has decreased substantially. In 2016, the unit cost per pre-school student was equivalent to 0.2 times the cost of a basic student, meaning that the cost of one basic education student could cover the education of five pre-school students.

By 2023, the difference widened further, and the cost of one basic education student became equivalent to schooling 10 pre-school students. This decline in pre-school unit costs is primarily driven by a faster increase in public pre-school enrolments, which grew by 160% over a 7-year period, compared to a slower increase in government recurrent expenditures for this subsector, which expanded by only 60% over the period. As a result, the unit cost per pre-school student fell by 45%, at an average annual decline of 8% between 2016 and 2023. The implications of this drop in pre-school unit costs may have significant implications for the quality of service provision in the subsector.

Pre-school education public unit costs have also declined in relation to GDP per capita. The unit cost of pre-school education has also decreased relative to GDP per capita, mirroring a trend observed across all education levels. In 2016, the unit cost for pre-school education represented 4% of GDP per capita. This share dropped to 3% in 2020 and further declined to just 2% in 2023, marking a 2 percentage-point drop over the 7-year period (see **Table 6.9**). As a result, pre-school education in Jordan now operates at a lower cost relative to national wealth; however, these cost savings may come at the expense of quality.

Table 6.9. Public recurrent unit cost for pre-school education, in 2016, 2020 and 2023 (JOD million constant, at 2023 prices)

	2016	2020	2023	Variation 2016–2023	Annual average growth rate 2016–2023
Pre-school education	**131**	**102**	**73**	**-45%**	**-8%**
% of GDP/capita	4	3	2		
Multiple of basic education	0.2	0.1	0.1		

Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department Budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2020, and 2023, EMIS enrolment figures for 2015/2016, 2019/2020 and 2022/2023 and the MoF financial government bulletin of August 2024.

*Notes: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here. (2) MoSD nurseries-related expenditures are not taken into consideration. (3) Enrolments in public institutions only are used.*

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

Jordan has expanded kindergarten provision, backed by strong political commitment. This commitment is reflected in several national strategies that emphasize the importance of early childhood care and education for individual and societal prosperity. Jordan aims to achieve full absorption in KG2 and had reached an attendance rate of 67% by 2023. Overall, kindergarten enrolment has increased steadily, with an average annual growth rate of nearly 5% between 2017/2018 and 2022/2023. Growth has been faster in government schools, which are free of charge, with a 14.5% average increase in enrolment between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023.

The landscape of kindergarten education is dominated by private providers, raising challenges for affordability and equity. Most children in kindergarten attend fee-charging private schools, and nearly all KG1 classes are delivered by private institutions. Although licensing requirements have been revised to make it easier to open private kindergartens, the reliance on private provision limits access for disadvantaged families. Nurseries for younger children are also mostly private, and severely limited in capacity, currently covering only 3% of children under the age of 5.

Equity and inclusion remain key concerns despite recent efforts. Kindergarten spaces in government schools are not always available to families wishing to enrol their children, particularly in densely populated areas, and private school fees may be unaffordable for many families, limiting access. The socioeconomic background of young children affects who can attend kindergarten, with children from the richest families more than twice as likely to attend kindergarten as those from the poorest families. Children with disabilities continue to be underrepresented in kindergarten, even though the government has taken steps to improve inclusive education, including by developing a procedural guide and training manual.

Participation in kindergarten is strongly associated with improved learning outcomes. Children in Jordan who attended kindergarten scored higher on international assessments of child development and, according to the 2021 PIRLS, performed better in Grade 4 reading than those who did not attend. PIRLS data modelling shows that two years of kindergarten are associated with significantly higher reading achievement compared to only one year. The effect of kindergarten attendance on reading achievement in Grade 4 is slightly larger for boys than for girls.

Public investment in kindergarten is growing but remains low overall. In 2023, only 0.9% of the total education budget was allocated to kindergarten. Still, the pace of growth is encouraging: spending on kindergarten increased by 114% between 2016 and 2023, compared with a 25% increase in overall education spending during the same period.

ANNEX TO CHAPTER 6: PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING QUALITY ECED IN JORDAN

Jordan has developed the National Arabic Literacy Strategy (2023–2028) to increase the practice of reading throughout society. The strategy aims to improve students' Arabic literacy skills and promote reading as an enjoyable and regular habit. This will be achieved through engagement with schools, families, communities, media and communications. The strategy recognizes the importance of building literacy skills from a young age. Actions to support the implementation of the strategy include further expansion of kindergarten enrolment, requiring teachers to use Modern Standard Arabic starting in kindergarten and incrementally expanding this requirement to higher grades, improving the skills of teachers in kindergartens and early grades to teach literacy, and equipping school libraries with engaging books.

The Queen Rania Foundation has developed several initiatives to encourage parents to read to their young children. It and a consortium of partners are implementing the *Iqrali* ("Read to me") Programme, which uses social behaviour change communications, a website with resources and activities to support reading, and direct engagement with parents. Parents are given children's books at their children's vaccination appointments at government health clinics. Through a partnership with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, imams have also conducted sessions with fathers on the importance of reading with their children and distributed books for them to take home. The Queen Rania Foundation has also conducted information and book distribution sessions for parents in partnership with community-based organizations. While these initiatives are extremely important, coverage is far from universal.

The Parent Involvement Programme in public kindergartens and Grades 1–3 promotes the involvement of families in their children's development and education and was a key component of the USAID-supported Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Project (RAMP). It provides professional development for teachers, supervisors and district education directors on how to involve parents to support their children's development. The training lasts 30 hours over six days.

The teacher training covers a range of modules that build teachers knowledge and skills in key areas of early child development, especially of children with disabilities. These include:

- ***Working with parents:*** ways to build partnerships with parents; ways parents can support their children's learning at home; children's developmental needs; understanding why social-emotional learning is important, and ways parents can support this at home; indicators of children's difficulties with mathematics and how to support them; activities to support children's Arabic language skills; transitions between school and home; parents' role in kindergarten and school readiness; parents' participation in kindergarten through Grade 3; and school programmes on parental participation.
- ***Working with people with disabilities:*** developmental delays, types of disabilities and early interventions; children's right to learn; inclusion of children with disabilities and strategies for inclusion for children with disabilities, developmental delays and learning difficulties; parents' experiences interacting with children with disabilities.

Schools also offer Open Days during which parents can visit schools, as well as meetings between staff and parents. There are volunteer opportunities for parents to help teachers in the classroom, and children's festivals to engage with families.

During the 2022/2023 school year, 7,414 parents and caregivers of kindergarteners, as well as 1,752 kindergarten teachers, were involved in the Parent Involvement Programme. There were 65,828 students in public KG2 classes that year, indicating a programme coverage rate of approximately 11% (assuming that only one parent per child attended the programme).

The Our Happy Home Programme promotes awareness of early childhood development and supports families' positive engagement with their young children. The inter-ministerial programme started in 2015, with support from UNICEF, for children from birth through age 9. School head teachers are trained to offer the course at their schools, which engages parents to use positive parenting and caregiving practices to support their children's development and reduce violent discipline in the home. It also helps develop parents' confidence in their parenting skills and strengthen their relationship with their children.

The course explains to parents that their children's environment and interactions with others in the first few years of life help shape the children's brain for life, highlighting the importance of positive and safe relationships and home environments to promote children's health, happiness and success in school.

The course sessions cover: positivity, building strong bonds with children, play as the key to children's development and learning, how to help children learn, positive communication for a better relationship with children, family rules and routine, encouraging desired behaviour in children, positive discipline, protecting children, maintaining a happy home and the key to a happy home.

During the 2022/2023 school year, 62 kindergarten supervisors and 383 head teachers were trained to deliver the Our Happy Home Programme. This was an increase from the 2021/2022 school year, when 18 kindergarten supervisors and 194 head teachers were trained.

The ASAS Programme is a five-year programme (2023–2028) for kindergarten through Grade 3 to support teacher training and foundational academic and social-emotional skills. Supported by USAID and implemented in partnership with IREX, the programme covers: strengthening data systems; assessments using the IDELA tool; revamping university degree programmes in early childhood education; and in-service training for KG2 to Grade 3 teachers.

The KIDSMART Programme provided public schools, including kindergartens, with computers and educational software. KIDSMART was a training programme for kindergarten teachers on how to use computers and software in their classrooms to enhance learning. During the 2017/2018 school year, the programme trained 115 kindergarten teachers and 26 kindergarten supervisors. Since then, the number of trainees has decreased, with 0 teachers and 11 supervisors trained in 2022/2023. Although the funding for the programme has ended, it continues on a small scale, and the MoE tries to provide access to computers in public kindergartens.

The MoE implements the Healthy Schools Programme in cooperation with the Royal Society for Health Awareness and the Ministry of Health under the National School Health Strategy 2018–2022. This includes education programmes on diabetes, a vaccination programme and dental and medical check-ups for children in primary schools. Though these programmes do not extend to kindergartens, some health awareness education is provided a kindergarten level. A government programme provides free eyeglasses to children in primary schools, including in kindergarten classes.

The National School Feeding Programme offers feeding programmes in KG2 through Grade 6 classes under the National School Feeding Strategy 2021–2025 in cooperation with the World Food Programme. The programme covers 520,000 students in 34 districts and three UNRWA camps. The

feeding programme components include providing 430,000 children with fortified nutritional biscuits and providing 90,000 other children with a healthy meal at school four days a week and a nutritional biscuit on the fifth day. This service starts in kindergarten and continues on throughout the education cycle. Thirty thousand Syrian children from kindergarten to Grade 12 in Azraq and Zaatari camps receive nutritional biscuits.

Early childhood education will be one of the six pillars of a "Smart Jordan" package of education reforms supported by a World Bank loan. The programme-for-results financing operation, Modernizing Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms (MASAR), was approved in 2024, but implementation had not yet begun as of early 2025. Planned initiatives include developing comprehensive curricula for KG1 and KG2 and teaching materials for KG2 and scaling up the kindergarten Quality Assurance System. Kindergarten classrooms will receive support to meet quality standards, including climate change adaptations and mitigation standards. Kindergartens that meet quality standards will expand enrolment by 25,000 Jordanian students and 5,000 refugee students by 2029. Other components include improving foundational literacy skills for Grades 1 through 3, revising teaching and reading materials and adding climate content.

The MoE has established facilities requirements to mitigate the effects of extreme heat and cold in kindergartens. Measures include requirements for a water dispenser in all kindergarten classrooms and working to provide cooling and heating systems in all schools. Schools in areas that reach very high temperatures, such as Badia, Jordan Valley, and Aqaba, are required to use parasols in outdoor play areas.

CHAPTER 7:

Technical and Vocational Education and Training



INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is to help young people develop occupation-specific and generic skills that are needed in the economy, so that they can transition more readily into the labour market and gain better-paying, higher-level jobs, including self-employment. More broadly, TVET has a key role to play in national development, ensuring that the economy is supported by the skilled human capital essential to drive growth, productivity and innovation. Effective, market-relevant, quality TVET thus represents a high-return, strategic investment for both public and private sectors, as well as for individuals.

In Jordan, however, alarmingly high rates of youth unemployment are a pressing issue. According to ILO statistics, 39% of young people aged 15–24 years old were unemployed in 2023, representing a massive pool of untapped potential, both on an individual level and for the national economy (see Chapter 9 for a more detailed analysis). For Jordan, the inability to provide meaningful opportunities for its youthful and growing population to contribute to and benefit from the labour market presents a strategic risk, not only to economic development, but also potentially to social and political stability.

Recognizing the urgency for action, Jordan has made TVET a top political priority, integrating it into the national development policy agenda and introducing a raft of institutional and policy reforms to further strengthen the existing operational framework. With TVET streams incorporated into secondary education in schools, and the provision of TVET spread among a wide range of public and private actors, the subsector has, however, been characterized by fragmentation and a lack of coordination, undermining its impact. The merging of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Research (MoHESR) into one Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MoEHRD)[136] represents a significant reform to address coordination challenges and streamline governance of the subsector.

A far-reaching reform has been the expansion of school-level vocational education and the introduction of the Business Technology and Education Council programme for school-based vocational education in 2023/2024. With the overall aim of strengthening the quality and relevance of TVET at this level, the roll-out has entailed formidable capacity development implications to ensure that anticipated quality improvements are achieved, and that students are increasingly attracted to join and complete this stream.

Enrolment in TVET remains low as a percentage of total secondary enrolment, and data at all levels show narrowing but continuing disparities in female/male enrolment. Subject choice is also highly gendered in line with traditional male and female roles, although females consistently outperform males in learning outcomes across all areas of specialization, indicating a need for gender-responsive approaches in TVET going forward. Demand and supply-side measures to enable more non-Jordanian nationals and people with disabilities to access TVET are strengthening the inclusiveness of the subsector.

This chapter first provides an overview of the TVET landscape in Jordan, including the legal framework, key actors, service providers, governance systems and coordination mechanisms for the subsector. It then analyses access and equity patterns for the various TVET provider systems, as well as quality issues affecting outcomes. The chapter also reviews the cost, expenditure and financing of TVET.

136 Based on the official memo issued by the Prime Minister on 30 April 2024 summarizing the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers at its session held on 24 April 2024 and the foreseen next steps.

7.1. Overview of the TVET subsector in Jordan

7.1.1. Legal, policy and regulatory framework

Jordan has a strong foundational policy and legal framework for TVET expansion and quality improvement, as outlined in the subsection below.

Internationally, Jordan is committed to SDG4, which includes three specific targets on skills for work and entrepreneurship, focusing on access to and equity in TVET, as well as increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.

At the national level, Jordan has signalled the significance of TVET as a high-level national political priority, by positioning it strategically in national development policies, plans and strategies. These include the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) for Jordan (2023-2033) and its related Women Empowerment Strategy;[137] Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy; the National Youth Strategy (NYS) (2025); and the National Strategy for Human Resource Development (NSHRD) (2016-2025).

The Jordan National TVET Strategy (JNTS) (2023-2027) and its Triple 888 TVET Reform Plan[138] provide a unified plan for TVET stakeholders and providers. Clearly aligned with SDG4 and the Economic Modernisation Vision, the strategy's main objectives are to: promote skills acquisition; enhance the governance, quality, and relevance of TVET systems; and to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning.[139]

The MoE is strengthening the inclusiveness of the TVET policy framework by enhancing access for refugees and students with disabilities to the Business Technology and Education Council (BTEC) programme. This is guided by the recently launched National Framework on Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2025). On the other hand, the Vocational Training Corporation has included persons with disabilities in its strategic plan and is cooperating with the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in vocational training programmes.

At the ministry level, vocational education (VE) constitutes one of the six domains (Domain 6) of the Ministry of Education's (MoE) Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2018-2025), anchoring TVET as a priority within the school system. TVET is also a principal domain of the MoE's Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education and its Action Plan (2023-2025), where enhancing gender equality and female participation in TVET is a principal strategic goal. Under the TVET domain, the GEAP+ focuses on promoting gender balance in the management of VE; promoting equal learning opportunities and improving access of girls and boys to non-traditional VE streams; and ensuring learning contents, processes and environments in VE are free from gender bias.

In a key TVET policy reform, the MoE has adopted the Business Technology and Education Council (BTEC) framework for its new vocational education programme for upper basic and secondary grades (Grades 10, 11 and 12), with a view to increasing the proportion of secondary students opting for school-based vocational education (VE). The internationally recognized BTEC qualifications, which are being rolled out in a phased approach, starting with Grade 10 in 2023/2024, are specifically designed to develop and apply knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to employers and to higher education. BTEC will fully replace the national programme by the 2025/2026 school year, with the

137 The Women Empowerment Strategy aims to enhance the participation of women in the marketplace, increase their participation in economic decision-making and mainstream gender-related issues in public institutions and the private sector.
138 National TVET Strategy 2023–2027 – Jordan TVET Reform Plan.
139 tvsdc.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/ar/eb_list_page/2023-2027_الاستراتيجية_الوطنية_الأردنية_للتعليم_والتدريب_المهني_والتقني.pdf

last cohort of students graduating from the Grade 12 national VE programme in 2024/2025.

The Jordan National Qualifications Framework (JNQF) (2019) provides the TVET subsector with a robust unifying regulatory foundation. It is a ten-level, learning outcomes-based, comprehensive framework spanning qualifications from general education, TVET and higher education, which promotes consistency and transparency across various programmes and providers.

The Licensing and Accreditation Instructions for Vocational and Technical Training Institutions in Jordan (2013) provide a clear framework for licensing and accreditation of all vocational and technical training institutions (public and private), which are required to align their programmes and outcomes with national education and labour market goals. Similar instructions are also provided for the licensing and operations of technical universities and colleges.[140]

Work-Based Learning (WBL) programmes are governed by a set of standards for licensing[141] in TVET institutions, issued by the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC) in 2023, which established standards for different types of WBL programmes, such as on-the-job training, apprenticeships and internships.[142]

The TVSDC is also leading efforts to standardize Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Jordan. Through partnerships, TVSDC develops guides, assessment tools and certification processes to recognize skills gained through experience, particularly for workers in the informal sector. The aim is to formalize skills, align with national economic goals and issue occupational licences, while enhancing lifelong learning and work opportunities for vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion.

Career guidance and counselling is based on the new National Strategy for Career and Vocational Guidance and Counselling (2024-2033), developed by the TVSDC and endorsed by the government in 2024. The strategy provides policy and programme directions and priorities for career guidance in Jordan, as well as, for the first time in Jordan, professional occupational standards for career guidance counsellors, vocational trainers and career guidance and employment counsellors in educational institutions.

7.1.2. Key TVET pathways and actors

Pathways

There are three different educational pathways to participate in TVET programmes in Jordan. Figure 7.1 shows the education cycles and pathways of the Jordanian education system linked to TVET. As shown in the diagram, public TVET can be: (i) school-based, through a vocational track as of Grade 10 of upper basic education; (ii) non-formal, through the Vocational Training Corporation and other public and private vocational training institutions and centres; or (iii) through higher education institutions. Private sector providers also complement public TVET service delivery.

The MoHESR is currently mapping and expanding its technical diploma-level specializations against those offered by the BTEC, to enhance educational pathways for secondary school students who will graduate from BTEC in 2025/2026.

The merging of the MoE and MoHESR under the MoEHRD[143] is expected to further strengthen the linkages between the different pathways.

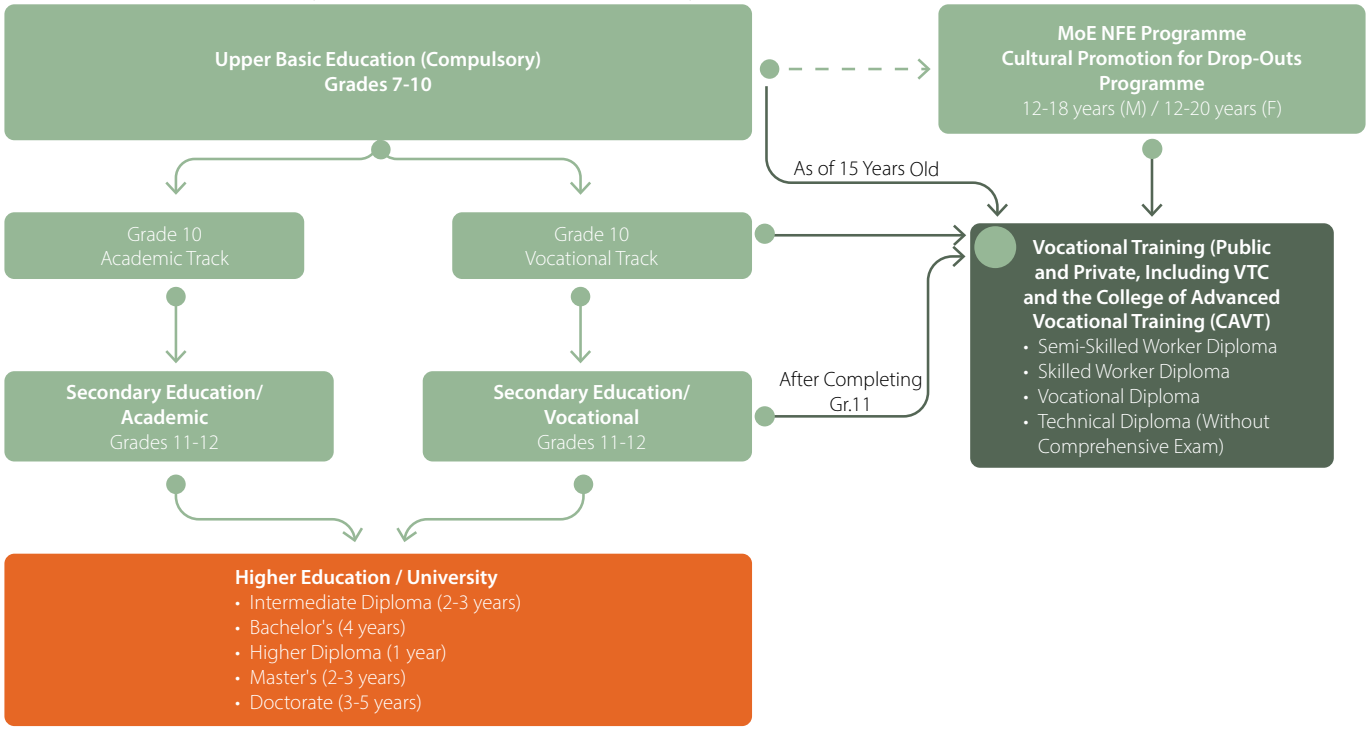
140 (AQACHEI, 2007) اعتماد الجامعات - هيئة اعتماد مؤسسات التعليم العالي وضمان جودتها

141 معايير_اعتماد_البرامج_التدريبية_للتعلم_القائم_على_العمل_لسنة_2023.pdf (Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission, 2023).

142 These standards were issued based on the Act on the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (Act No. 9 of 2019) (Article 3(3)(3)).

143 Based on the official memo issued by the Prime Minister on 30 April 2024 summarizing the taken by the Council of Ministers at its session held on 24 April 2024 and the foreseen next steps.

Figure 7.1. Education system and learning pathways in Jordan



Source: Authors.

The TVET subsector is characterized by a diverse landscape of TVET providers and regulatory bodies, giving rise to significant coordination challenges as detailed in the sub-sections below.

TVET providers

For school-based TVET, the MoE is the principal policy-making and implementation body, providing vocational education in Grades 10, 11 and 12 at Jordanian National Qualifications Framework (JNQF) levels 2 and 3.

Outside the school sector, the Vocational Training Corporation, currently a financially and administratively independent structure affiliated with the Ministry of Labour (MoL),[144] runs 31 vocational training institutes across the country[145] and provides vocational training at JNQF levels 2, 3 and 4.

The MoHESR oversees the Al-Balqa' Applied University and other universities and colleges that provide technical diplomas, such as public community colleges, military colleges, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) teacher college and private colleges. The MoHESR is responsible for the overall policy and financing of technical universities and colleges.

In addition, the Al-Balqa' Applied University supervises the 22 community (university) colleges that provide post-secondary education and award technical training diplomas at JNFQ levels 5 and 6, overseeing their academic, institutional and technical aspects.

Al Hussein Technical University is a major TVET provider in Jordan, affiliated with the Crown Prince Foundation, and specializes in applied technical education in fields such as engineering and computing. The College of Advanced Vocational Training, developed with Al Hussein Technical University and endorsed by the government in 2022, aims to enhance the TVET

144 Act No. 11 of 1985.

145 In addition to that, 11 vocational training institutes are run by the College of Advanced Vocational Training/Al Hussein Technical University based on the partnership agreement between the Vocational Training Corporation and Al Hussein Technical University.

sector by developing high-quality, relevant and affordable programmes. The College of Advanced Vocational Training runs seven branches across Jordan, providing diplomas at JNQF levels 3, 4 and 5.

Within the private sector, a key TVET provider is the National Employment and Training Company, a Public Private Partnership (PPP) operated jointly by the MoL, the Jordanian Armed Forces and the private sector. The National Employment and Training Company owns 19 vocational training centres which offer 111 training programmes (including the Business Technology and Education Council/Pearson) at JNQF levels 2, 3 and 4 to youth aged 17–29 years. Its institutes can enrol up to 4,000 students per year (2,000 students per training round).

Other TVET providers include nine military colleges, two UNRWA-run training centres, as well as private schools and colleges, and NGO/development partner supported projects. The Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission oversees and is responsible for accrediting TVET programmes and issuing licences to both public and private TVET providers. As part of its regulatory mandate, it monitors TVET programmes to ensure the quality of outputs and enhance compliance with best institutional practices, in accordance with national development goals.

TVET governance bodies

In a key reform, TVET regulatory responsibilities are to be consolidated into one Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, which will oversee licensing, occupational standards and quality assurance and promote the engagement of sector skills councils and the private sector. The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission will merge three currently separate bodies for a more harmonized approach to TVET governance. The three bodies are the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission,[146] a semi-independent body currently affiliated with the MoL, the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions and the MoE's Educational Quality and Accountability Unit.

Covering a range of sectors, the National Sector Skills Councils, set up under the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission, also play a significant role in the governance of the TVET system, by involving industries in sectoral skill assessments and strategies, training, curriculum development, work-based learning, quality assessment and certification.

Other TVET stakeholders include leading industry and professional bodies, such as the Amman Chamber of Industry, Jordan Chamber of Industry, Jordan Strategy Forum, Jordan Engineers Association and General Federation of Trade Unions.

On the knowledge generation side, the National Centre for Human Resources Development, a semi-independent non-profit organization, conducts education-related research, including on the gaps between skill demand and supply, in cooperation with National Sector Skills Councils.

146 https://tvsdc.gov.jo/

7.1.3. TVET coordination and leadership

As can be clearly seen from the overview of institutional actors above, TVET in Jordan, as in many countries, is complex, multifaceted, and challenging to organize into one coherent system. The various TVET delivery types coexist with different degrees of integration or fragmentation, which can hinder the effective coordination of national TVET policy development and implementation. Addressing this fragmentation and enhancing coordination between the various bodies is critical to achieving a more efficient, effective and inclusive TVET system.

Mechanisms to support effective coordination are lacking, exacerbated by the absence of well-defined governance structures, weak management and institutional capacities. In particular, the absence of a robust database that systematically collects and analyses data on TVET is a significant constraint, contributing to mismatches between skills supply and labour market demand (Jordan, Ministry of Education, and UNESCO, 2023).

The merger of the MoE and MoHESR into one ministry, the MoEHRD, is expected to improve TVET coordination and cooperation. A separate TVET administration under this new ministry, headed by a secretary-general for TVET, will help to bring all TVET providers and bodies under one unified leadership and governance umbrella.

The Jordan National TVET Strategy (2023–2027), mentioned above, also has the potential to facilitate a more unified governance and action framework that integrates the various institutions and types of TVET provision. Currently led by the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission, the Jordan National TVET Strategy supports improving communication and coordination among different providers, optimizing the management of resources and eventually improving student learning outcomes. Under the strategy, the Triple 888 TVET Reform Plan provides an online platform designed to support the TVET sector. By compiling and monitoring the various ongoing and future TVET programmes, initiatives and projects in the country, the Triple 888 platform aims to ensure investment diversity and that projects meet priority needs and are not duplicated.

In 2024, the MoE also launched a Thematic Group on TVET under the coordination structure of the Education Strategic Plan. Co-chaired by the MoE and development partner representatives, and with wide representation from key national and international partner organizations that support Jordan's TVET reforms, the group provides a platform to improve coordination and information-sharing between TVET stakeholders and partners, as well as joint strategic planning and implementation.

7.2. Access and equity in TVET

This section analyses enrolment data relating to the three main types of TVET provision: school-based vocational education; non-formal vocational training run by the Vocational Training Centre; and technical education in higher education institutes. While gender is mainstreamed in each sub-section, equity patterns are further analysed in section 8.2.4.

For the enrolment analysis, the number of learners per 100,000 inhabitants was not calculated. This indicator, commonly used in TVET and international comparisons, helps assess system coverage. However, due to challenges with population data in Jordan, this indicator was not calculated, and hence an international comparison was not possible.

7.2.1. Participation in school-based vocational education

Enrolment trends

Participation in formal vocational education at secondary level remains modest despite ongoing reform efforts, although these are still at too early a stage to assess their impact. With Jordan rolling out its major policy reform at this level as it expands vocational education to Grade 10 and switches to the new Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) programme from 2023/2024, the analysis below is subdivided into pre- and post-BTEC figures, given that it is still too early to draw comparative conclusions from the change.

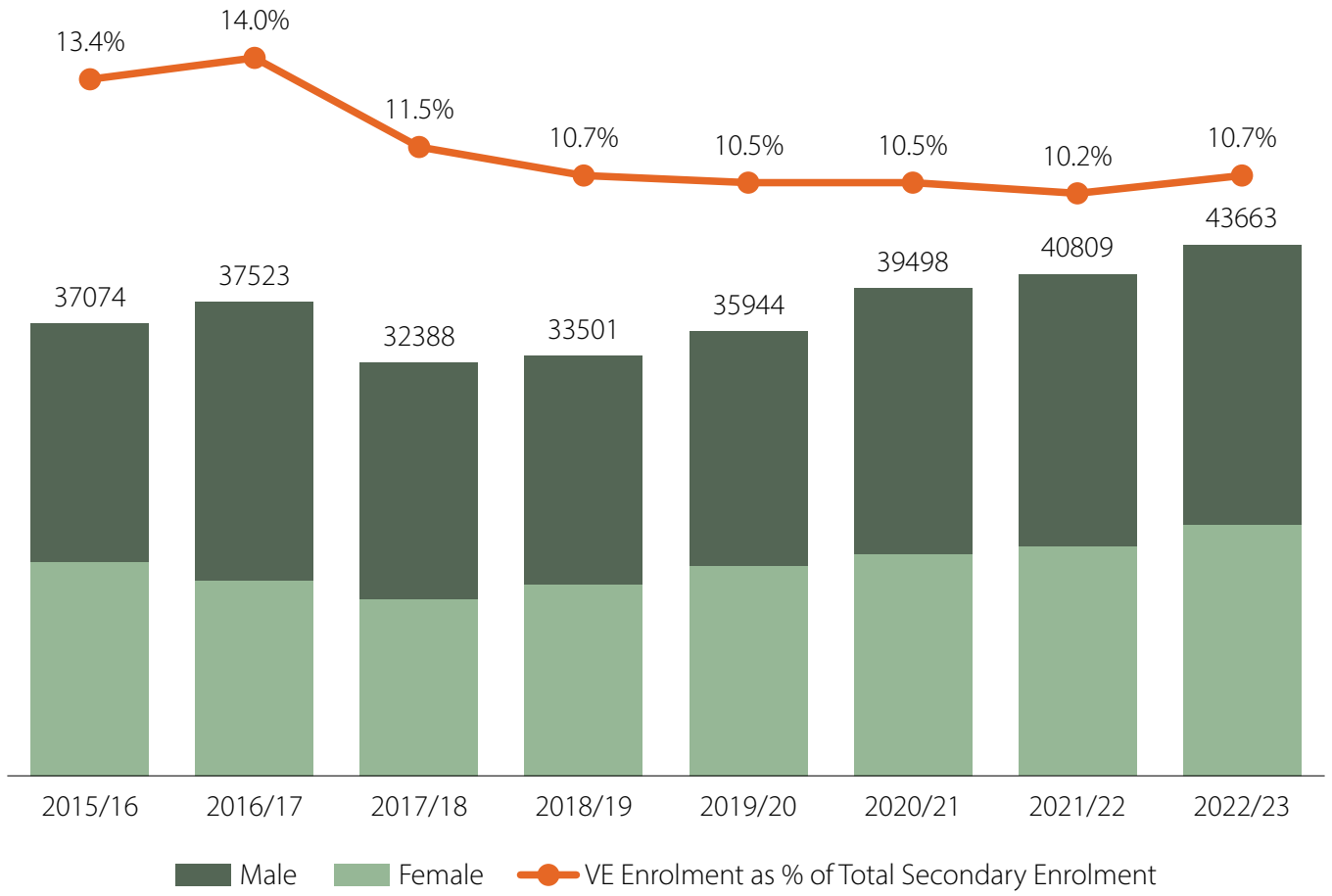
Enrolment trends in the national vocational education programme, pre-BTEC (outgoing model)

The national vocational education programme was offered in Grades 11 and 12 in 216 MoE public schools until the 2024/2025 school year, with four major vocational streams: agriculture, hospitality and tourism, household economics and industry. Formal vocational education is also provided in 32 private schools and in 4 public military schools.

Enrolment data for the national vocational education programme prior to the BTEC programme show modest but steady upward growth, from 25,386 students (48.5% female) enrolled in 2015/2016 to 29,801 students (47.6% female) in 2022/2023, indicating an average annual growth rate of 2.3%. Despite the few fluctuations observed, there is a rise in enrolment towards the end of the period, particularly from 2020/2021 to 2022/2023, marking a positive trend.

However, while the number of vocational education students has grown in absolute terms, the vocational education share of total secondary education enrolment has not increased commensurately. Enrolment ranged from a high of 14% in 2016/2017, to a low of 10.2% in 2021/2022, with an overall average of 11% for the period (see **Figure 7.2**). Growth in vocational education numbers has been outweighed by a stronger increase in general secondary enrolments, which recorded an average annual growth rate of 6.2% compared to just 2.3% for vocational education, lending further urgency to reform efforts to attract more students to this track, in accordance with policy goals.

Figure 7.2. Total number of students enrolled in vocational education and vocational education enrolments as a percentage of total secondary enrolment (2015/202016-2022/2023)



Source: MoE EMIS, 2024.

Enrolment trends in the new national vocational education BTEC programme

Given that the BTEC is a new programme, data on its implementation are only available for the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 school years,[147] which inform the preliminary analysis below. Regarding coverage, the MoE managed 310 schools (153 boys' schools and 157 girls' schools) across the country offering the BTEC programme as of the beginning of the 2024/2025 school year, with a combined capacity to enrol up to 20,450 students (see **Table 7.1**).

Table 7.1. MoE vocational education schools by region and sex, 2024

Region	Male	Female	Total
North	50	59	109
Middle	77	75	152
South	26	23	49
Total	**153**	**157**	**310**

Source: MoE data, 2024.

147 Data for 2024/2025 was collected in October 2024.

MoE data show that enrolment in BTEC Grade 10 in 2023/2024 reached a total of 17,478 students (65.7% male and 34.3% female), rising to 33,590 students in both Grades 10 and 11 in 2024/2025, showing a slight increase in female participation (37%). Vocational education enrolment in the different areas of specialization, presented in **Tables 7.2** and **7.3** below, shows indicative trends at this early stage of roll-out.

BTEC specializations for the secondary vocational education programme were selected based on a rapid labour market needs study conducted by Pearson in 2023, during the programme's inception phase, as well as an earlier study conducted by the MoE in 2022 entitled "Vocational Education in the Light of the Future Professions of Education and the Aspirations of the Labour Market". The MoE began implementing the BTEC programme in 2023/2024, with six areas of specialization: agriculture, business, engineering, hair and beauty, hospitality and information technology (IT). Another four areas, including art and design, construction, creative media and travel and tourism, were introduced in 2024/2025.

In 2023/2024, the three most pursued specializations for Grade 10 students were engineering, IT and business. Engineering, which was new to the MoE's vocational track, was the most popular, accounting for 28.2% of total enrolment. The overwhelming majority of these students were male (98.4%), suggesting a potential growth area for female participation. IT followed closely, accounting for 22.8% of total enrolment, and business (17%) ranked third. Both IT and business had a more balanced gender distribution, with participation spread more evenly between females and males in each case.

Enrolments in the least pursued specializations were highly gendered. The vast majority of students enrolled in hair and beauty were female (91.8%), while most students enrolled in agriculture (85.1%) and hospitality (87.1%) were male. However, initial findings from the gender analysis in the TVET sector in Jordan indicate a trend towards breaking traditional divisions in vocational education streams (UNESCO, 2025a). This is reflected in enrolment patterns, with boys accounting for 8.2% of students enrolled in hair and beauty and girls accounting for 14.9% of students in agriculture, which was never the case in the previous programme.

Table 7.2. Enrolment in BTEC Grade 10 by sex and specialization, 2023/2024

Area of specialization	Number of students enrolled			% male	% female	% students in specialization
	Male	Female	Total			
Engineering	4,849	78	4,927	98.4	1.6	28.2
Agriculture	1,515	265	1,780	85.1	14.9	10.2
Hospitality	1,221	181	1,402	87.1	12.9	8.0
Hair and beauty	189	2,130	2,319	8.2	91.8	13.3
Business	1,628	1,435	3,063	53.2	46.8	17.5
IT	2,087	1,900	3,987	52.3	47.7	22.8
Total	**11,489**	**5,989**	**17,478**	**65.7**	**34.3**	**100.0**

Source: MoE data, 2024.

Similar trends were seen in the new Grade 10 cohort in 2024/2025 (see **Table 7.3**). As in the first year of BTEC implementation, enrolment of new entrants in Grade 10 was highest for engineering, followed by IT, business, agriculture and hospitality. The specializations with the lowest enrolment were art and design, construction, travel and tourism and creative media. Subject specialization was again highly gendered, as discussed further below.

Table 7.3. Enrolment in the BTEC by grade, sex and specialization, 2024/2025

*	Grade 10			Grade 11			Total
	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	
IT	4,366	45	55	3,623	50	50	7,989
Business	3,135	46	54	2,639	50	50	5,774
Agriculture	1,466	13	87	1,436	18	82	2,902
Hair and beauty	2,077	100	0	2,052	93	7	4,129
Hospitality	1,150	11	89	1,218	14	86	2,368
Engineering	4,231	3	97	4,023	2	98	8,254
Creative media	143	26	74	0	0	0	143
Travel and tourism	262	27	73	0	0	0	262
Art and design	958	90	10	0	0	0	958
Construction	811	0	100	0	0	0	811
Total	**18,599**	**37**	**63**	**14,991**	**37**	**63**	**33,590**

Source: MoE data, 2024.

**Creative media, travel and tourism, art and design and construction were introduced in 2024/2025.*

The BTEC programme has expanded access to vocational education for non-Jordanian students. According to MoE data, a total of 1,838 non-Jordanian students (5.47% of total enrolment) enrolled in vocational education in 2024/2025, a track which had not been accessible to them under the previous programme. There are 1,236 non-Jordanian students in Grade 10 (new BTEC cohort) and 602 in Grade 11.

Gender in vocational education

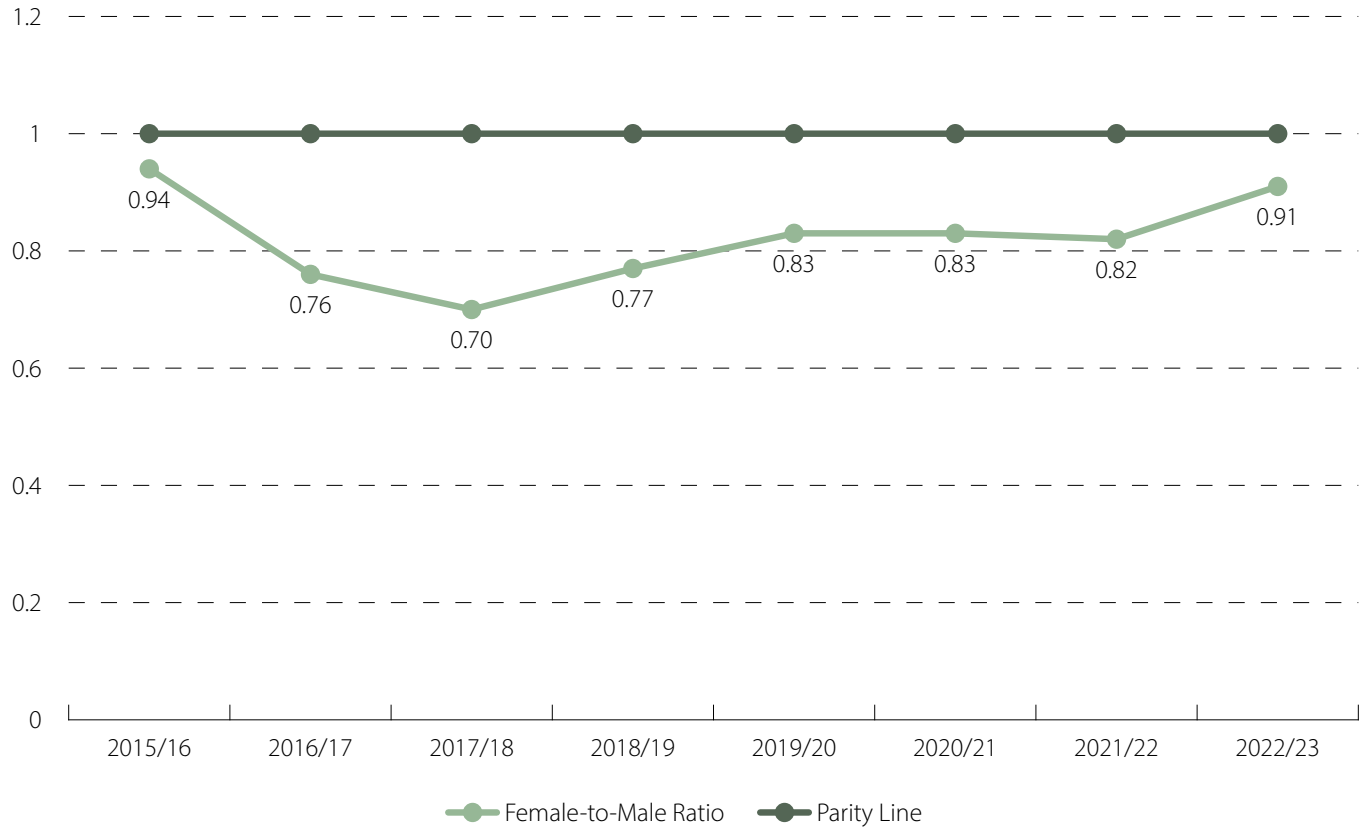
There are still fewer girls than boys in vocational education, although there has been progress in narrowing the gap recently. Average female participation in the national vocational education programme between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023 stood at 45% and was lower than the share of males every academic year (the average Gender Parity Index (GPI)[148] stood at 0.82). The ratio reached its lowest point in 2017/2018 (0.7), but since then has continued to improve, showing a gradual increase towards parity, reaching a GPI of 0.91 in 2022/2023. This upward trend observed from 2018/2019 onwards is a positive indication of progress towards narrowing the gender gap (see **Figure 7.3**).

Despite this recent progress, however, the GPI for vocational education has not yet recovered to the peak level of 0.94 attained in 2015/2016. By contrast, enrolment trends in the academic track show females having a significantly higher share of enrolment than males, with GPI reaching as high as 1.25. This disparity calls for

148 The GPI is the ratio of female/male value of a given indicator (in this case enrolment).

the need to strengthen demand-side initiatives to enhance female participation in vocational education, such as the implementation of career guidance and counselling, including awareness-raising sessions on vocational occupations, in earlier grades, as well as awareness-raising through the media.

Figure 7.3. Female/male ratio in secondary vocational education enrolment, 2015/2016–2022/2023



Source: MoE EMIS, 2024.

Females accounted for only 37% of total BTEC enrolment in 2024/2025, compared to 45% average female participation in vocational education between 2015/2016 and 2022/2023. While BTEC roll-out remains at an early stage, incentives must be strengthened to attract more young women to the vocational track, a key strategic objective in the MoE's TVET plans and reforms, and in the Women Empowerment Strategy of the Economic Modernisation Vision.

Enrolment figures by area of specialization show an apparent segregation by gender according to traditional "male" and "female" professions. For instance, between 2018/2019 and 2022/2023, no boys enrolled in household economics, and female participation in industry and hospitality specializations was low (Jordan, Ministry of Education, and UNESCO, 2023). A key factor is societal norms that direct boys and girls into "acceptable" areas of study along gender lines.

In addition, while the MoE has made all BTEC specializations open to both sexes, in practice some specializations are still not available in girls' or boys' schools. For example, based on MoE data, hair and beauty is offered only in girls' schools, while construction is offered only in boys' schools. Art and design is available in 38 girls' schools compared to 5 boys' schools, while agriculture is available in 20 boys' schools compared to five girls' schools.

One way to overcome this gap in vocational education is through the collaboration between the MoE and Vocational Training Corporation. Students whose choice of specialization may not be available in vocational education schools may join the equivalent programme in the Vocational Training Corporation. This provides a pathway, for example, for a male student who wants to enrol in hair and beauty, or a female student who wants to enrol in construction, to access their preferred specialization.

7.2.2. Participation in non-formal vocational training

This section focuses on enrolment trends in the Vocational Training Corporation as the main provider of vocational training in the country. Vocational training leads to certificates corresponding to NQF levels 2, 3 and 4, which may be awarded by the Vocational Training Corporation and other accredited public private training providers, such as the National Employment and Training Company.[149,150] Vocational Training Corporation courses and programmes are designed for learners aged 16 years and above.

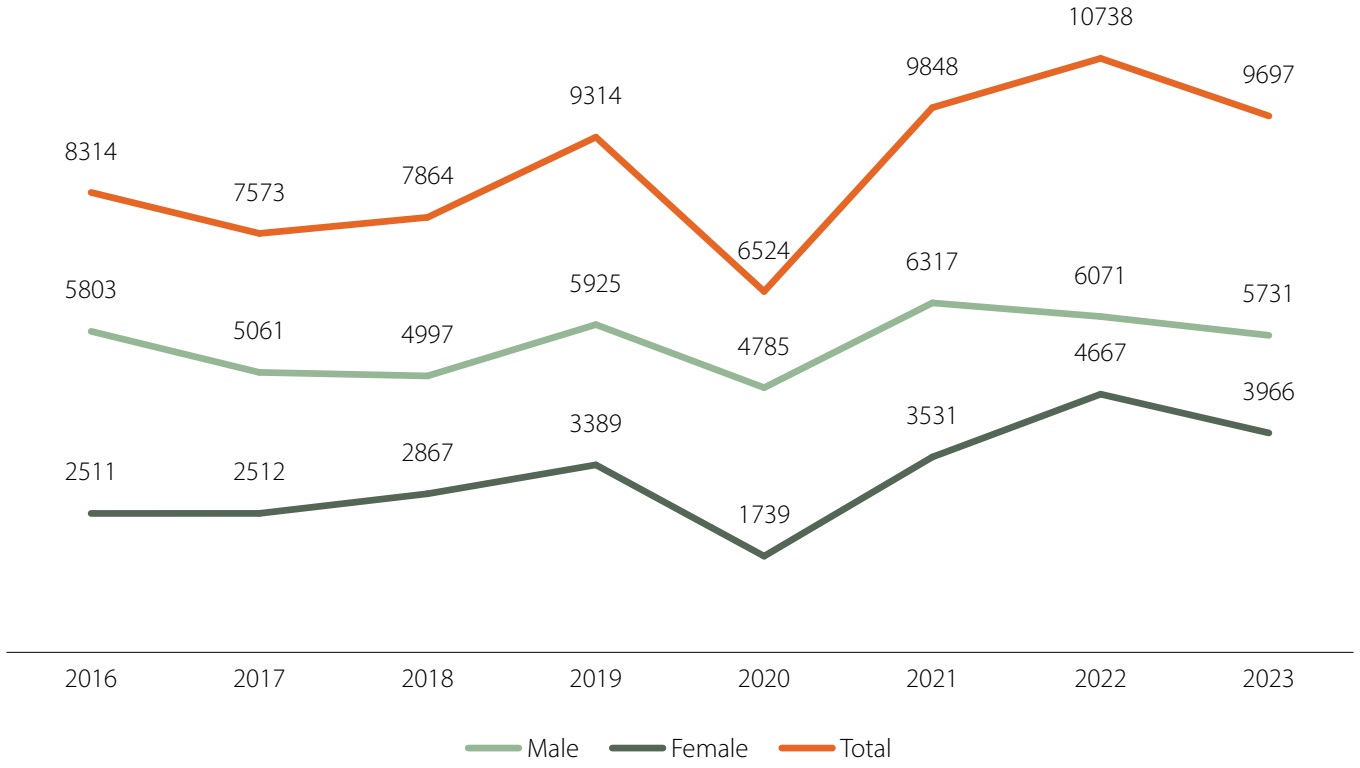
Enrolment trends in the Vocational Training Corporation

Enrolment trends in the Vocational Training Corporation have witnessed significant growth in recent years, growing by nearly 17% between 2016 and 2023. Enrolment peaked in 2022 (with a total of 10,738 learners), rebounding after a steep drop of 30% in 2020, most likely linked to closure of the training centres during the COVID-19 pandemic (see **Figure 7.4**). There was a slight decline in both female and male enrolment in 2023. This could be attributed to the agreement between the Vocational Training Corporation and Al Hussein Technical University that was signed in 2023, under which 11 Vocational Training Corporation institutes were placed under the management of Al Hussein Technical University therefore leading to lower enrolment in the Vocational Training Corporation.

149 According to the records of the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission, it has accredited 277 private and public training providers/institutes to date; 185 are in the Middle region, 59 in the North and 33 in the South.

150 While it is beyond the time frame of the present education sector analysis, it is worth noting that 3,263 students were enrolled in the various diploma programmes of the College of Advanced Vocational Training during its first year of operation in 2024/2025.

Figure 7.4. Enrolment in the Vocational Training Corporation by sex, all nationalities, 2016–2023



Source: Vocational Training Corporation data, 2024.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, nearly three-quarters of enrolled learners (74.1%) fall in the youngest age group (16-33 years), though figures are highly gendered. While males account for the vast majority of enrolments for the 16–33 age group (73.5%), females have higher enrolment numbers in the upper age groups, with social norms around marriage and child-care roles, as well as the lack of transportation services, potentially leading women to defer their studies (see **Table 7.4**).

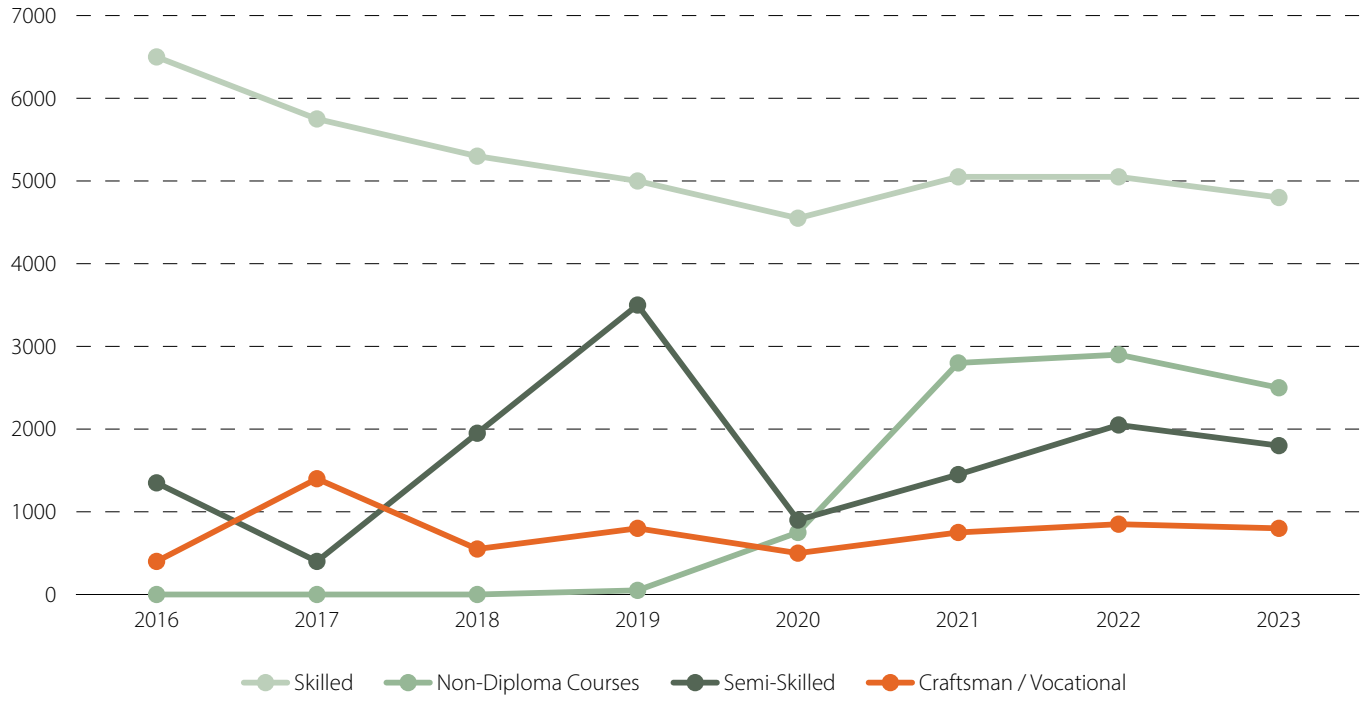
Table 7.4. Vocational Training Corporation learners' age groups, 2024

Learner age range	16–33	24–33	34–43	44–53	54–63	64–73	74–83
Total	**57,588**	**13,612**	**41,77**	**1,858**	**425**	**22**	**3**
Females (%)	26.51	67.67	73.86	69.16	67.29	54.55	66.67

Source: VTC data, 2024

Between 2016 and 2023, the majority of learners in the Vocational Training Corporation enrolled in courses and programmes leading to skilled worker qualifications, although there is an upward trend for the semi-skilled qualifications programmes, especially for females. Programmes leading to craftsperson qualifications (vocational diplomas) have the lowest participation for both genders (see **Figure 7.5**).

Figure 7.5. Enrolment in the Vocational Training Corporation by diploma type, all nationalities, 2016–2023



Source: VTC data, 2024.

Gender and equity

Female enrolment in the Vocational Training Corporation is generally lower than male enrolment across the board, although it has been steadily growing towards parity, despite a drop in 2020. Females accounted for 43.5% of total enrolment in 2022, but male enrolment is consistently much higher than female enrolment in the skilled diploma programmes.

While Vocational Training Corporation courses are open to non-Jordanians and refugees and the Vocational Training Corporation has improved its outreach policies targeting refugees, the enrolment rates of these groups remain generally low and declined sharply in 2023 following years of steady growth. From a low of less than 1% of total enrolment in 2016, the participation of refugees, according to Vocational Training Corporation records, rose to a high of 9.4% in 2022, dropping to just 2.9% in 2023. This is mainly due to a general decrease in external funding support for refugee education programmes in Jordan.

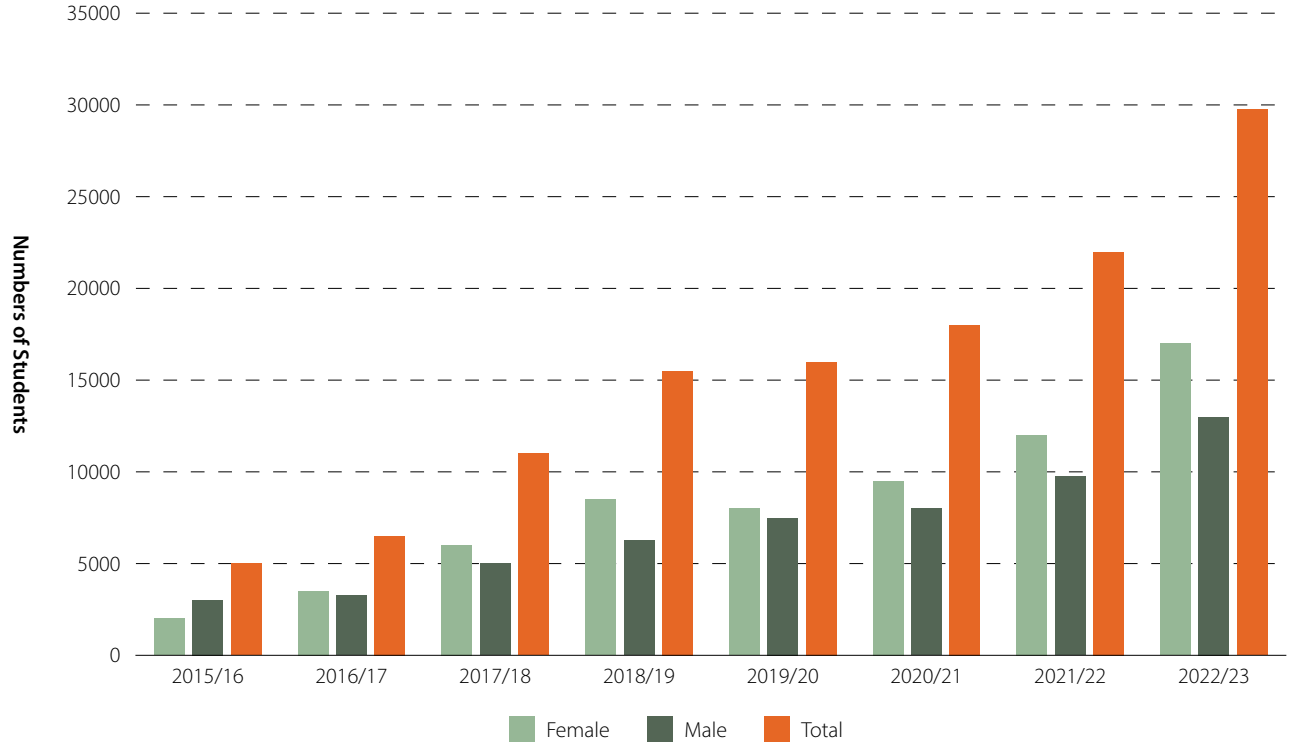
7.2.3. Participation in technical education in higher education institutes

Technical education in Jordan refers to post-secondary academic programmes that focus on practical and applied skills in various technical fields, typically offered through community colleges or technical universities. According to the MoHESR definition, it leads to qualifications such as the technical diploma awarded after at least two years of study beyond secondary education.

Enrolment trends

Enrolment in technical education in higher education institutes witnessed a significant increase from 5,311 in 2015/2016 to 29,935 in 2022/2023, with a significant rise in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. The average annual growth rate stood at 23.26% per year, indicating substantial and steady growth momentum (see **Figure 7.6**).

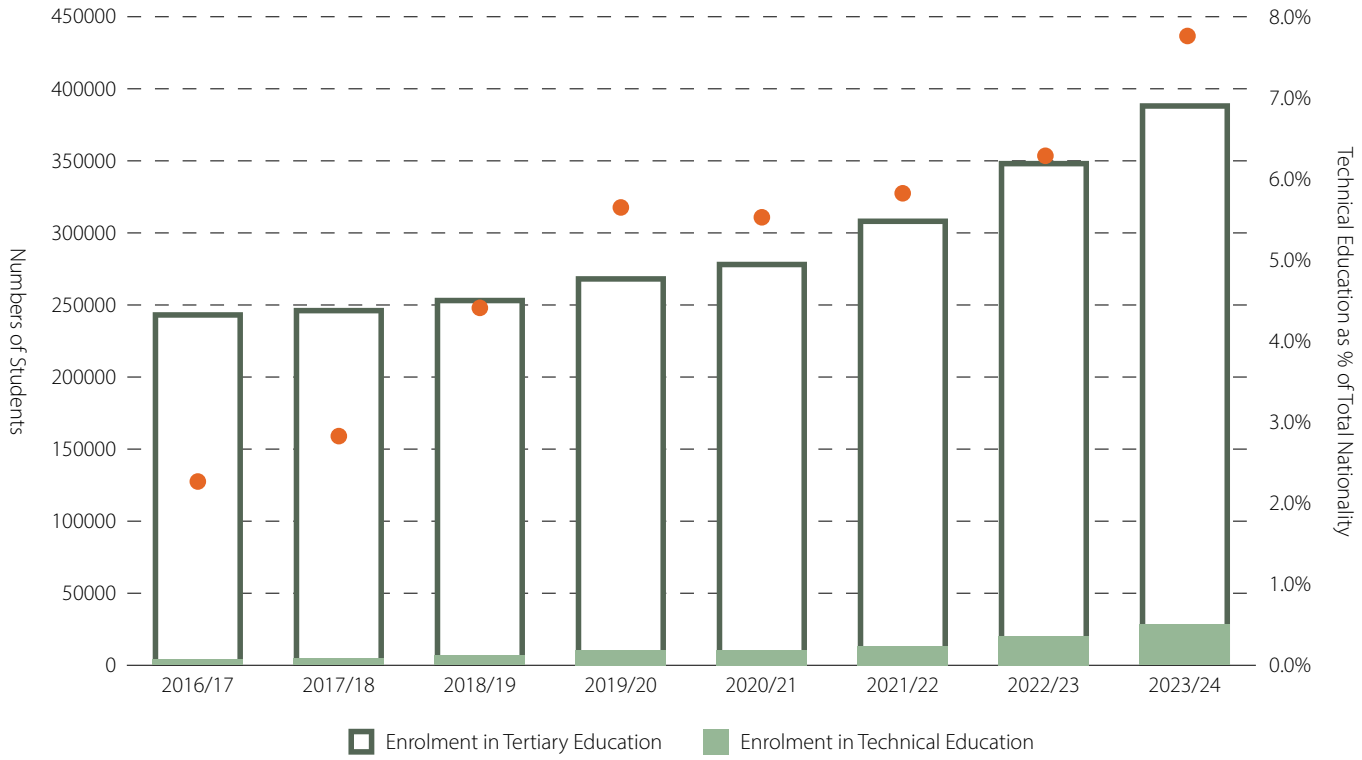
Figure 7.6. Enrolment in technical education by sex, all nationalities, 2015/2016–2022/2023



Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

This growth is also reflected in an increase in the share of technical education out of total tertiary education enrolment during the observed period (see **Figure 7.7**). While technical education constituted just 2.2% of total tertiary enrolment in 2016, it had risen to 7.7% in 2023.

Figure 7.7. Enrolment in technical education compared to total enrolment in tertiary education, 2016–2023



Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

An analysis of enrolment trends by diploma type shows that the intermediate diploma dominates enrolment in technical education, ranging between 90 and 99% of total enrolment. Other diploma types, such as the vocational diploma, recorded much smaller enrolment numbers.

7.2.4. Equity issues across the TVET subsector

The participation of groups most vulnerable to exclusion from TVET remains very low; however, serious reform efforts are being made to address equity issues in the TVET sector, as detailed below.

Female participation in formal vocational education at the secondary level has been lower than male participation across the different types and levels of training, as indicated in the analysis of vocational education enrolment data. Moreover, there is a clear gender segregation when it comes to specializations, whereby males and females usually opt for "traditional" occupations and specializations based on their gender. Enhancing female participation in TVET remains a main government priority, and several initiatives and plans are under way to support this strategic goal.

To address gender-based occupational segregation and enhance female participation in the workforce, the MoE has strengthened gender-responsive career guidance and early awareness campaigns in recent years. Efforts have included incentives for students to pursue non-traditional vocational paths and targeted activities for female students and parents, such as awareness-raising sessions, competitions and initiatives like BTEC Ambassadors, in which female graduates of vocational education programmes share their experiences. These efforts align with the Economic Modernisation Vision, its Women Empowerment Strategy and the Gender Equality Action Plan under the Education Strategic Plan.

Traditionally, vocational education in MoE public schools has not been accessible to all learners. The limited enrolment capacity of the schools has led to the exclusion of several vulnerable groups, such as refugees, from the national vocational education programme. In addition, the national vocational education programme was not adapted to students with disabilities in terms of school infrastructure and accessibility, curricula, learning materials and teacher training, therefore preventing their participation.

The introduction of the BTEC vocational education programme and the ongoing TVET reforms are supporting the expansion of vocational education in MoE schools and making it more accessible to the groups most vulnerable to exclusion. In 2024/2025, 1,838 non-Jordanian students (40% female) enrolled in the BTEC. The MoE is also adapting several specializations for students with disabilities by mapping their needs and adjusting in schools to make them accessible. Moreover, 500 teachers were trained in 2023 on inclusion and diversity in education, including methodologies for dealing with students with disabilities in vocational schools, and 10 vocational schools have been equipped to receive students with disabilities (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2024). These initiatives are meant to be scaled up in the coming years and are aligned with the National Framework on Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan, launched by the MoE in 2025 (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2025).

For non-formal vocational training in the Vocational Training Corporation, refugee enrolment has grown, while participation of students with disabilities remains low. While refugees accounted for only 0.5% of the total share of enrolment in the Vocational Training Corporation in 2016, they accounted for 9.4% in 2022 (with females constituting 48.4% of the cohort's total enrolment), indicating considerable growth. As for students with disabilities, while data on enrolment in the Vocational Training Corporation do not include this level of disaggregation, data on graduation suggest low participation of students with disabilities in vocational training (see **Table 7.5**), although a package of inclusion-friendly demand and supply side initiatives being implemented across all governorates may increase these numbers in the future.[151]

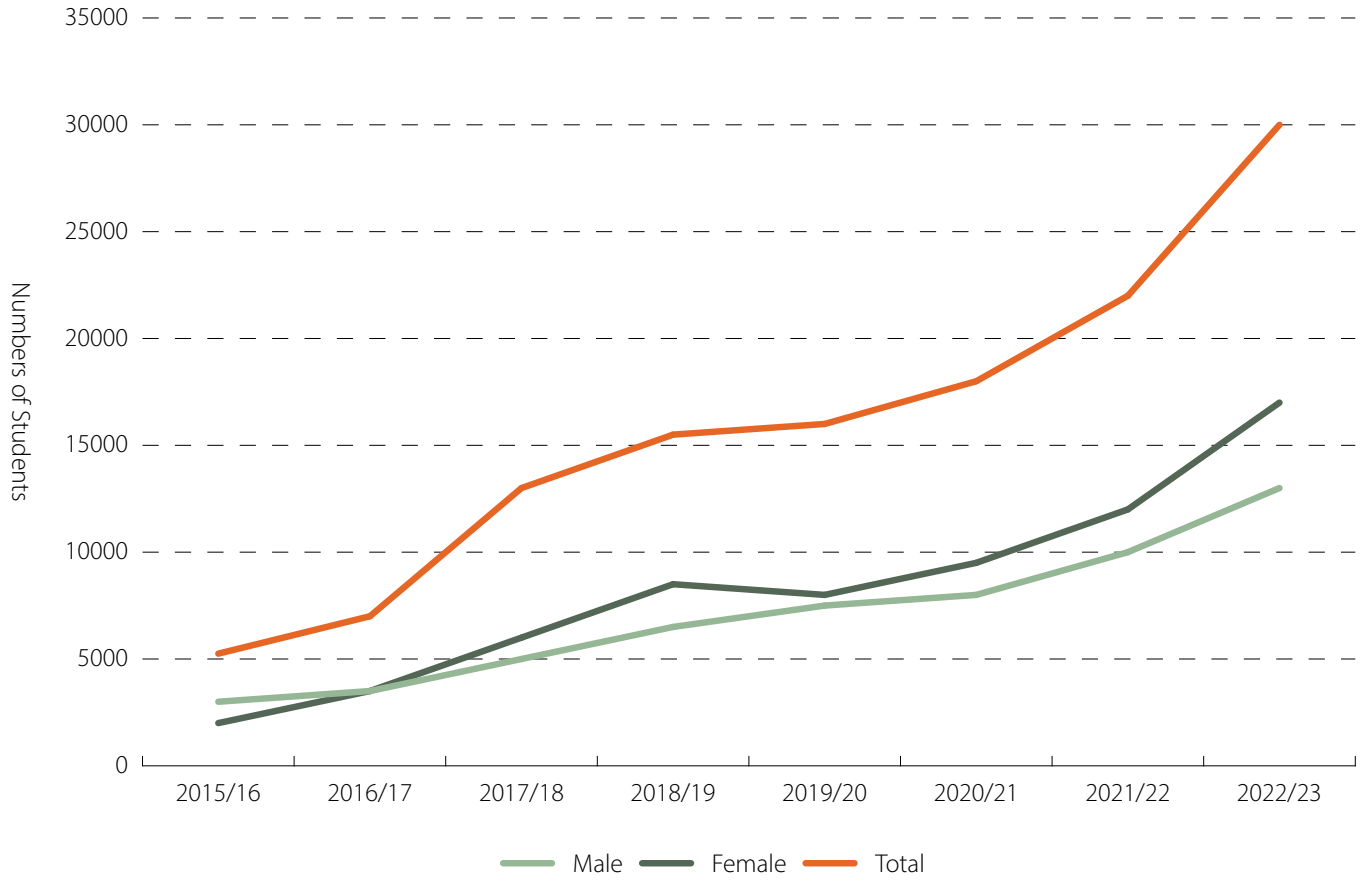
Table 7.5. Students with disabilities who graduated from the Vocational Training Corporation (2016–2023)

Year	Number of students
2016	120
2017	115
2018	109
2019	111
2020	96
2021	80
2022	112
2023	120

Source: Vocational Training Corporation data, 2024.

151 Key measures include fee exemption and provision of stipends; updating the Vocational Training Corporation admission policy to expand inclusion; and adapting infrastructure, training programmes and curricula to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities, with five Vocational Training Corporations equipped to become disability-friendly institutes of excellence.

Figure 7.8. Enrolment in technical education by sex, all nationalities, 2015/2016–2022/2023



Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

At the technical education level, the participation of non-Jordanians has also been very low in comparison to the enrolment of Jordanians, although it has increased in recent years. While Jordanian nationals account for more than 98% of enrolment during the observed period, enrolment of non-Jordanians increased from 104 students in 2016 to 410 in 2023. The technical education system in Jordan therefore primarily serves Jordanian nationals, with limited participation from foreign students. While this trend is partly linked to the social perception of academic education being more favoured by students and their parents, the limited participation of non-Jordanians may also be due to the limited occupational options they can pursue after graduation, as several industry sectors and jobs in Jordan are not open to migrants and refugees.

7.2.5. Social perception of TVET in Jordan

In Jordan, as in many other countries, TVET continues to be perceived as a less prestigious and less desirable educational path compared to academic routes. Societal norms linking TVET to low status and poor career prospects lead many youths to pursue a university education, even when it mismatches labour market needs. This limits TVET enrolment and contributes to youth unemployment, despite strong demand for TVET skills (Jordan, Ministry of Education, and UNESCO, 2023). Furthermore, findings from the TVET gender analysis underscore the significant impact of cultural norms and structural barriers on vocational education in Jordan and on the ongoing gender-based occupational segregation within vocational education, which illustrates societal mechanisms of control and highlights the constraints placed on individual will (UNESCO, 2025a).

The MoE is leading several initiatives to address these perceptions and ultimately enhance youth participation in TVET and improve employment outcomes. Recent efforts include a review of career guidance in Jordan and the development of a new, inclusive and gender-sensitive career guidance model and tools; enhancing private sector engagement and work-based learning by developing practical and market-based vocational models in collaboration with the private sector; carrying out a TVET gender analysis; and launching a national media and awareness-raising campaign in close cooperation with TVET partners and stakeholders to improve the public image of vocational education and promote TVET as a relevant and valuable pathway for both boys and girls, especially in the light of the newly introduced BTEC programme.

7.3. Quality of TVET provision

This section analyses the quality of TVET provision based on the analytical framework introduced in Chapter 4, taking into consideration how the quality of learning outcomes is impacted by education inputs and processes and shaped by contextual factors in the enabling environment, such as the legal framework, and cultural and social norms.

7.3.1. Quality outcomes in school-based vocational education

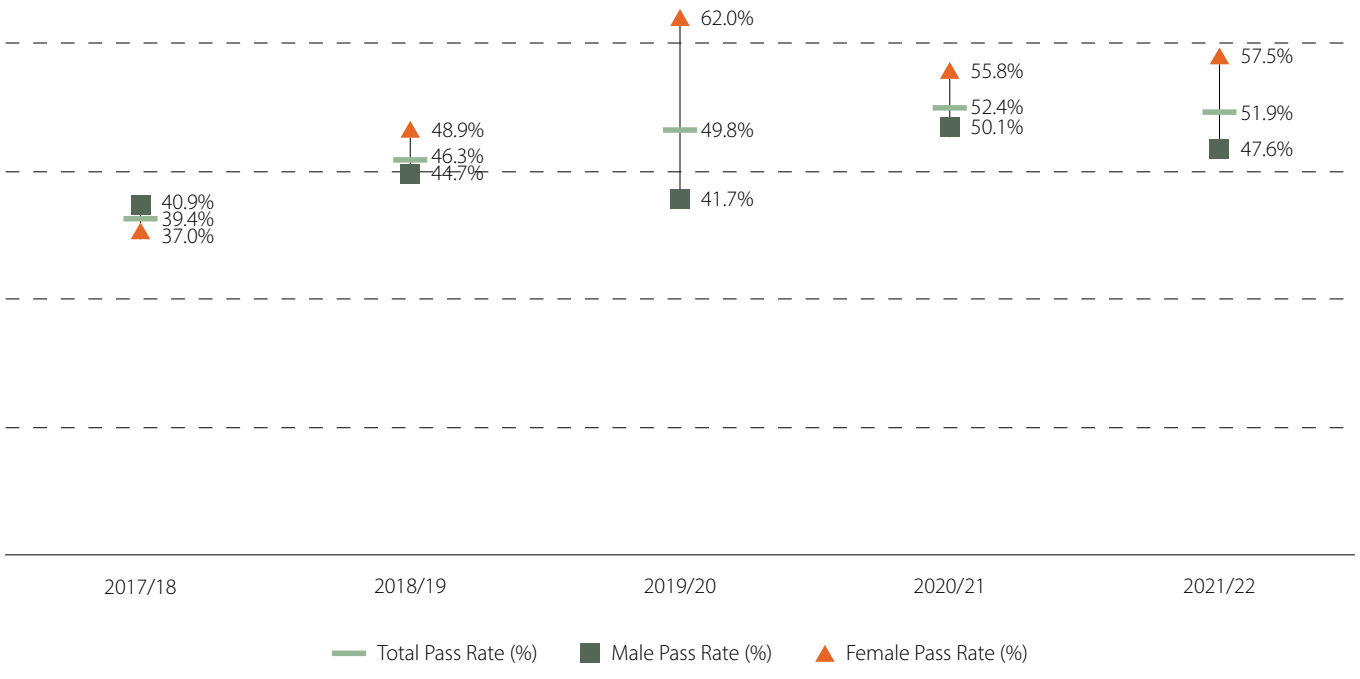
While the MoE does not collect data on repetition, dropouts and retention within the national vocational education programme (since secondary education is not compulsory in Jordan), it does collect data on pass rates for the vocational track in the national secondary school exam (Tawjihi) (see **Figure 7.9**). The pass rate can thus be used as a proxy indicator for internal efficiency and an indication of quality outcomes.

As in the section on access to vocational education, the data is analysed in two clusters: firstly, for the period prior to the introduction of the BTEC programme (2017/2018–2021/2022), and subsequently, for the first year of BTEC implementation (2023/2024).

Learning outcomes for vocational education prior to introduction of the BTEC

Assessment data show steady improvements in pass rates in formal secondary vocational education. Pass rates in the general secondary exam (vocational track) have steadily increased over the period from 2018 to 2022. The average annual growth rate stood at 7.14% per year, with a 32% increase over the period in question (see **Figure 7.9**). This consistent growth suggests a positive trend in vocational education outcomes and the system's internal efficiency.

Figure 7.9. Pass rates in secondary-level vocational education by total, male and female (2017/2018–2021/2022)



Source: MoE data, 2024.

Female students have consistently outperformed male students since 2017/2018 in total pass rates. The gap between male and female pass rates was most pronounced in 2019/2020 and 2021/2022. The increasing gender gap could suggest underlying structural or motivational differences. Interventions may be needed to support male students more effectively.

Female students also perform better than male students across specializations. During the period in question, female pass rates surpassed those of males by 10–20 percentage points in agriculture, and by 10–38 percentage points in the industrial stream, even though their participation in these subjects was lower (see **Table 7.6**). Females also performed well in hospitality, with pass rates of nearly 75% in 2021 and 2022, around 20–25 percentage points above males.

Table 7.6. Pass rates in vocational education general secondary exam by specialization and sex, 2018–2022

	Agriculture			Industrial			Home economics			Hospitality		
	Total pass rate (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total pass rate (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total pass rate (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total pass rate (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
2017/2018	47.8	43.6	62.5	38.6	38.4	48.9	33.4	42.2	33.3	51.6	49.6	70.2
2018/2019	49	44.1	71	44.6	43.9	82.5	46.3	55.9	46.3	49.4	48.2	65.5
2019/2020	54.6	52.6	66.5	37.3	36.9	62.6	61.3	27	62	45.7	45.3	50.9
2020/2021	52	48.7	71.3	50.7	50.4	72.7	53.6	28.1	54	54.5	52.9	74.6
2021/2022	55.8	54	66.6	45.2	44.9	67.4	56	25.9	56.5	50.3	48.1	74.7

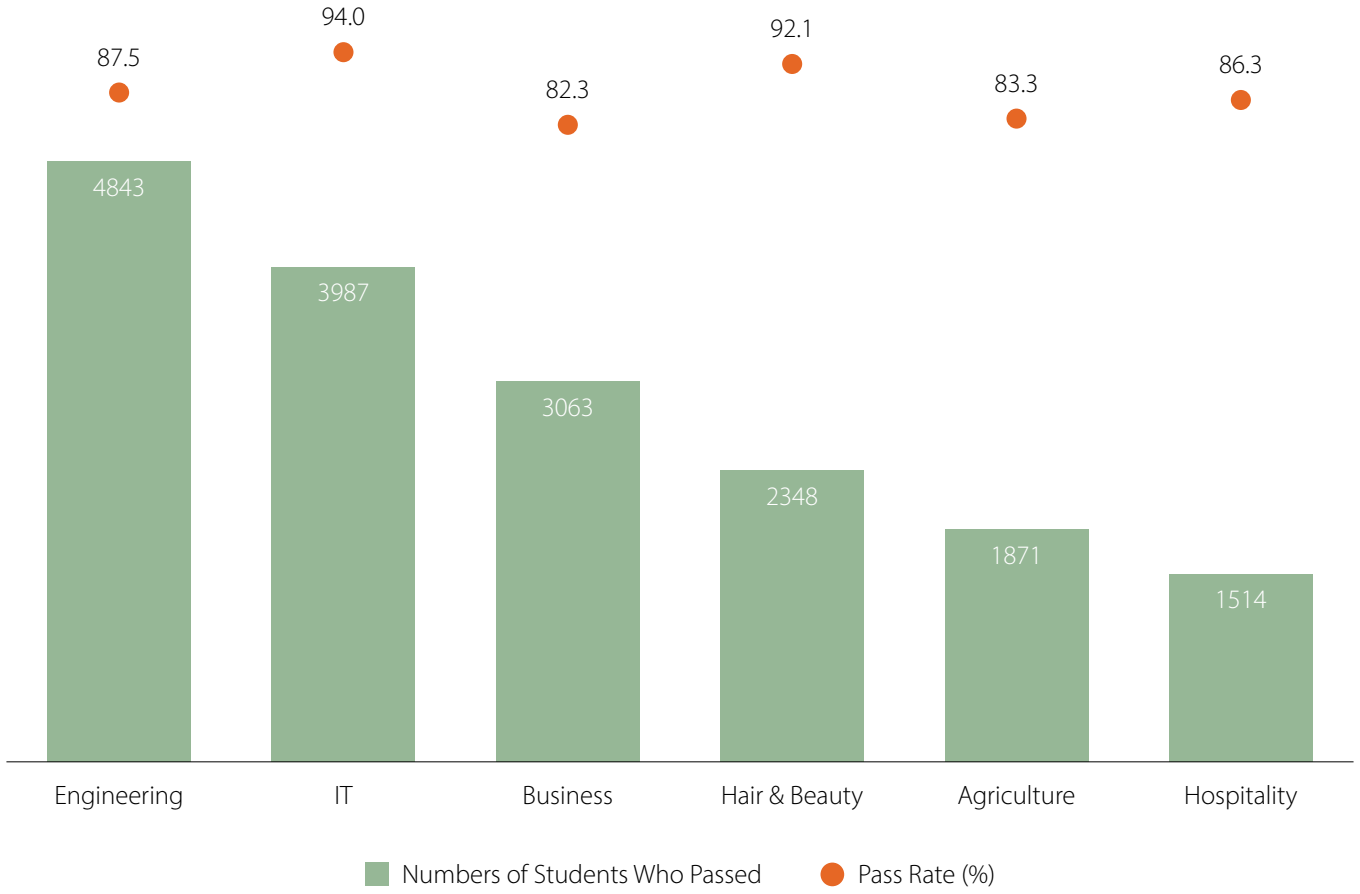
Source: MoE data, 2024.

Learning outcomes for vocational education since the introduction of the BTEC

The first student cohort in the BTEC programme shows promising results. The total average pass rate[152] for the first student cohort of BTEC Grade 10 stood at 90%, a high rate compared with the national programme pass rates presented earlier. Out of the 17,617 students enrolled in the BTEC in 2023/2024, 15,235 students passed Grade 10. In terms of performance per specialization, while all specializations recorded pass rates of over 83%, the highest pass rate was recorded in IT (see **Figure 7.10**).

152 Student performance in the BTEC programme is assessed in two steps. First, students are assessed by Pearson and the MoE based on set criteria. Students who pass this step can then sit exams that assess their knowledge in the common subjects for all vocational education specializations. The first part of the assessment constitutes 70% of the total grade, and the second 30%.

Figure 7.10. Number of passing students and pass rates in BTEC Grade 10 by specialization, 2023/24



Source: MoE data, 2024.

However, while initial BTEC pass rates are quite high, the dropout rate is still striking at 9%. Out of the 17,617 students enrolled, 670 students dropped out, with the highest dropout numbers in business (180 students), followed by engineering (141), agriculture (93), hospitality (89), hair and beauty (85) and IT (82). Moreover, enrolment in BTEC Grade 11 in 2024/2025 reached 14,991 students (see **Table 7.3**), which means that an additional 244 students who passed their Grade 10 requirements dropped out. This brings the total dropout number to 1,584 (9%). In the future, it would be useful to examine why these students discontinued their education despite passing to the next grade, which could be due to several factors, including the need to work.

The employability of TVET graduates in Jordan seems low. Despite efforts to track graduate outcomes, there is no unified system for collecting and analysing employability data across the TVET sector in Jordan. According to internal reports from the MoE, the employability rate of vocational education graduates – while increasing from 5% in 2021 to 15% in 2022 and 2023 – remains low. The MoE aims to improve data collection to assess the employability of BTEC graduates after the first cohort completes the programme in 2025/2026.

7.3.2. Quality of TVET inputs

Teachers and teacher development in vocational education

Enhancing the capacities of vocational education teachers and trainers[153] remains a strategic priority to meet quality standards as the new BTEC programme is rolled out. The introduction of the BTEC in 2023 has created a huge need to train teachers on the new curriculum framework, its pedagogical and assessment approaches and quality assurance requirements. Moreover, as some BTEC specializations are completely new, many teachers do not have the relevant technical background to teach them and therefore need extensive capacity development in the areas of specialization, as well as relevant generic skills (such as digital skills and English language for business, etc.), programme assessment methods and project-based learning, to be able to deliver the programme and achieve the anticipated quality outcomes.

To this end, the MoE has launched a professional development programme to address vocational education teachers' skills gaps. During the 2022/2023 academic year, 1,222 vocational education teachers (750 males and 472 females) and 272 administrative staff received training on the new BTEC programme in close collaboration with Pearson. In 2023/2024, more than 4,395 teachers and 772 staff members received training. Moreover, the MoE contracted additional teachers (56 Vocational Training Corporation trainers and 80 contractual teachers) to meet the new programme's teaching requirements. The MoE also trained 500 teachers on principles and methodologies for the inclusion of students with disabilities in vocational education (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2024).

Long-standing systemic deficiencies in capacity development for vocational education teachers and staff, which has traditionally been limited, fragmented and lacking structure and resources in comparison to other levels of education, have constrained training impact. Vocational education teachers in the MoE face significant gaps in both initial preparation and ongoing professional development. The current system does not adequately address their dual need for pedagogical training and industry-relevant expertise. The Pre-Service Teacher Education programme excludes vocational-specific content, and neither the Teacher Policy Framework (2023) nor the Teacher Training Platform provide tailored support for TVET instructors. Moreover, the proportion of TVET teachers in the MoE with a bachelor's degree is lower than that of academic teachers. In 2024, only 70.4% of secondary vocational teachers had at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 81% in the academic stream (see **Chapter 4**). These systemic limitations hinder the recruitment, development and retention of qualified vocational instructors, ultimately affecting the quality and relevance of TVET delivery in Jordan. The MoE, through its Managing Directorate of Supervision and Training and with specialized committees, is addressing this issue by establishing the standards and criteria of vocational education teachers for all vocational specializations to institutionalize a vocational education professional development programme and strengthen quality (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2024).

The Vocational Training Corporation is also significantly expanding the number of its trainers and capacity development interventions to enhance the quality of vocational training. For instance, the number of Vocational Training Corporation trainers who received training quadrupled from 101 in 2019 to 403 in 2024.

153 Including staff at the level of education field directorates.

7.3.3. Quality of TVET programmes and processes

Quality assurance of TVET programmes is underpinned by official instructions and internal practices and procedures. At the BTEC level, a structured process for assessment verification ensures the quality of the programme's learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and technical skills acquired. At the Vocational Training Corporation level, the emphasis is on promoting a culture of excellence, setting clear goals and implementing structured procedures to ensure high training standards.

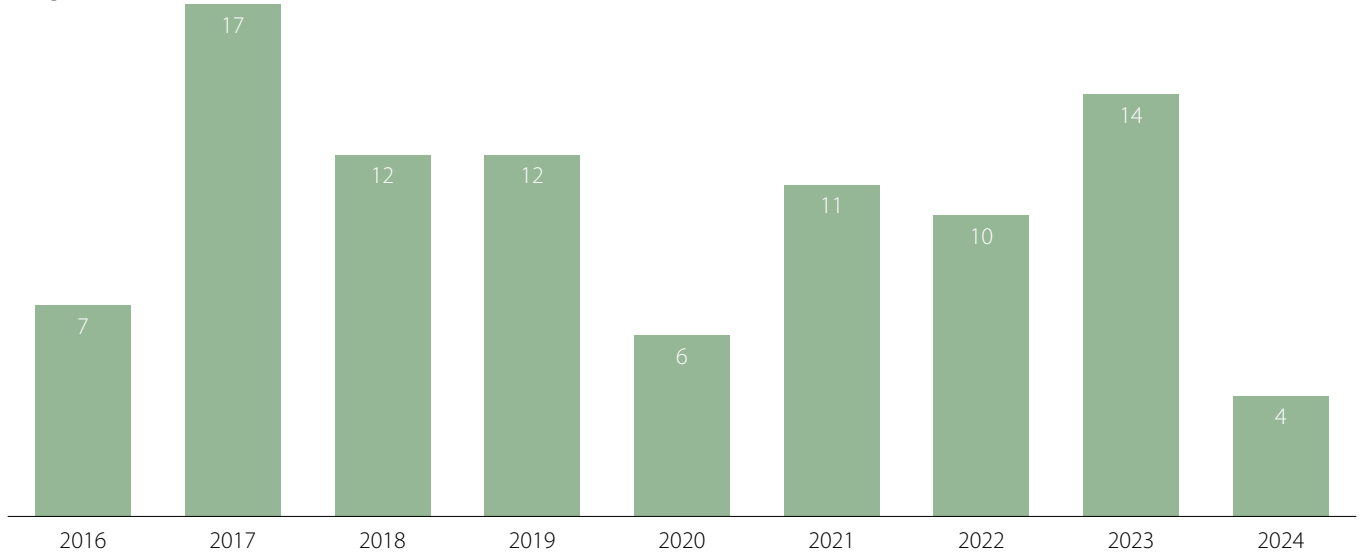
There is a growing focus on private sector linkages and work-based learning in TVET in national reforms and strategies to increase its labour market relevance, but private sector engagement remains limited, ad hoc and unsystematic. In response, the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission issued accreditation standards for work-based learning programmes in 2023, marking a step toward more structured collaboration. Strengthening partnerships through structured work-based learning, strategic employer involvement and capacity-building measures is critical to addressing skills mismatches and improving youth employability.

While the Vocational Training Corporation has well-established, structured work-based learning through partnerships with diverse local employers, the MoE is still working on devising a comprehensive implementation for work-based learning practicum component in its vocational education curriculum. The Vocational Training Corporation has industry liaison officers as part of its structure to facilitate student placements and ensure compliance with standards and has established several agreements with the public and private sector to this end (see **Figure 7.11**).[154]

The Al Hussein Technical University with its College of Advanced Vocational Training, as well as the National Employment and Training Company, also incorporate on-the-job training as part of all their training programmes. The MoE is currently exploring how to integrate work-based learning into the BTEC while ensuring the protection and safety of its students and to expand partnerships with industries and the private sector for this purpose, including partnerships with institutions like the Vocational Training Corporation and universities.

154 Agreements include partnerships with unions and syndicates, such as the general syndicate of jewellery shop owners; with government bodies like the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Council for Family Affairs; with institutions like the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts; with foundations like the Jordan River Foundation; with private companies like Hilton Hotels, Orange and Zain telecom; and with non-governmental organizations, such as Education for Employment and the World University Service of Canada.

Figure 7.11. Number of partnership agreements between the Vocational Training Corporation and the private sector, 2016–2024



Source: Vocational Training Corporation data, 2024.

Career guidance is another important area that is gaining attention and witnessing institutional developments in Jordan. Enhancing the outreach and quality of career guidance at the various levels of the TVET system is major strategic goal for TVET providers like the MoE and Vocational Training Corporation. Career guidance[155] involves a range of learning activities and services, such as the provision of career education, career information, skills assessment and psychometric testing, individual and group guidance and counselling, skills development needed for job-seeking and self-employment, and engagement with employers. These activities provide people with access to services, experiences and resources for their employment and/or further education and training. Effective career guidance helps individuals to reach their potential and contributes to a more efficient economy (European Training Foundation, 2021). Several policy and programmatic initiatives are being implemented since 2024 to enhance the availability, quality and regulation of career guidance in Jordan. Data-driven career guidance is essential to support students in making informed decisions that are aligned with labour market realities, including employment trends, demand for skills and career prospects. Strengthening labour market data and information systems therefore emerge as key priorities for improving the relevance and impact of career guidance services.

Jordan's National Strategy for Career and Vocational Guidance and Counselling (2024–2033) led by the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission was endorsed by the government in 2024. The strategy covers five strategic areas, namely communication and awareness, alignment of learning and training outcomes with labour market needs, economic empowerment, community development and governance and sustainability.

One key accomplishment of this strategy is that it provides, for the first time in Jordan, professional occupational standards for career guidance counsellors, vocational trainers and career guidance and employment counsellor. Based on that, the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission has launched a series of accredited training courses that culminate in career counsellor licences. A total of 200 counsellors have obtained professional licences to practice this profession. Moreover, the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission is also implementing training of trainers for vocational trainers. Between 2022 and 2024, 94 MoE staff members, including heads of departments, teachers and counsellors, were trained and received career guidance counsellor

155 In some countries, terms such as "career counselling", "career development", "careers information, advice and guidance", "vocational counselling" or "vocational guidance" are used to refer to the range of activities that is covered by the term "career guidance" here.

occupational licences from the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission. They are currently supporting the MoE's efforts to carry out plans and activities related to career guidance and counselling.

Career guidance interventions in MoE schools aim to raise the awareness of students, staff and parents about vocational education and the various specializations offered, as well as the learning and occupational opportunities that vocational education can lead to. These interventions seek to enhance student access to and participation in vocational education and improve social perceptions of TVET. To achieve these objectives, the MoE has developed a career guidance awareness operational plan. In 2024, interventions reached 9,535 Grade 10 students in 175 schools and 2,351 members of the local community. Interventions in 2025 will focus on awareness-raising and career guidance services and will target 8,000 parents and local community members, 5,600 school staff and teachers in the field directorates and 130,000 Grade 9 students.

The Vocational Training Corporation also provides career guidance and employment services to all its trainees and engages its wide network of private sector partners in several interventions. Career guidance and counselling services are also available in various higher education institutes (as per the higher education licensing standards set by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions).

Alignment of skills development with environmental sustainability and digitization: The Economic Modernisation Vision calls for aligning skills development with the demands of a green economy and accelerating digital transformation. It emphasizes the need to expand and enhance both TVET and higher education programmes to support sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and environmental management, while addressing the country's climate commitments. It also stresses the integration of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, robotics and digital skills into education systems to ensure that the workforce is prepared for a sustainable digital future. Several initiatives have been introduced or are being developed to support these national priorities:

- The MoE has introduced a vocational education curriculum for students in Grades 4 to 9 covering topics such as hydroponics, green space conservation, pollution control, recycling and energy conservation. This curriculum promotes early engagement with sustainability and environmental protection.
- The BTEC framework offers specializations in agriculture, IT and engineering. In agriculture, students learn about sustainability and modern agricultural techniques, while the IT and engineering streams focus on digital skills, including AI, cybersecurity and programming.
- The MoE is integrating digital skills into vocational teacher training and upgrading vocational education facilities with computers, internet access and interactive boards to support the digital economy.
- The Vocational Training Corporation offers training in sustainable agriculture (12 programmes) and renewable energy (2 programmes), as well as digital skills courses for students and staff. Hybrid and remote training formats are also being used to increase access for young people unable to attend in person.
- In 2021, the Higher Education Council issued a circular urging all higher education institutions to introduce programmes and courses focused on environmental sustainability and digital skills. This ensures alignment with national priorities across both higher education and TVET sectors, reinforcing the importance of these skills throughout the education system.

7.4 . Cost and financing of TVET

This section examines the costs, financing and expenditures for the TVET subsector, focusing on financial data for the fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023.[156] The analysis includes data from the MoE's budget laws to cover vocational education; vocational training courses managed by the MoL and the Vocational Training Corporation; activities supporting vocational education and training by the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission; training courses and awareness-raising sessions for self-employed individuals; and financial/non-financial services supported by the Development and Employment Fund.

The analysis is structured into three key areas. First, it examines intrasectoral budget trade-offs and their evolution over time to assess the relative priority given to TVET in public funding. Secondly, it evaluates budget execution performance to understand the aforementioned entities' ability to utilize domestic resources allocated for the sub-sector. Finally, the analysis explores the evolution of TVET unit costs per student over time.

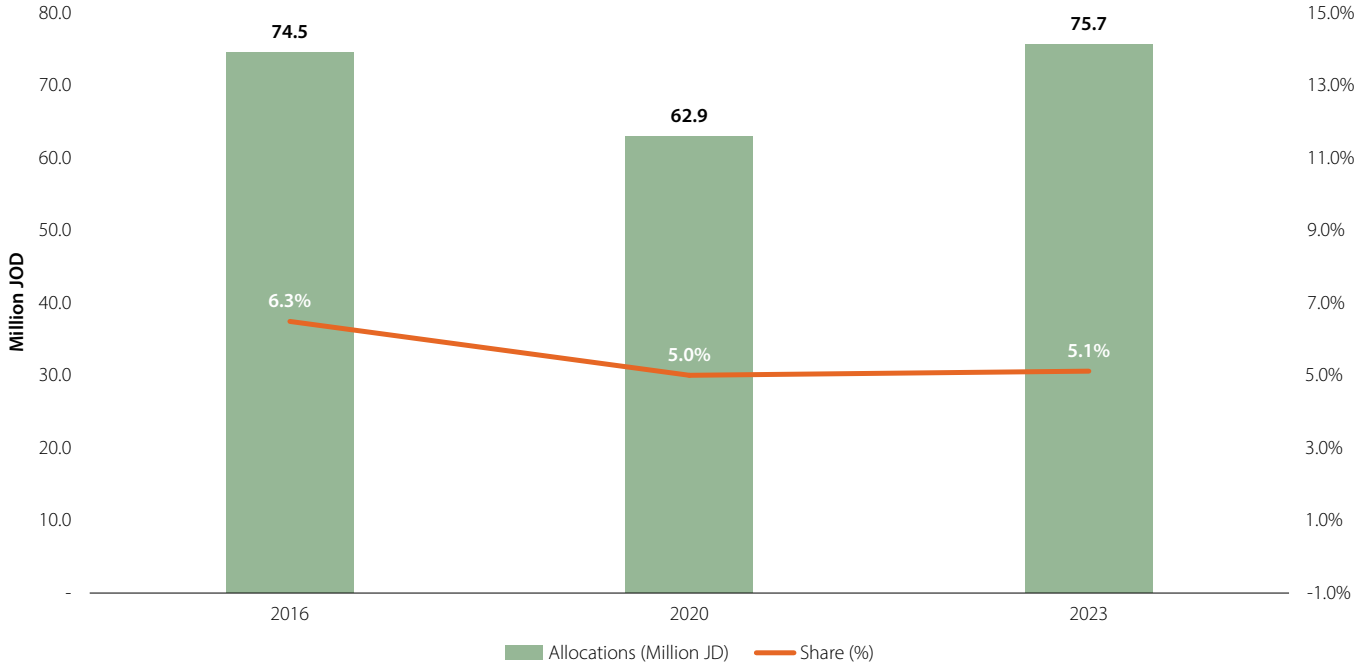
7.4.1. Intrasectoral trade-offs: TVET allocations over time

TVET remains a low priority in public funding, with its share declining over time despite strong national commitments. While Jordan has introduced a national strategy to enhance the TVET subsector, public budgetary allocations have not reflected this commitment. In 2016, TVET received JOD 74.5 million (constant 2023 prices), accounting for 6.3% of total education allocations (see **Figure 7.12**). However, by 2020, its share had dropped to 5% (JOD 62.9 million in constant 2023 terms), before rebounding to reach JOD 75.7 million in 2023. Despite this increase in net amounts, TVET's relative share of the education budget remains lower than in 2016, at 5.1%, indicating that funding for the subsector has not kept pace with increases in the overall education budget. To effectively support national objectives for TVET improvement and expansion, a higher budget envelope and a more consistent financial commitment is needed.

TVET budget allocations have grown significantly more slowly than overall public education funding. While total public education allocations increased by 25% between 2016 and 2023 (with an average annual growth rate of 3%), TVET funding grew by just 2% over the same period, with an annual average of only 0.2%.

156 For estimated (allocations), data are retrieved from the MoE's budget laws for the fiscal years 2015, 2019 and 2022.

Figure 7.12. Public allocations[157] to TVET and its share of the education budget (2016, 2020 and 2023, in JOD million and per cent)



Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department Budget laws for the fiscal years 2017, 2021 and 2024 to retrieve budget allocations re-estimations.

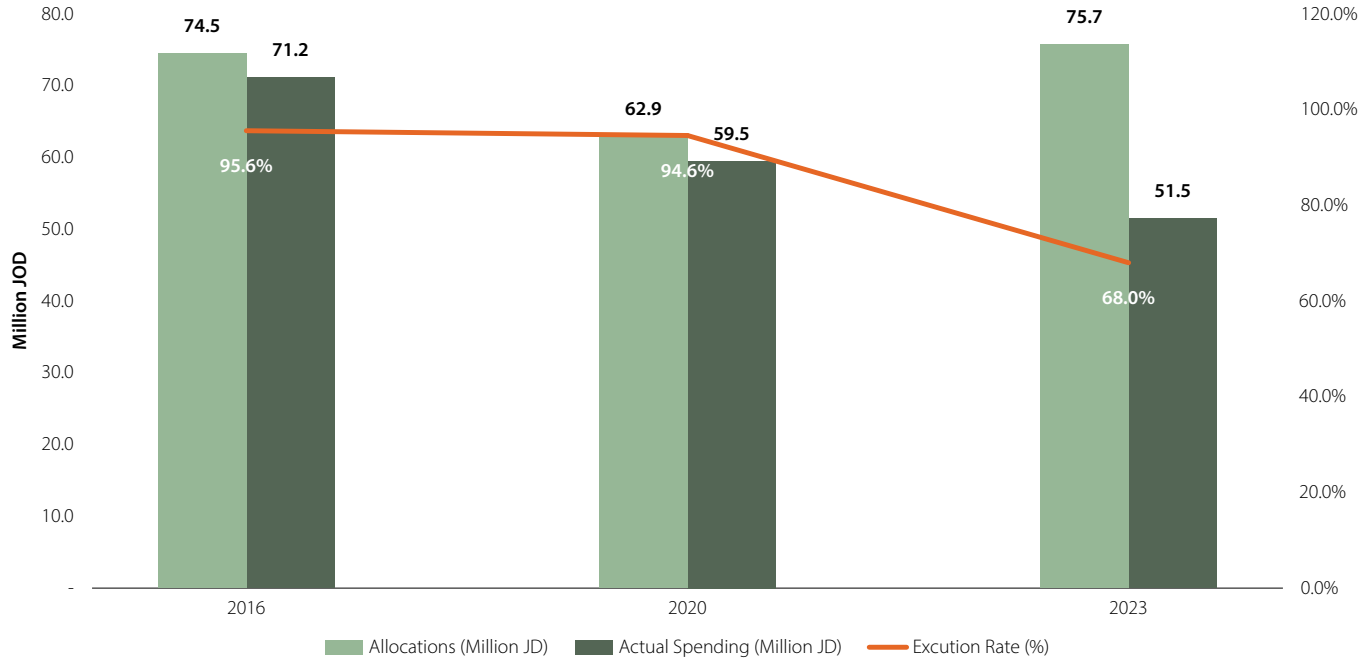
*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here.*

7.4.2 . Budget execution in TVET: Trends and challenges

TVET faces growing challenges in budget execution, with a sharp decline in recent years. While budgetary allocations for TVET in 2023 have returned to levels comparable to 2016 in volume, the education sector has struggled to fully disburse the resources allocated. In 2016, 95.6% of the revised budget for TVET was executed, demonstrating relatively strong financial management performance. However, this rate declined slightly to 94.6% in 2020, before experiencing a drastic drop to just 68% in 2023, a 27 percentage-point decrease between 2020 and 2023 (see **Figure 7.13**). This trend indicates major barriers in budget execution within the TVET subsector, which limits the ability of all managing entities to effectively implement planned activities and projects and fully utilize available domestic resources.

157 We consider the revised budgeted allocations to account for in-year budget reallocations.

Figure 7.13. Budget allocations vs actual spending and execution rate for TVET (2016, 2020 and 2023, JOD million and per cent)



Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department Budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here.*

Capital expenditures in TVET have followed a fluctuating trend over time. While overall TVET expenditures had declined between 2016 and 2023 as shown in **Figure 7.13** above, capital spending in the subsector has seen a different trajectory. In 2016, capital expenditures stood at JOD 4.2 million but dropped to JOD 3 million in 2020, most likely due to the halt of activities during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, by 2023, capital spending rebounded to JOD 5.4 million, reflecting a 26% increase over the period, with an average annual increase of 3% (see **Table 7.7**).

Table 7.7. Public capital education expenditures by economic classification for TVET (2016, 2020 and 2023, in JOD million[158] and per cent)

	2016		2020		2023			
	Actual spending	Share	Actual spending	Share	Actual spending	Share	Variation 2016–2023	Annual average growth rate 2016–2023
Construction, land/building purchases, and engineering studies	0.7	16%	1.5	49%	1.6	30%	145%	14%
Equipment, including IT (excl. teaching and learning materials)	0.3	7%	0.1	3%	0.6	10%	77%	8%
Rehabilitation and maintenance	0.5	12%	0.4	12%	1.6	30%	210%	18%
Subsidies and grants	2.3	56%	-	0%	-	0%	-100%	-100%
Teaching and learning materials	0.4	9%	1.1	37%	1.5	29%	306%	22%
Total	**4.2**	**100%**	**3.0**	**100%**	**5.3**	**100%**	**26%**	**3%**

Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department Budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here.*

Investment in teaching and learning materials for TVET has seen the highest growth over time. Among capital expenditures categories for TVET, teaching and learning materials experienced the most significant increase. Spending on these materials rose from JOD 0.4 million in 2016 (at 2023 prices), to JOD 1.1 million in 2020, further increasing to JOD 1.5 million by 2023.

Rehabilitation, maintenance and construction investments have also increased. Spending on rehabilitation and maintenance more than tripled over the period, rising by 210%, from JOD 0.5 million in 2016 to JOD 1.6 million in 2023, despite a slight dip in 2020 (JOD 0.4 million). Spending on construction, land and building purchases for TVET institutions increased significantly, with a 145% growth rate, rising from JOD 0.7 million in 2016 to JOD 1.5 million in 2020, and maintaining a comparable level in 2023 (JOD 1.6 million). These trends reflect the government's increased focus on improving physical infrastructure and learning resources for TVET, despite overall expenditure constraints for the subsector.

158 Constant 2023 prices.

7.4.3. Public unit costs for the TVET subsector: Trends and insights

The cost of educating a TVET student has declined sharply over time. Between 2016 and 2023, public unit costs for TVET dropped significantly.[159] In 2016, the unit cost per TVET student was 2.8 times higher than the cost of a basic education student, meaning that the cost of educating one basic education student covered only 36% of the cost of a single TVET student (see **Table 7.9**). However, by 2023, this ratio decreased to 1.2 times the basic education unit cost, reflecting a steep 60% decline in TVET unit costs over the period, with an average annual decline of 12%. This shift is largely driven by a 74% increase in TVET public enrolments (from 32,292 students[160] in 2016 to 56,053 students[161] in 2023) coupled with a 23% reduction in public recurrent expenditures on the subsector. As a result, the financial burden per student in TVET institutions has been considerably eased.

TVET public unit costs have also declined relative to GDP per capita. The financial cost per TVET student has diminished not only in absolute terms but also in relation to national wealth. In 2016, the TVET unit cost represented 65% of GDP per capita, a relatively high level of investment per student. This share dropped to 60.1% in 2020, before drastically declining to 27% in 2023, marking a 38 percentage-point decline over the 7-year period (see **Table 7.8**).

Table 7.8. Public recurrent unit cost for TVET, in 2016, 2020 and 2023 (JOD million constant, at 2023 prices)

	2016	2020	2023	Variation 2016–2023	Annual average growth rate 2016–2023
TVET	**2,077**	**1,842**	**833**	**-60%**	**-12%**
% of GDP per capita	65	60.1	27		
Multiple of basic education	2.8	2.6	1.2		

Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department Budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023, EMIS enrolment figures for 2015/2016, 2019/2020 and 2022/2023, and the MoF financial government bulletin of August 2024.

*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here. (2) Enrolments in public institutions only are used. (3) Public unit cost here is based on recurrent expenditures only, excluding capital investments.*

159 The calculation of public unit costs focuses on recurrent expenditures, as capital investments (e.g. construction, equipment and rehabilitation) represent long-term infrastructure spending that benefits multiple student generations and do not reflect the annual per-student cost. Recurrent expenditures, mainly staff salaries and operational costs, better capture the direct annual financial effort required to deliver education for each student.

160 Including students enrolled in vocational secondary stream (Grade 11 and 12) managed by the MoE from EMIS 2015/2016 data, and students enrolled in the VTC program in 2015/2016

161 Including students enrolled in vocational secondary stream (Grade 11 and 12) managed by the MoE from EMIS 2022/2023 data, students enrolled in the VTC programme in 2022/2023, and the 17,748 students are enrolled in BTEC (Grade 10) for the academic year 2022/2023.

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

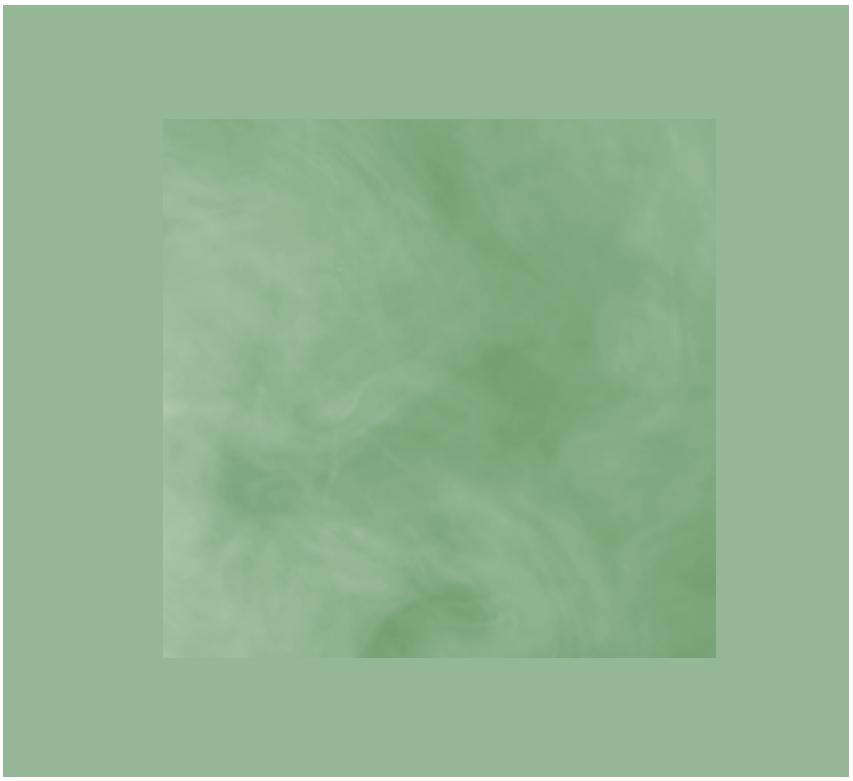
TVET holds a prominent place on Jordan's political agenda and is supported by a comprehensive policy and legal framework. This foundation provides a conducive environment for reform, expansion and quality improvement. However, despite political prioritization and increased investment in materials, infrastructure and facilities, the share of public funding allocated to TVET declined from 6.3% of total education budget allocations in 2016 to 5.1% in 2023. At the same time, while budgetary allocations for TVET in 2023 returned to levels comparable to 2016 in volume, the education sector struggled to fully disburse the resources allocated.

The TVET subsector is characterized by a diverse landscape of providers and regulatory bodies, giving rise to significant governance and coordination challenges. The major ongoing public administration reform – merging the MoE and MoHESR into a new MoEHRD – is expected to improve the management and coordination of the subsector and strengthen linkages across the various TVET pathways.

A key TVET reform has been the expansion of school-level vocational education and the introduction of the BTEC programme in 2023/2024. By 2024/2025, close to 34,000 students were enrolled in BTEC Grades 10 and 11. The roll-out has had formidable capacity development implications for achieving the expected quality improvements and attracting more students to this stream.

The number of students enrolled in formal vocational education has increased since 2015/2016, though they still represent a relatively small share of total secondary enrolment, accounting for 10.7% in 2022/2023. Steady growth is also observed in vocational training provided by the Vocational Training Corporation and in technical education at higher education institutions. Girls' enrolment remains lower across all types and levels of TVET, although the gender gap has narrowed in recent years. Gender segregation by field of study remains strong, and the participation of students with disabilities, refugees and other groups vulnerable to exclusion remains low across the subsector.

Quality improvement and labour market alignment are key areas of ongoing reform. Enhancing the capacities of TVET teachers across the sector is a strategic priority. However, systemic weaknesses in capacity development – which is limited, fragmented and under-resourced – have constrained progress in teacher training. In 2022, the MoE launched the development of vocational education teacher standards to address skills gaps among these teachers. There has also been a growing focus on improving the provision and quality of career guidance, as well as on strengthening private sector linkages and work-based learning to increase the labour market relevance of TVET.



CHAPTER 8:
Higher education

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is widely recognized as a strategic investment for both governments and individuals, contributing significantly to economic growth, social mobility and national development (Arnhold and Bassett, 2021; Bloom et al., 2014). For governments, a strategically well-balanced higher education sector can help ensure that universities produce the higher-level skilled work force needed to drive progress in a modern economy, foster scientific research and innovation and enhance global competitiveness (World Bank, 2002). For individuals, higher education expands access to employment opportunities, increases earning potential and provides a pathway for upward social mobility (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2018). At a time of rapid technological advancement and evolving labour markets, investment in higher education has a key role to play in sustaining national progress amid global challenges.

Jordan has made significant strides in expanding its higher education sector and supporting research and innovation as a key driver for societal advancement. Over the past decade, it has shown steady growth with increased enrolment and a range of programmes and institutions being established, reflecting the sector's strategic importance, despite limited resources. However, this expansion has also posed challenges in maintaining quality and meeting labour market needs.

Overall, higher education in Jordan has seen steady progress, becoming a key driver of economic and social growth. However, financial sustainability remains a pressing concern, as public funding for higher education has declined, and external aid has become less predictable. Ensuring sustainability, quality and market alignment will remain essential challenges in the years to come (Jordan, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2015).

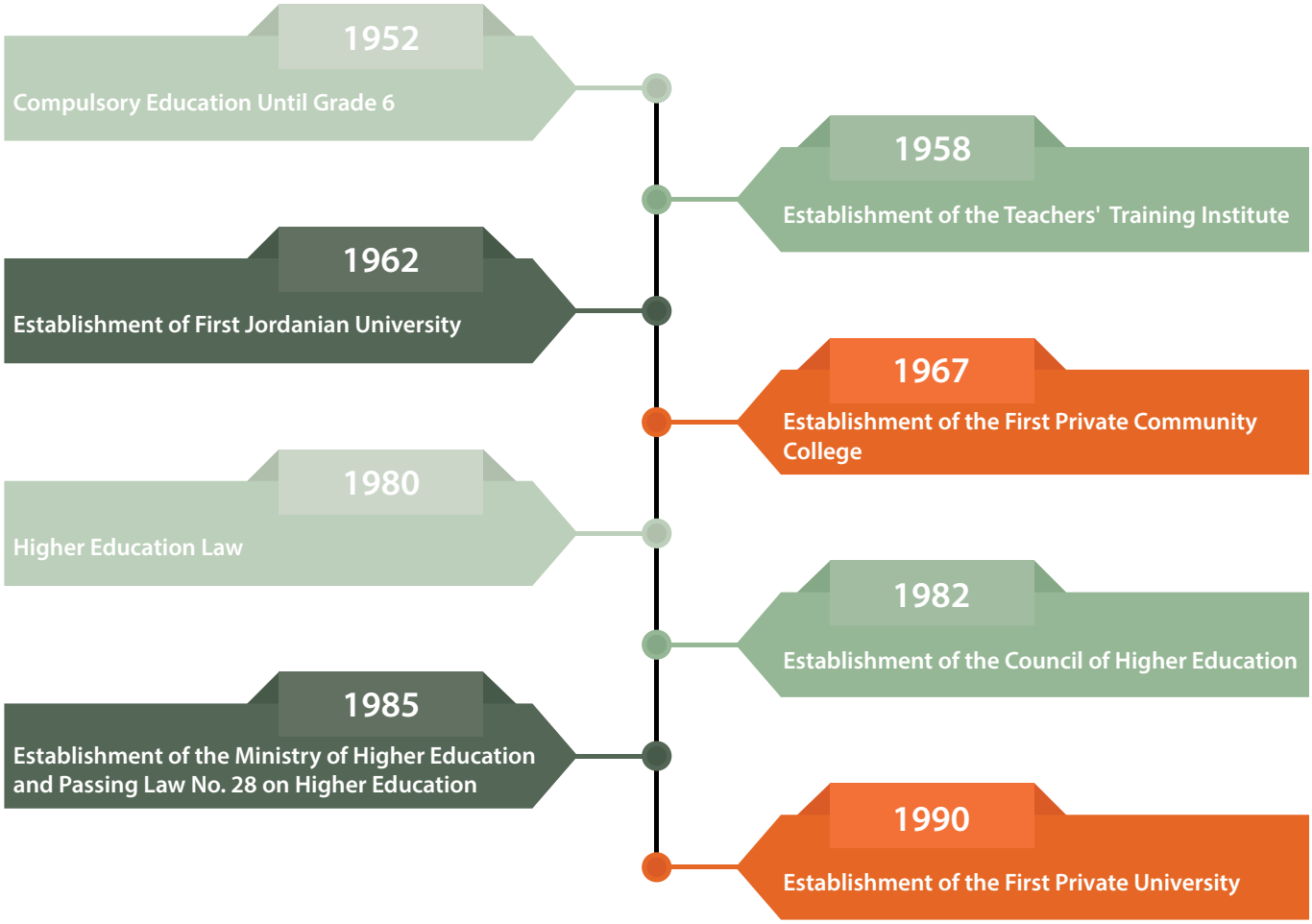
This chapter provides an overview of the higher education subsector in Jordan, briefly outlining its historical evolution, legal, policy and institutional framework, as well as coordination structures, before moving on to consider issues of access and equity, including enrolment trends and the participation of vulnerable groups. This chapter also considers the quality of higher education, focusing on graduation trends, faculty development and quality assurance processes. It concludes with a discussion of the cost and financing of the subsector in Jordan. Aspects related to the external efficiency of the higher education system in Jordan, including, for instance, the employability of higher education graduates and their engagement in the labour market, will be addressed in Chapter 9 on external efficiency.

8.1. Overview of higher education in Jordan

The legal and policy framework for higher education in Jordan has continuously evolved since the establishment of teacher training institutes in 1958, which was followed by the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) in 1985 and the issuance of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 28 of 1985), which determined the mandate, roles and responsibilities of the MoHESR and its relationship to higher education institutes. Over the years, Jordan's higher education system has expanded significantly, with the founding of public and private universities, community colleges and international partnerships. Key developments include the establishment of the University of Jordan in 1962, the introduction of private universities in 1990 and the creation of regulatory bodies such as the Higher Education Council, the MoHESR and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions. Several laws on higher education and the functioning of higher education institutes have been issued since then, the last of which was Act No. 17 of 2018 and its amendments.

Roles and responsibilities for higher education are divided between the Higher Education Council, the MoHESR and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institution. The MoHESR addresses the evolving needs of the education sector and improves its structure and governance. The Higher Education Council oversees higher education institutions and develops policies and strategies for universities and academic institutions, with the aim of guiding and regulating the higher education sector based on national priorities (Jordan, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2015). As for the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institution, it is responsible for setting accreditation and quality standards that are consistent with international standards and monitoring higher education institutions' compliance with them, to improve their performance and enhance their ability to compete globally. The evolution of the subsector is illustrated in **Figure 8.1**. The anticipated establishment of a new ministry, merging the Ministry of Education (MoE) and MoHESR together into one Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MoEHRD), as noted in earlier chapters, will entail further revision of roles and responsibilities in the higher education subsector.

Figure 8.1.: The emergence of the higher education subsector



Source: MoHESR, 2024.

8.1.1. Legal and policy framework

The governance of higher education in Jordan was first established by the Higher Education Act issued in 1980. In 1982, the Higher Education Council was created to oversee higher education institutions across the country. This was followed by the establishment of the MoHESR in 1985, alongside the issuance of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 28 of 1985), which defined the objectives of higher education and the respective mandates of the Council and the MoHESR .

In 1998, Higher Education Act (Act No. 6) was enacted, abolishing the MoHESR and transferring its responsibilities to the Higher Education Council. During the same period, Jordanian community colleges became affiliated with Al-Balqa' Applied University. In 2001, however, the MoHESR was re-established by royal decree, restoring its mandate to supervise and monitor public and private higher education institutions, advance the quality of higher education and align it with global trends and national development needs.

Since then, the MoHESR has continued to update and refine the legislative and regulatory framework governing higher education, in accordance with its strategic plans and short- and long-term national goals. It also works to empower and support higher education institutions in fulfilling their academic and institutional responsibilities.

The subsector is currently governed by the Higher Education Act (Act No. 17 of 2018) and its amendments. The Act outlines twelve core objectives, with a strong focus on human resource development, institutional collaboration and fostering a vibrant, free and forward-looking academic environment

(Jordan, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2015). This is achieved through:

- Preparing qualified and specialized skilled human resources across diverse fields of knowledge to meet national needs, in accordance with development goals and plans.
- Promoting Islamic faith, values and ethics and strengthening national identity.
- Promoting and strengthening democratic principles and freedom of expression to ensure freedom of academic work, the right to expression, respect for others' opinions, teamwork and the use of critical scientific thinking.
- Providing an academic, research, psychological and social environment that supports creativity, excellence, talent development, innovation and leadership.
- Fostering interest in national heritage, national culture and global cultures. Adopting the Arabic language as a scientific, educational and learning language at various stages of higher education, supporting scientific writing in Arabic and translation from and into Arabic, and considering any international language as a supporting language.
- Contributing to the development of knowledge in the fields of science, literature and arts, inter alia, and building a national scientific and technical nucleus capable of linking research communities, and directing and developing scientific research towards generating knowledge, industrial production and technology.
- Developing the capabilities of students in at least one foreign language in their fields of specialization and providing them with appropriate skills to use information technology (IT) in those fields.
- Encouraging, supporting and raising the level of scientific research and innovation, especially applied scientific research aimed at serving and developing society.
- Improving the performance of higher education institutions and the quality of their outputs and increasing their global competitiveness by developing the capacities of their faculty and administrative staff, keeping pace with developments in information and communications technology, integrating it into teaching and research and obtaining international accreditation for programmes and institutions.
- Encouraging excellence and diversity among higher education institutions to enable them to focus on scientific research and attract distinguished academic talent, on the one hand, and teaching to produce graduates that meet labour market needs on the other.
- Establishing a close institutional link between the public and private sectors and higher education institutions to benefit from the qualified capacities of these institutions to develop sectors through consulting and applied scientific research.
- Strengthening scientific, cultural, artistic and technological cooperation in higher education and scientific research with countries and their educational institutions, international organizations and Arab, Islamic institutions.

The Economic Modernisation Vision for Jordan (2023–2033) provides the overarching strategic framework for higher education development, highlighting key challenges of access, quality and management to be addressed. These include quality assurance and equity issues in admissions policy; issues of outdated study programmes; poor facilities; the system's focus on certification rather than competencies; rote learning methods; weak use of technology; lack of innovation in systems and programmes; poor financial management and insufficient budget and financing; lack of institutional, financial and academic autonomy; and high student/teacher ratios as a result of growing student population. The Women Empowerment Strategy under the Economic Modernisation Vision also provides strategic directions for the higher education sector. The strategy aims to enhance the participation of women in the marketplace, increase their participation in economic decision-making and mainstream gender-related issues in public institutions and the private sector.

Subsector strategic priorities are to reach an accessible and equitable, research-driven

and technology-enabled higher education system that is reputable, competitive, flexible, agile, inclusive and capable of providing Jordan and the international community with competent graduates. As such, strategic priorities focus on quality programmes, high quality infrastructure, diverse course offerings, improved industry linkages and better employment outcomes.

Higher education in Jordan is further guided by several national strategies and plans, which collectively articulate the Kingdom's strategic priorities for addressing persistent challenges in balancing quantity and quality. These include the launch of a new strategic plan for the MoHESR for the period 2025–2027, which builds on the achievements of the previous strategy (2022–2024) and the outcomes of the Royal Committee to Modernise the Political System (2021–2023). Other key guiding policy frameworks and strategies include the National Youth Strategy 2025, the National Strategy for Human Resources Development (2016–2025), the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2020–2025) and the National Policy for Ensuring the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Kingdom (2020–2030).

8.1.2. Key higher education pathways and providers

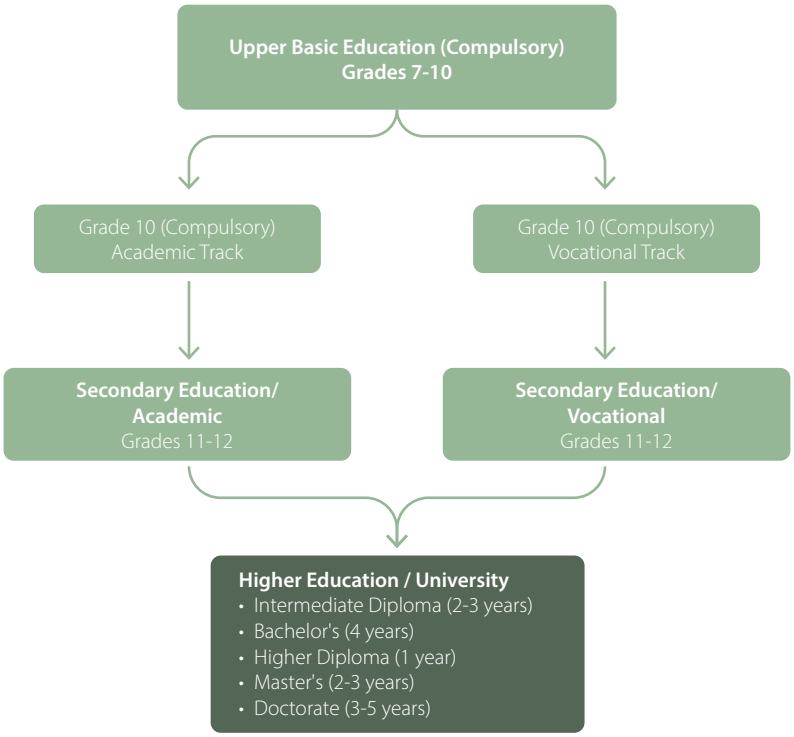
A variety of pathways are available for students to progress to higher education, with a range of public and private institutions and community colleges providing higher education services.

Pathways

Students can reach higher education through academic and vocational pathways in the system. Students who opt for an academic track in Grade 9 may proceed to academic subjects in Grade 10 and in secondary education (Grades 11 and 12) and then choose their subjects of study at university. Similarly, students who take the vocational track in Grade 10 and at the secondary level will also be eligible for higher education in select and relevant fields/pathways. Passing the Tawjihi official exam is a requirement for enrolment in academic higher education programmes after the completion of the secondary education cycle (see **Figure 8.2**).

Technical education, which has traditionally been offered by community colleges and technical universities in various technical fields, is addressed in chapter 7 on technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Figure 8.2. Higher education in the education system in Jordan



Source: Authors.

Study programmes in higher education span over levels 5 to 10 in the Jordan National Qualifications Framework (JNQF) (2019). The JNQF is a 10-level, learning outcomes-based, comprehensive framework covering qualifications from general education, TVET and higher education, which promotes consistency and transparency across various programmes and providers (Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions, 2019). Higher education programme types and their relevant qualification levels are summarised below:

- **Technical diploma (JNQF level 5):** A vocational degree awarded in technical majors. The focus is on the practical aspect of the specialization, with the student required to study at least 50% of the specialization courses in practical applications. Programmes leading to the technical diploma are accredited by the Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission.
- **Vocational diploma (JNQF level 5):** A non-academic training programme awarded by post-secondary community colleges or conducted under the supervision of training centres, in accordance with the 2019 regulations for vocational diplomas and training courses in Jordanian higher education institutions. The programme duration must be at least nine months or two academic semesters, with a minimum of 300 training hours or 24 credit hours equivalent to 384 training hours to yield a training certificate.
- **Intermediate diploma (JNQF level 6):** An academic degree awarded to a student after completing at least two academic years or 72 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions, following successful completion of secondary school.
- **Bachelor's degree (JNQF level 7):** An academic degree awarded to a student after completing at least 132 credit hours or four academic years in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions.
- **Higher diploma (JNQF level 8):** An academic degree awarded to a student after obtaining a bachelor's degree and completing a minimum

duration of one year or 27 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions.

- **Master's degree (JNQF level 9):** An academic degree awarded to a student after obtaining a bachelor's degree and completing a minimum duration of two years or 33 credit hours of study in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions.
- **Doctoral degree (JNQF level 10):** An academic degree awarded to a student after obtaining a master's degree and completing a minimum duration of three years or 54 credit hours in one of the accredited and offered specializations at higher education institutions.
- **Higher specialization:** A vocational degree specific to the medical field (for students enrolled in human medicine and dentistry majors) and supervised by the Jordanian Medical Council.

Higher education providers

The higher education sector in Jordan includes public and private universities that are regulated under the unified Higher Education Act introduced in 2009 and its amendments of 2018. Under this Act, universities are required to develop their annual strategies and budgets. University boards of trustees assume the mandates and duties stipulated in the provisions of article 10 of the Jordanian Universities Act (Act No. 18 of 2018), which include approving policies, setting tuition fees, monitoring implementation and evaluating performance. The Act also addresses quality assurance in teaching, scientific research, oversight of infrastructure, facilities and the social responsibilities of universities. Universities must align higher education outcomes with labour market needs and economic development goals and support Jordan's aspiration of becoming a regional hub for higher education.

The higher education sector also includes specialized colleges (public, private, military and international), which offer practical training (leading to the intermediate diploma) aligned with industry needs and market trends.

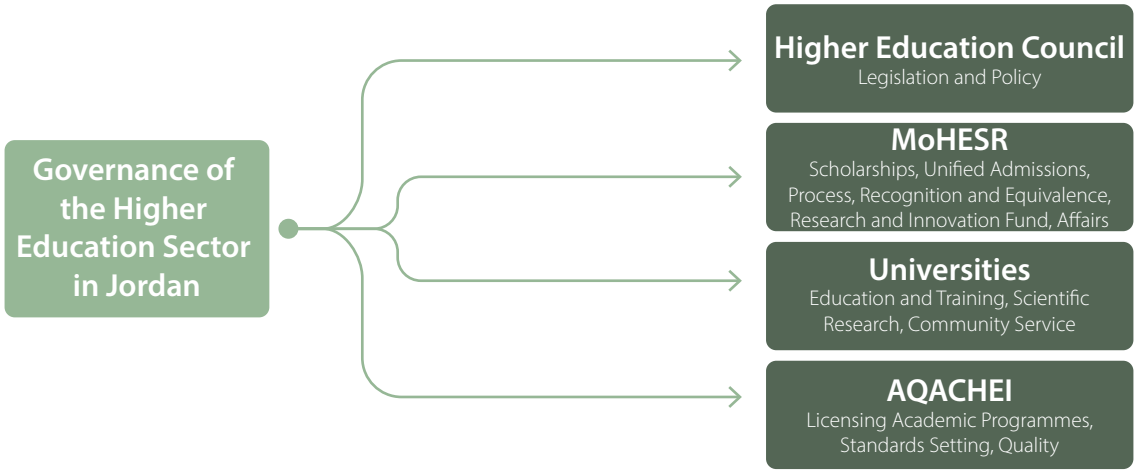
In addition to its universities in Jordan, the MoHESR recognizes degrees and diplomas from 2,755 non-Jordanian higher education institutes, of which 303 are Arab institutes, and 2,452 are international.

8.1.3. Higher education management and governance

The higher education subsector is characterized by clear coordination, governance and management structures.

The governance of the higher education sector includes several bodies with different mandates and roles (see **Figure 8.3.**). (Jordan, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research), 2015).

Figure 8.3. Governance of the higher education sector in Jordan



Source: MoHESR, 2024.

The Higher Education Council is a high-level body that shapes the strategic goals and oversees governance of the higher education subsector. Established under the Higher Education Act of 1980 and its amendments of 2005, 2009 and 2018, the council oversees the establishment, approval and regulation of higher education institutions, including their leadership and academic programmes; manages international cooperation and partnerships; and supervises admissions policies and government scholarships.

The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions is responsible for ensuring the quality and accreditation of higher education institutions. The commission, which is an independent body that reports to the Prime Minister, was established under Act No. 20 of 2007 and has an oversight and monitoring role for the higher education sector. This involves developing and enforcing standards for institutional and programme accreditation in accordance with legislation; supervising all types of higher education institutions and monitoring their performance, including scholarship and assessment systems; introducing new programmes of study; and facilitating partnerships with foreign universities.

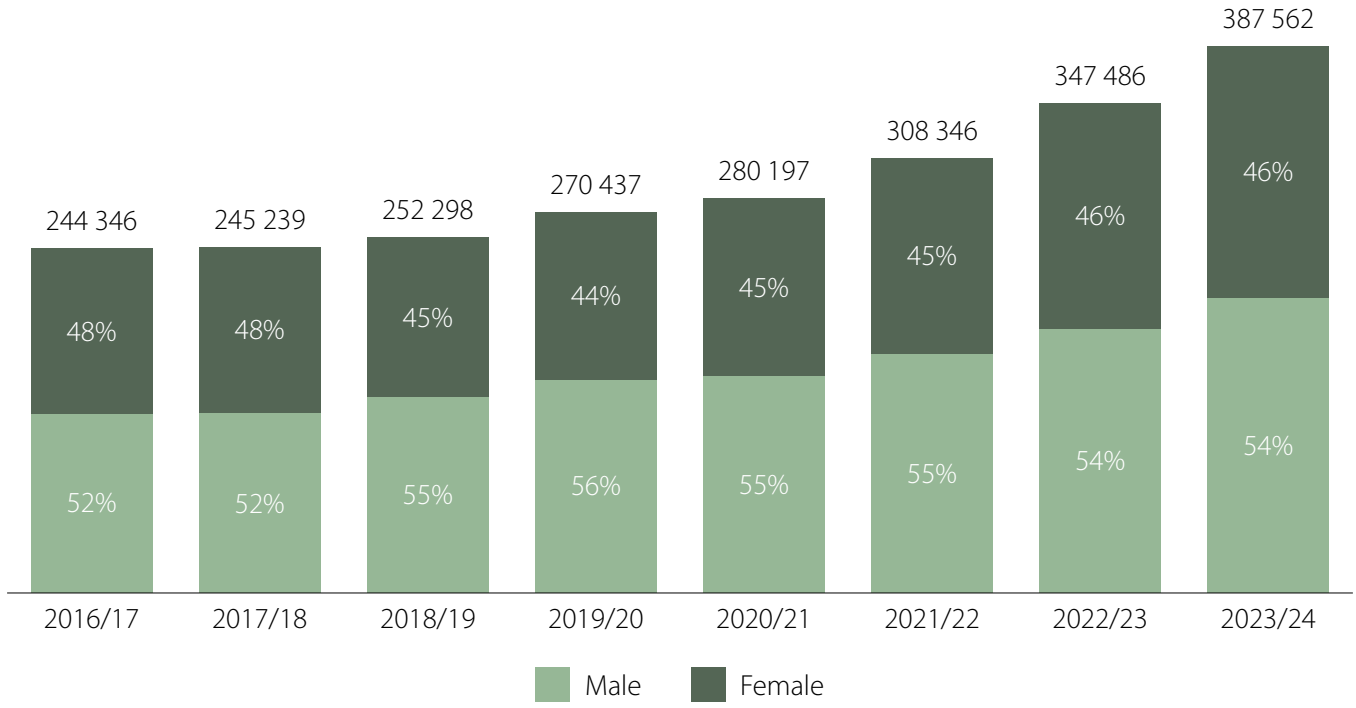
The Scientific Research and Innovation Fund plays a crucial role in strengthening Jordan's higher education and research ecosystem. Established in 2005 under the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (Act No. 13), the fund aims to enhance scientific output, support research projects and contribute to the knowledge economy by increasing the national research budget. The fund also established the King Abdullah II Centre for Excellence to foster scientific research and technology innovation.

8.2. Access and equity in higher education

Participation in higher education has grown substantially over the last decade, with demand focused on academic and undergraduate studies. Most students do not pursue higher education beyond undergraduate level, mainly due to the high cost of higher education and to graduates attempting to enter the labour market.

The higher education sector has seen an important growth in its student population since 2016/2017 with higher enrolment rates for women than for men. Total enrolment grew from 244,346 in 2016/2017 to 387,562 in 2023/2024, representing an annual average growth rate of 6.8% and a considerable expansion of higher education access for both sexes. While enrolment shows that both sexes experienced growth,[162] females outnumber males every year. Their average share of enrolment during this period stands at 54% of total enrolment (see **Figure 8.4.**).

Figure 8.4. Total enrolment in higher education by sex, 2016/2017–2023/2024

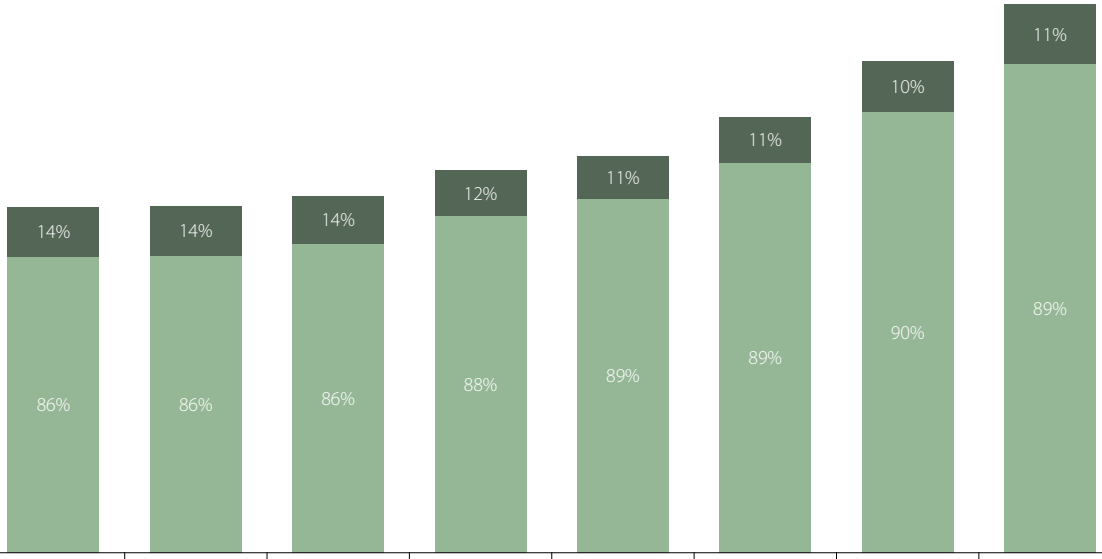


Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

The higher education student body in Jordan is diverse. Higher education institutions in Jordan welcome non-Jordanian students from over 100 countries, including Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, the Gulf states and others further afield, such as Malaysia and Indonesia. The average participation rate of non-Jordanians during the period 2016/2017–2023/2024 was 12%, compared to 88% for Jordanians (see **Figure 8.5.**). The average annual growth rate[163] for Jordanians for this period was 7.4%, compared with 2.5% for non-Jordanians. Therefore, while there is growth in enrolment numbers for both groups, it is more pronounced for Jordanian nationals.

162 An enrolled student is a student who is currently enrolled and has completed the registration process. This includes regular students, deferred students and temporarily suspended students. A graduate is a student who has completed the requirements for a specific degree.
163 The average annual growth rate of enrolment in education refers to the average percentage increase or decrease in the number of students enrolled in a specific level or type of education over a set period of years. It shows how enrolment has changed each year, on average, and helps track long-term trends in access to education.

Figure 8.5. Enrolment in higher education by nationality, 2016/2017–2023/2024



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	AAGR
Non-Jordanian	35246	35246	34310	32514	29859	32492	35690	41860	2.5%
Jordanian	209100	209993	217988	237923	250338	275854	311796	345702	7.4%

Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

Most students pursue study programmes leading to a bachelor's degree, which account for 85 to 89% of total student enrolment every academic year. This is valid for all subcategories by a significant margin (Jordanians, non-Jordanians – including foreign students and refugees, females and males). Intermediate diplomas and master's degrees come next, indicating a significant demand for these programmes (see **Table 8.1.**). Participation in intermediate diploma programmes has grown significantly for Jordanians, particularly over the last few years, indicating increasing demand for this type of qualification. Post-graduate degrees have shown modest but steady growth, reflecting a stable interest in advanced academic degrees, including among non-Jordanians, but confirming that most students do not pursue education beyond undergraduate studies. Post-graduate degrees (master's and doctorate) have higher demand among Jordanian females than all other subgroups.

Academic pathways are more popular than practical, skill-based training, especially among females and non-Jordanians. Enrolment data show that technical and vocational diplomas are the least popular tracks across the years. In fact, despite some growth in 2023, non-Jordanian enrolment in technical and vocational programmes is minimal, suggesting that these pathways are less attractive to international students who pursue higher education in Jordan. Moreover, the limited demand from non-Jordanians for these tracks might be because several occupations and sectors are not open to non-Jordanians. As such, a technical or vocational diploma may not be the best investment for future work. As for Jordanians, participation in these types of diplomas attracts a higher proportion of males compared to females, indicating gendered preferences for technical and practical fields.

Table 8.1. Enrolment in higher education by programme type, 2016/2017–2023/2024

	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024	Average annual growth rate
High specialization	86	72	70	71	52	23	8	97	1.7%
Bachelor	218,345	215,902	218,660	230,825	238,343	266,231	298,293	330,950	6.1%
Doctorate	3,882	3,925	4,018	3,999	4,046	3,822	3,981	4,101	0.8%
Masters	16,411	17,931	17,786	18,981	20,520	19,482	21,647	21,203	3.7%
Technical Diploma	-	108	241	393	427	404	371	365	22.5%*
Higher Diploma	311	300	674	1,253	1,525	879	1,645	1,276	22.3%
Intermediate Diploma	5,304	6,989	10,656	13,755	15,117	17,431	20,529	29,524	27.8%
Vocational Diploma	7	12	193	1,160	167	74	1,012	46	30.9%
Total	**244,346**	**245,239**	**252,298**	**270,437**	**280,197**	**308,346**	**347,486**	**387,562**	**6.8%**

** Refers to calculation for annual average per cent change adjusted for a 2017/18 starting period.*

Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

As of 2023/2024, the higher education sector included 78 higher education institutions distributed as shown in **Table 8.2**. Every year, several university majors are reviewed, removed from or introduced into the various institutes. As of 2023/2024, the MoHESR reported more than 2,000 majors being offered in the various higher education institutions.

Table 8.2. Higher education institutions by type (2018/2019–2023/2024)

Type of higher education institution	2018/2019	2023/2024
Public universities	10	10
Private universities	16	18
Special institutes[164]	2	2
Regional universities	1	1
Community universities	2	8
Community colleges	42	39
Total	**73**	**78**

Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

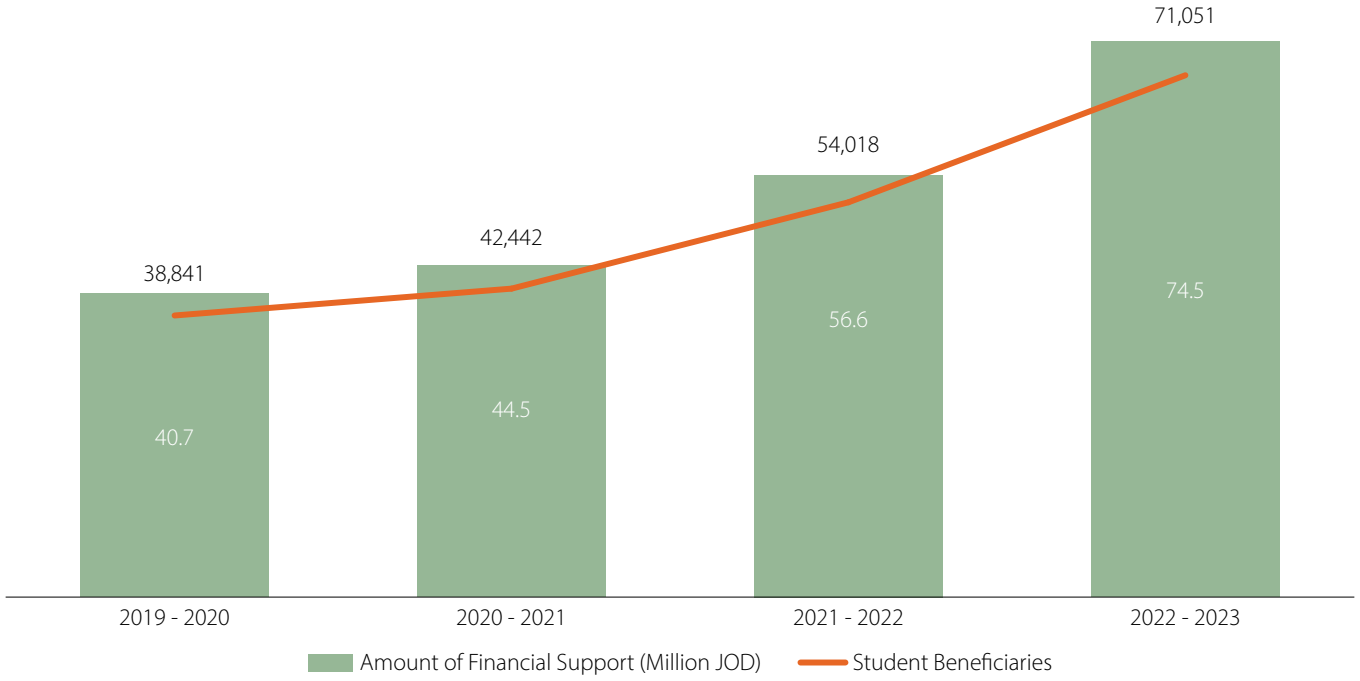
164 These universities are the World Islamic Sciences and Education University and Al Hussein Technical University.

Higher education in Jordan is not free, meaning that enrolment in this level of education is conditional on the students and their families' ability to afford tuition fees. Tuition fees differ between universities and programmes. There are currently no unified standards or instructions on the cost of tuition fees in higher education.

Since the establishment of the Student Support Fund in 2004, the MoHESR has been providing support to students, in accordance with sectoral and national objectives, such as the National Strategy for Human Resources Development (2016–2025), which includes numerous initiatives aimed at building an effective social protection system, such as providing scholarships and other forms of financial support for those enrolled in technical specializations, to enhance equity and reduce poverty and unemployment levels. Accordingly, the MoHESR's Directorate of Scholarships works to expand the cohort of students benefitting from this support, by strengthening cooperation with donors and local and international educational institutions.

Support systems for enhancing equity and the participation of girls and boys most vulnerable to exclusion from higher education are limited, although they have grown significantly in recent years. Financial aid under the Student Support Fund, which was set up by the MoHESR to enable vulnerable Jordanian students to access public universities, has almost doubled in four years, though the actual number of beneficiaries remain low. Between 2019/2020 and 2022/2023, funds under the Student Support Fund were increasing significantly by an average annual growth rate of 22% a year, reaching a total of JOD 74.5 million in 2022/2023. The number of students who benefited from the fund grew from 38,841 in 2019/2020 to 71,051 students in 2022/2023 (see **Figure 8.6.**).

Figure 8.6. Number of student beneficiaries and funding of the Higher Education Student Support Fund, 2019/2020–2022/2023



Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

Note: Amounts in JOD are rounded up to millions.

Data on participation of students with disabilities in higher education are not systematically collected, hindering in-depth analysis. While licensing requirements set forth for higher education institutions by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions stipulate that students with disabilities should be able to access higher education programmes, the MoHESR's Education Management Information System (EMIS) does not capture disaggregated enrolment data for this group. For the purposes of this education sector analysis, the MoHESR requested universities to provide data on the participation of students with disabilities in their institutions, though at the time of writing, just 21 higher education institutions (5 public and 16 private) had responded. Due to the lack of comprehensive data, only a simple analysis could be done. **Participation of persons with disabilities in higher education appears to remain extremely low, as in other education cycles of the Jordanian education system, with public universities as the main provider.** Based on the data received, between 2016/2017 and 2023/2024, a total of 1,647 students with disabilities enrolled in higher education. Males outnumbered females, with 848 male students compared to 799 female students enrolled (gender parity index 90.94). The vast majority of students (1,585) were Jordanians, compared to only 62 non-Jordanian students of various nationalities, including Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqis, Egyptians, Kuwaitis, Omanis and Yemenis. Students with disabilities enrolled mainly in public universities (1,287 students) compared to private universities (360). This could be due to several reasons, such as the different admission requirements and restrictions in private universities, or to issues related to absorption capacity, accessibility and financial constraints (see **Table 8.3**).

Table 8.3. Enrolment trends of students with disabilities in higher education 2016/2017–2023/2024

		2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
By gender	Female	111	120	110	97	86	93	118	64
	Male	123	130	91	99	85	108	114	98
By institute	Public	149	188	179	175	140	166	186	104
	Private	85	62	22	21	31	35	46	58
By nationality	Jordanian	229	244	198	189	154	191	226	154
	Non-Jordanian	5	6	3	7	17	10	6	8
Total		**234**	**250**	**201**	**196**	**171**	**201**	**232**	**162**

Source: Data collected by the MoHESR from higher education institutions, 2024.

As part of the MoHESR's efforts to ensure the right to education for persons with disabilities, university seats have been allocated at the undergraduate level for persons with disabilities through the general admission policy.

In line with the recently launched National Framework for Inclusion and Diversity in Education in Jordan (Jordan, Ministry of Education, 2025), it is recommended that the MoHESR and Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions implement inclusive education principles within the higher education system. These include the development of national guidelines for accessibility and reasonable accommodations, periodic institutional assessments to ensure physical, digital, and academic inclusion, and the systematic collection of disaggregated enrolment data for students with disabilities, including gender and type of disability, to enable evidence-based policy decisions and improve access.

MoHESR data are not disaggregated by status

but rather by nationality, distinguishing between Jordanians and non-Jordanians, with the latter group including foreign students and refugees. As such, **there are no official or accurate data on the enrolment rate of refugees in higher education in Jordan.** It would be helpful in the future for the MoHESR to systematically disaggregate higher education data by gender, refugee status and disability, to enable better monitoring of access and participation of girls and boys most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education.

Higher education scholarship programmes targeting refugees and vulnerable groups, including of Jordanian nationality, are available in Jordan. For example, the EDU-SYRIA Scholarship Program, funded by the European Union, helps Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian youths in Jordan to access higher and vocational education to improve their employability. Since 2015, the programme has mobilized 32.6 million euros, benefitting a total of 3,478 students studying in Jordan (see **Table 8.4.**).

Table 8.4. EDU-Syria scholarships granted to Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, 2016–2024

Fiscal year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Males	504	257	47	150	269	97	40	0	79	1,443
Females	433	338	82	213	498	198	117	0	156	2,035
Syrians	785	359	27	175	658	120	91	0	235	2,450
Jordanians	152	236	102	188	109	175	66	0	0	1,028
Total	**937**	**595**	**129**	**363**	**767**	**295**	**157**	**0**	**235**	**3,478**

Source: European Union data, 2025.

The Albert Einstein Academic Refugee Initiative, also known as the DAFI, is another large scholarship programme targeting refugees. While the DAFI programme has provided 3,788 university scholarships since 2016 benefitting a total of 1,068 students, data show a significant reduction in the total number of scholarships awarded. DAFI scholarships mainly target Syrian refugee youth, but the programme adopts "One Refugee Approach"[165] of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) whereby scholarships also benefit Sudanese, Yemeni and Iraqi refugee students, among others. Since 2018, when the number of awards peaked at 728, the figure has consistently declined, dropping to just 147 scholarships in 2024. Female refugees have consistently received more scholarships than males under the DAFI programme throughout the observed period, averaging around 60% per year (see **Table 8.5.**). Between 2020 and 2024, 150 refugee youth in Jordan also benefitted from higher education scholarships granted by UNHCR as "complementary pathways", allowing them to resettle to a third country where their international protection needs are addressed.

165 The "One Refugee Approach" framework adopted by UNHCR promotes equity, inclusion and harmonization of services and rights for all forcibly displaced individuals, regardless of the legal category they fall into. The approach emphasizes that all individuals displaced by persecution, conflict, violence or serious human rights violations deserve equitable protection and support. It is grounded in the recognition that forcibly displaced individuals often experience overlapping vulnerabilities. By emphasizing inclusivity and equal treatment, the "One Refugee Approach" reflects the humanitarian principles of impartiality and non-discrimination.

Table 8.5. DAFI scholarships for refugee students in Jordan, 2016–2024

Fiscal year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Males	119	305	302	284	215	131	75	72	55
Females	167	414	426	412	316	180	115	108	92
Total	**286**	**719**	**728**	**696**	**531**	**311**	**190**	**180**	**147**

Source: UNHCR data, 2024.

The decline in the number of scholarships awarded is linked to the overall decline in humanitarian funding to Jordan under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in response to the Syria crisis. For instance, the EDU-Syria Scholarship Program had a gap in 2022 and 2023 where no calls were advertised but was reopened in 2024 and is expected to award scholarships in 2025 and 2026.

Despite these financial challenges and gaps, the Jordanian Government and international community continue their collaboration to tackle economic challenges and ensure adequate refugee responses within the broader context of sustainable development. For instance, in an effort to enhance equal opportunities for all, a Higher Education Alliance, led by UNHCR, academics, philanthropists and NGOs, was established. This initiative has already led four public universities to lower tuition fees for refugee students and align them with the fees for Jordanian students.

8.3. Quality of higher education provision in Jordan

This section considers the quality of higher education in terms of outcomes, based on graduation data, as well as faculty capacity, and quality assurance processes.

8.3.1. Higher education graduation

While some universities may compile data on student retention and completion in higher education institutes and programmes and conduct tracer studies to follow up on the status of their students, these data are not available for the whole subsector, limiting a full analysis of the system's internal efficiency. However, data on graduates are available and can therefore provide an indication of key trends; these show that while enrolments have increased, graduation rates have declined.

The number of graduates in higher education has remained relatively stable over the observed period, recording a very low average annual growth rate of 0.2%. Graduation numbers peaked in 2020/2021 (86,428 graduates) but have since declined, dropping to 71,649 in 2023/2024. Higher graduate numbers observed in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 could be attributed to flexible measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic (see **Table 8.6.**).

The pattern of increasing enrolment in higher education without a corresponding rise in the number of graduates raises concerns about internal efficiency. This troubling trend suggests potential challenges within the system, such as high drop-out rates, extended time to graduation or poor academic performance, which may require further investigation.

Graduation varies by subgroup, with the number of non-Jordanian students decreasing. Non-Jordanian graduates saw a decline in numbers over the years, dropping from 8,404 in 2016/2017 to 6,511 in 2023/2024. This represents a significant decrease in their share of total graduates, possibly due to the challenges mentioned above, but also potentially due to financial or geopolitical constraints that particularly impact non-Jordanian students. The overall decline in scholarships and support programmes for non-Jordanians, especially refugees, may also be contributory factors.

By contrast, the proportion of female graduates has increased. The higher number of female graduates compared to males aligns with the same upward trend in enrolment, but also with the pattern of females outperforming males seen in other education subsectors. The data show that while females accounted for just over half (57.4%) of total graduates in 2016/2017, the figure jumped to 60.8% in 2023/2024.

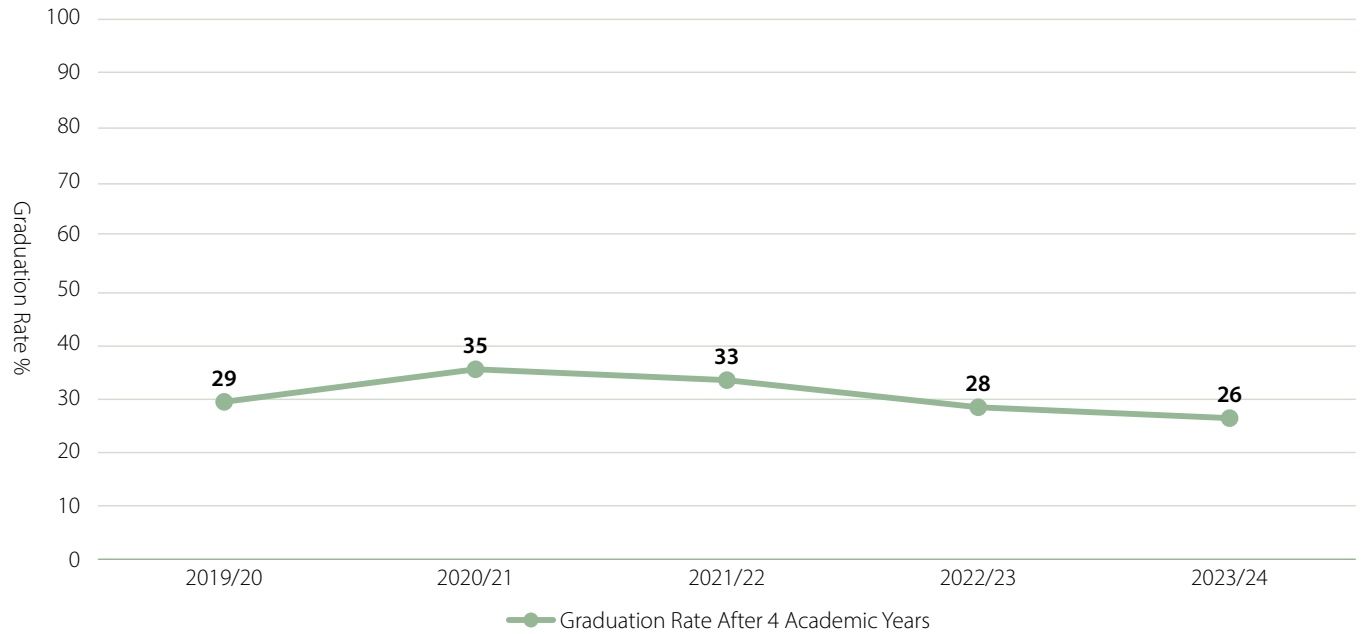
Table 8.6. Higher education graduates by sex and nationality, 2015/2016–2022/2023

Year	Jordanian				Jordanian Total	Non-Jordanian				Non-Jordanian Total	Grand Total
	Female	%	Male	%		Female	%	Male	%		
2016/2017	35,704	57.4	26,518	42.6	62,222	3,169	37.7	5,235	62.3	8,404	70,626
2017/2018	39,285	59.0	27,261	41.0	66,546	3,601	40.5	5,298	59.5	8,899	75,445
2018/2019	37,121	58.5	26,361	41.5	63,482	3,342	36.4	5,834	63.6	9,176	72,658
2019/2020	37,253	60.3	24,563	39.7	61,816	3,399	37.6	5,634	62.4	9,033	70,849
2020/2021	45,916	60.2	30,411	39.8	76,327	3,658	36.2	6,443	63.8	10,101	86,428
2021/2022	45,323	60.0	30,243	40.0	75,566	3,854	43.8	4,950	56.2	8,804	84,370
2022/2023	40,610	60.9	26,071	39.1	66,681	4,579	56.2	3,566	43.8	8,145	74,826
2023/2024	39,633	60.8	25,505	39.2	65,138	3,260	50.1	3,251	49.9	6,511	71,649

Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

Average graduation rates have fluctuated in the last five years but show a decline overall. Using the enrolment and graduation data for the academic years 2019/2020 until 2023/2024, the graduation rate was computed for the cohort of students who enrolled in a certain academic year and graduated after four years of study (which is the average number of years needed for completing a bachelor's degree, the predominant degree that students pursue in Jordan). Based on this analysis, the average graduation rate in the five-year period was just 30%, with the highest rate (35%) recorded in 2020/2021 and the lowest rate (26%) in 2023/2024 (see **Figure 8.7.**). The declining rate aligns with the previous analysis, which indicates the presence of challenges facing students in Jordan to complete their higher education studies.

Figure 8.7. Graduation rate in higher education, 2019/2020–2023/2024



Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

8.3.2. Higher education faculty[166]

The faculty cohort for higher education has grown in terms of numbers but not necessarily in terms of capacity or opportunities for career progression.

The number of faculty members has increased, though middle-ranking positions remain limited. The number of faculty members in higher education increased from 10,928 in 2019 to 12,629 in 2023, indicating a growth over time of 15.6% over the entire period. The largest growth was observed in the ranks of professor (37%) and lecturer (27%) (see **Table 8.7.**). While increases in the number of professor and associate professor faculty members reflect a positive development, showing that faculty members are advancing in their positions, the rather stable numbers of assistant professors suggest limited opportunities for faculty promotion and career progression. As for lecturers, the growth in their numbers suggests a reliance of higher education institutes on lower-ranking faculty members for teaching. This may also be linked to the increase in student enrolment figures across the system.

Table 8.7. Higher education faculty members by academic rank (2019–2023)

Faculty members by academic rank	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Professor	2,282	2,541	2,662	2,764	3,129
Associate	3,001	3,094	3,152	3,159	3,357
Assistant	3,731	3,671	3,593	3,474	3,702
Lecturer	1,914	2,001	2,044	2,139	2,441
Total	**10,928**	**11,307**	**11,451**	**11,536**	**12,629**

Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

The total number of faculty members rose from 12,629 in 2023 to 13,899 in 2024, indicating 10% growth. This is explained by the increase in the number of students enrolled and the introduction of new programmes and courses. Data on the distribution of faculty members by broad field of study in higher education is available for the academic year 2024/2025 and show that most faculty members are in medicine and health-related fields (3,143 faculty members in medicine, dentistry and medical sciences), accounting for 23% of total faculty (see **Table 8.8.**).

Table 8.8. Distribution of higher education faculty members by field of study, 2024/2025

Discipline	Number of faculty members
Medicine and dentistry	1,045
Medical sciences/Medical support	2,098
Veterinary medicine and agriculture	287
Engineering	1,881
Natural sciences	1,098
IT	1,208
Shariaa (Islamic studies)	425

166 Due to data limitations, the analysis could not address faculty members distribution by sex, nor look into faculty who own industry experience, which is an important factor to enhance the relevance of teaching in response to the evolving labour market requirements.

Discipline	Number of faculty members
Education	987
Architecture and design	401
Law	424
Sports sciences	176
Management	1,768
Literature, social and human sciences	1,342
Foreign languages	421
Archaeology, tourism and hospitality	237
Journalism, media and television	101
Total	**13,899**

Source: AQACHEI data, 2024.

A rise in research activity by faculty members reflects a positive trend in line with the subsector's ambition to strengthen research and development in higher education. Jordan's higher education sector has seen an impressive growth in research production in recent years. The number of published papers by university faculty members increased significantly from 6,308 in 2019 to 16,451 in 2023, constituting a striking 160% increase over five years. The ratio of published research papers to the number of faculty members has improved from 0.6 publications per faculty member in 2019 to 1.3 in 2023, reflecting a significant growth in research output. Over the five-year period, faculty members have contributed on average 0.9 publications per person (see **Table 8.9.**). This reflects a positive development in the faculty's engagement in scholarly work, collectively producing a total of 52,916 published papers during the observed period. This may also indicate a heightened emphasis on research incentives at the institutional level, where research activity is linked to faculty promotions and career advancement. Overall, strong research productivity in universities has the potential to greatly enhance the academic reputation of Jordanian institutions.

Table 8.9. Published academic research by higher education faculty members in Jordan

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Published papers	6,308	8,110	9,739	12,308	16,451	52,916
Number of faculty	10,928	11,307	11,451	11,536	12,629	57,851
Ratio	**0.6**	**0.7**	**0.9**	**1.1**	**1.3**	**0.9**

Source: MoHESR data, 2024.

8.3.3. Higher education quality assurance processes

Accreditation and licensing of higher education is overseen by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions, with all public and private universities and colleges required to meet minimum operational standards.

The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions plays a key role in strengthening the quality of higher education in Jordan by setting standards for accreditation, monitoring, evaluations and quality assurance, enhancing competitiveness and adhering to transparency and accountability, with the aim of achieving international standards that serve the interests of students and society.

Similar instructions are issued by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions for specific types of higher education institutions, such as private universities and public and private community colleges and technical universities, providing a framework for licensing and operations while ensuring adherence to quality and national standards and promoting alignment with labour market needs. All instructions and regulations are available on the commission's website.[167]

8.3.4. Relevance of higher education programmes

The goals of Jordan's higher education subsector include offering more diverse courses, strengthening ties with industry, improving graduate employment, using information and communication technology in teaching and research and promoting research and innovation to support sustainable development and societal needs.

To support the achievement of these goals, the Higher Education Council issued guidelines in 2021[168] to higher education institutions on the development of academic programmes and courses that align with national priorities, respond to labour market demands and enhance graduate employability.

A rapid mapping of programmes related to environmental sustainability currently offered by higher education institutions during the 2024/2025 academic year found that at least 23 universities and technical colleges provide such programmes. Fields of specialization include renewable and sustainable energy engineering, renewable energy technologies, water and environmental management, environmental technology, sustainable development engineering, climate change and land sustainability, occupational health and safety, environmental sciences and sustainable agriculture. In 2024/2025, at least 5,403 students were enrolled in these programmes. The majority (77.6%) were enrolled in bachelor's programmes, followed by intermediate diploma/technical education (15.1%), master's (6.6%) and doctoral programmes (0.8%).

To improve both the quality and relevance of higher education, many programmes incorporate mandatory on-the-job training components, such as internships, which students must complete as a graduation requirement. These are common in a wide range of disciplines, including medicine and health, education, psychology, engineering, business and finance, IT, communication and media, languages, environmental studies and art and design.

167 اعتماد الجامعات - هيئة اعتماد مؤسسات التعليم العالي وضمان جودتها.

168 Official memo, Higher Education Council, 2021 (Higher Education Council, 2021).

8.4. Cost and financing of higher education

This section examines the financing and expenditures for the higher education subsector, focusing on financial data for the fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023.[169] The analysis includes budget law data from the MoHESR,[170] the Jordan Academy of Arabic and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions, as well as data relating to a technical assistance and training programme run by the above-mentioned commission for staff of the National Center for Examinations, which is designed to enhance academic program quality at universities.

The analysis is structured into three main parts. First, it examines intrasectoral budget trade-offs and their evolution over time to assess the relative priority given to the higher education subsector in public funding. Secondly, it evaluates budget execution performance to understand the higher education system's ability to utilize domestic resources allocated for the subsector. Finally, the analysis explores the evolution of higher education unit costs per student over time.

8.4.1. Intrasectoral trade-offs: Higher education allocations over time

Higher education funding has declined over time despite its significant allocations. While higher education remains one of the top subsectors receiving public funding, its share of total education allocations has steadily declined. In 2016, higher education received JOD 139.1 million (constant 2023 prices), representing 11.8% of total education allocations (see **Figure 8.8.**). By 2020, its share dropped to 9.6% (JOD 121.2 million in constant terms), and by 2023, it further declined to JOD 110.1 million (7.5%). This shift in funding priorities has resulted in higher education dropping from its position as the second largest recipient of education funding to the third largest in 2023, below secondary education.

Higher education funding has significantly decreased despite overall growth in education allocations. While total public education allocations increased by 25% between 2016 and 2023,[171] funding for higher education declined by 21% over the same period. This represents an average annual decrease of 0.3%, highlighting a diversion of resources towards other subsectors (see **Figure 8.8.**).[172]

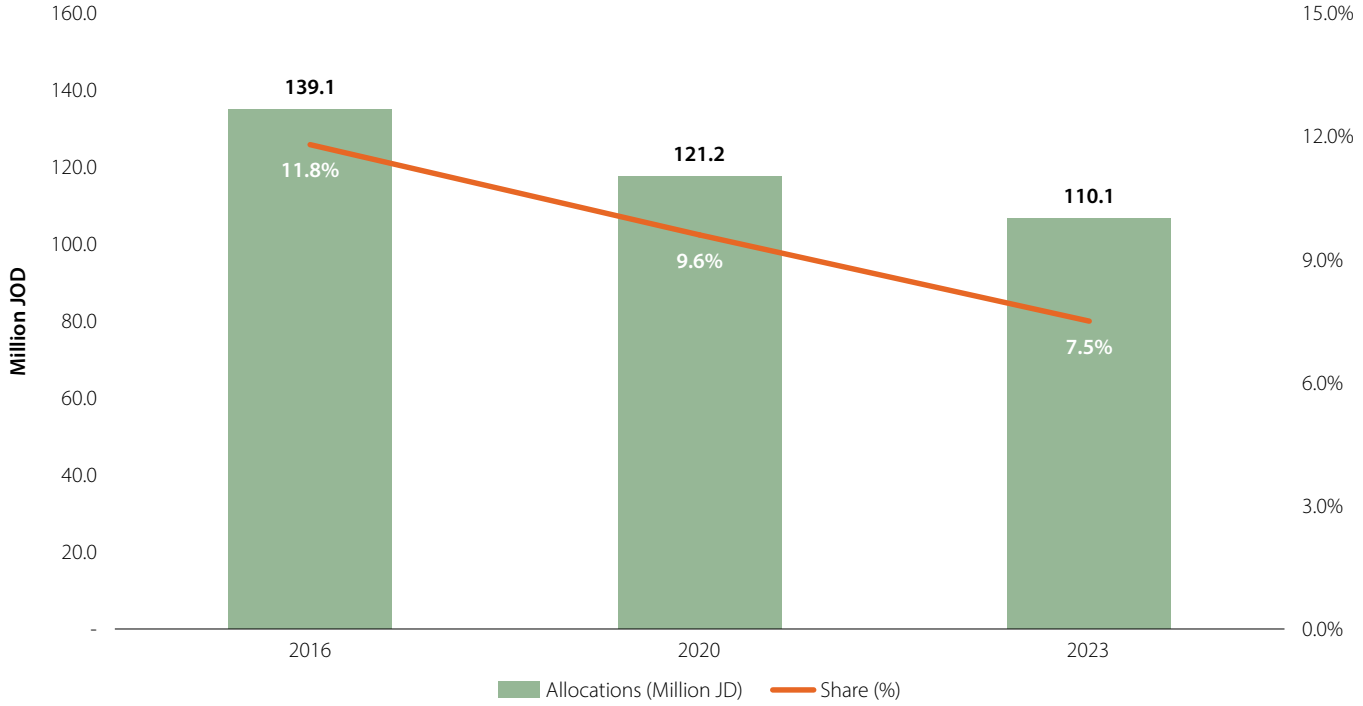
169 For estimated allocations, data are retrieved from the MoE's budget laws for the fiscal years 2017, 2021 and 2024.

170 Financial data from the MoHESR cover the subsidies provided to public universities in Jordan. The data used do not account for public universities' expenditures coming from other sources, as these institutions are semi-autonomous and have other sources of revenue beyond government subsidies.

171 With an average annual growth rate of 3%.

172 In addition to the limited scholarship opportunities and higher tuition fees for non-Jordanians, the declining funding for higher education over time may disproportionately impact refugee students, further restricting their access to university education. Some universities have taken steps (joint initiative with UNHCR) to change this policy.

Figure 8.8. Public allocations[173] to higher education and its share of the education budget (2016, 2020 and 2023, in JOD million and per cent)



Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department budget laws for the fiscal years 2017, 2021, and 2024 to retrieve budget allocations re-estimations.

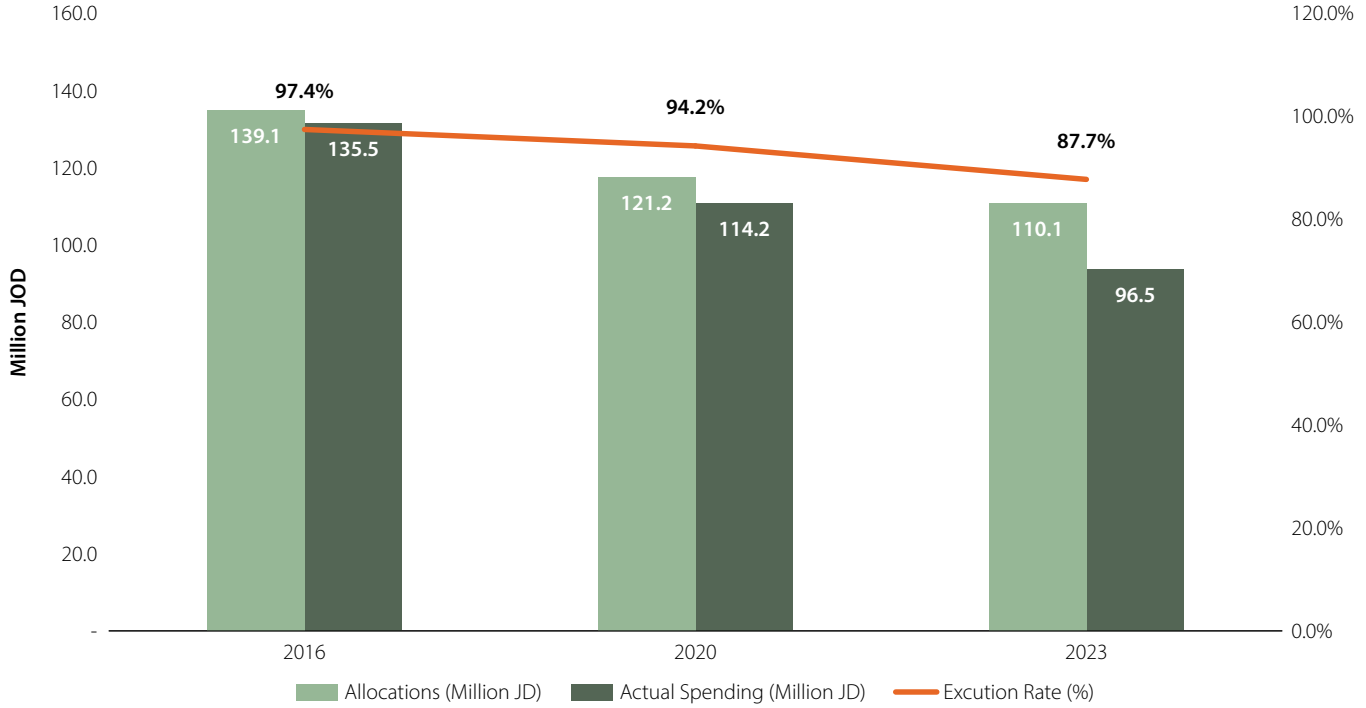
*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here.*

8.4.2. Budget execution in higher education: Trends and challenges

Higher education has experienced challenges in budget execution. The financial execution for higher education has weakened in recent years, following the broader trend observed across the education sector. In addition to the steady decline in budgetary allocations, managing entities for higher education have struggled to fully execute the allocated funding. In 2016, 97.4% of the revised budget for higher education was executed, reflecting a relatively strong financial management performance. However, execution rates dropped to 94.2% in 2020 and further declined to 87.7% in 2023; a 7 percentage-point decrease between 2020 and 2023 (see **Figure 8.9.**).

173 We consider the revised budgeted allocations to account for in-year budget reallocations.

Figure 8.9. Budget allocations vs actual spending and execution rate for higher education (2016, 2020 and 2023)



Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here.*

Capital expenditures for higher education have sharply declined, drastically outpacing the overall reduction in higher education spending. While overall public spending on higher education fell by 29% between 2016 and 2023 (with an average annual decline of 5%), capital expenditures experienced a much steeper drop of 60% over the same period, averaging an annual decline of 12% (see **Table 8.10.**). This indicates a significant shift away from infrastructure and equipment investments in higher education institutions and could pose challenges for maintaining and upgrading university infrastructure.

Table 8.10. Public capital education expenditures by economic classification for higher education (2016, 2020, and 2023, in million JOD[174] and per cent)

	2016		2020		2023			
	Actual spending	Share	Actual spending	Share	Actual spending	Share	Variation 2016–2023	Annual average growth rate 2016–2023
Construction, land/building purchases and engineering studies	33.1	71%	6.9	36%	7.2	39%	-78%	-20%
Equipment, including IT (excl. teaching and learning materials)	1.6	3%	0.5	3%	0.5	3%	-69%	-15%
Rehabilitation and maintenance	1.3	3%	0.1	0.4%	0.01	0.1%	-99%	-50%
Subsidies and grants	9.9	21%	11.1	58%	10.7	57%	8%	1%
Teaching and learning materials	0.5	1%	0.5	2%	0.2	1%	-53%	-10%
Total	**46.4**	**100%**	**19.1**	**100%**	**18.6**	**100%**	**-60%**	**-12%**

Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here. (2) The public capital expenditures shown include expenditures for the MoHESR (including subsidies transferred to public universities), the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions and the Jordan Academy of Arabic.*

Almost all capital expenditures categories have seen drastic reductions, except for subsidies and grants. Among capital spending categories, rehabilitation and maintenance witnessed the most severe decline. Expenditures fell from JOD 1.3 million in 2016 to just JOD 0.1 million in 2020 and further declined to JOD 0.01 million in 2023, marking a sharp 99% reduction and an average annual decline of 50%. Similarly, investments in construction and building/land purchases dropped from JOD 33 million in 2016 to JOD 6.9 million in 2020, with only a minor recovery

174 Constant 2023 prices

to JOD 7.2 million in 2023, representing an overall decline of 78%. Spending on equipment also saw a sharp contraction, decreasing by 69% between 2016 and 2023, from JOD 1.6 million in 2016 to only JOD 0.5 million in 2023. Teaching and learning materials were the least affected category, relatively speaking, though spending on this category still declined by 53% over the period, with an average annual reduction of 10%.

Subsidies and grants are the only category on which capital spending increased over the period. Unlike other categories, subsidies and grants, primarily representing financial support from the MoHESR to public universities and colleges, increased by 8% over the period, with an average annual growth rate of 1%.

8.4.3. Public unit costs for higher education: Trends and insights

Public unit costs for higher education have declined significantly. Between 2016 and 2023, the cost of educating a student in higher education dropped sharply. In 2016, the unit cost per student was 0.7 times that of a basic education student, meaning that for every 7 students in higher education, 10 students in basic education could be schooled for the same cost (see **Table 8.11.**).[175] This ratio remained stable in 2020, before falling to 0.5 by 2023, reflecting a 35% decline in higher education unit costs over the period, with an average annual decline of 6%.

Enrolment growth and funding reductions have driven the decline in unit costs. The decline in unit costs is primarily due to a 38% increase in higher education public enrolments (from 179,278 students in 2016 to 248,285 students in 2023), coupled with a 0.3% reduction in public recurrent expenditures for the subsector.

Higher education public unit costs have also decreased relative to GDP per capita. In 2016, the public spending per higher education student represented 15% of GDP per capita, a ratio that remained constant in 2020. However, by 2023, it dropped to 10%, marking a 5 percentage-point decline over the 7-year period.

Table 8.11. Public unit cost for higher education in 2016, 2020 and 2023 (JOD million constant, at 2023 prices)

	2016	2020	2023	Variation 2016–2023	Annual average growth rate 2016–2023
Higher education	**497**	**468**	**322**	**-35%**	**-6%**
% of GDP per capita	15	15	10		
Multiple of basic education	0.7	0.7	0.5		

Source: Author's calculation based on the General Budget Department budget laws for the fiscal years 2016, 2020 and 2023, EMIS enrolment figures for 2015/2016, 2019/2020 and 2022/2023, and the MoF financial government bulletin of August 2024.

*Note: (1) The notes accompanying **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** are applicable here. (2) Enrolments in public institutions only are used. (3) Public unit cost here is based on recurrent expenditures only, excluding capital investments.*

175 The calculation of public unit costs focuses on recurrent expenditures, as capital investments (e.g. construction, equipment and rehabilitation) represent long-term infrastructure spending that benefits multiple student generations and do not reflect the annual per-student cost. Recurrent expenditures, mainly staff salaries and operational costs, better capture the direct annual financial effort required to deliver education for each student.

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

Higher education in Jordan has seen steady progress, becoming a key driver of economic and social growth. However, financial sustainability remains a pressing concern, as public funding for higher education declined by 21% between 2016 and 2023, and external aid has become less predictable.

The subsector's strategic priorities focus on quality programmes, high-quality infrastructure, diverse course offerings, improved industry linkages and better employment outcomes. Ultimately, the goal is to reach an accessible and equitable, research-driven and technology-enabled higher education system that is reputable, competitive, flexible, agile, inclusive and capable of providing Jordan and the international community with competent graduates.

A variety of pathways are available for students to progress to higher education, with a range of public and private institutions and community colleges providing diverse higher education programmes that lead to technical diplomas and graduate and undergraduate academic degrees.

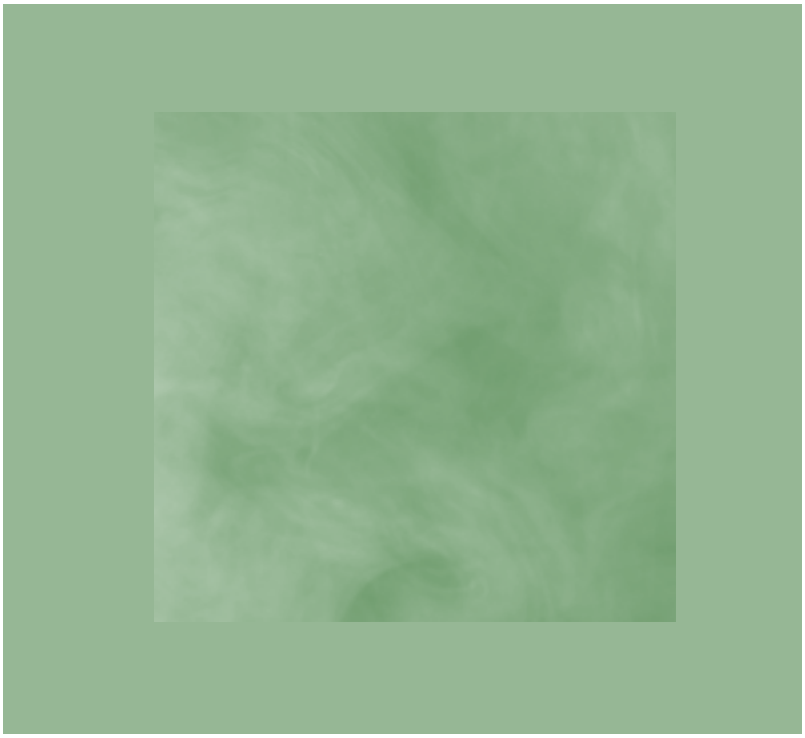
The sector has seen important growth in its student population since 2016/2017, with an annual average growth rate of 6.8% and with higher enrolment rates for women than for men. The demand focused on academic and undergraduate studies, suggesting that practical skill-based training under technical and vocational diplomas are less popular.

Support systems for enhancing equity and participation of vulnerable groups in higher education are limited, though have grown significantly in recent years. Several scholarship schemes have been available since 2016 to enhance access for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians. However, decline in funding over the years has affected the outreach of these programmes.

While enrolments have increased, graduation rates have declined, suggesting potential challenges within the system, such as high drop-out rates, extended time to graduation or poor academic performance.

Higher education faculty has grown in terms of numbers but not necessarily in terms of capacity or opportunities for career progression. An increase in research activity by faculty members reflects a positive trend in line with the subsector's ambition to strengthen research and in higher education.

Higher education institutions are diversifying their course offerings and expanding programmes and courses that address environmental sustainability and technology, such as renewable energy and sustainable agriculture, to meet global advancements and enhance the relevance of higher education to meet labour market needs.



CHAPTER 9:

Education and Labour Market Dynamics

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between education and labour market dynamics concerns how effectively the education system supports broader economic and social goals. It involves assessing how well the system prepares graduates and skilled individuals to meet labour market demands and contribute to national development. This connection is essential because it links educational outcomes to economic productivity, employment opportunities and societal well-being, helping to ensure that investments in education generate meaningful returns for both individuals and society. Understanding these dynamics enables policy-makers to identify mismatches, allocate resources more effectively and design strategies and programmes that foster the skills required for inclusive economic growth.

For Jordan, a recent study notes that "[t]he labour market […] is characterized by relatively high unemployment and constrained by serious skill gaps and shortages, suggesting that the education and training system – including [technical and vocational education and training] – is not fully meeting labour-market needs" (Jordan, Ministry of Education, and UNESCO, 2023). For education policy-makers, this finding signals an urgent need to tailor education policies and programmes more closely to labour market dynamics and ensure that the education system produces graduates equipped with the skills required by employers which enable them to secure stable, well-paying jobs.

Jordan has one of the lowest labour market participation rates in the world. It is especially low among youth, women and non-Jordanians. An expanding services sector has in recent years increased the demand for low-/medium-skill jobs and depressed wages and purchasing power, offset by improvements for certain groups and skill levels. Persistent yet evolving gendered wage disparities and common mismatches between education and job requirements reflect the complex economic dynamics of the Jordan labour market. These are further mirrored by unemployment patterns, which vary greatly according to age, education level, gender and nationality. High numbers of young people not in education or training also indicate challenges in the school-to-work transition (Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2024; European Training Foundation, 2021; ILO, 2023, 2025; World Bank, 2024).

On the positive side, the labour force's educational profile has improved slightly since 2017, with an increase in the share of workers completing upper secondary education. Higher education has been shown to significantly increase the likelihood of employment, particularly for Jordanian women, whose earnings have also improved, especially in high- and medium-skill jobs, though structural issues in the labour market and social norms may prevent full utilization of their skills and qualifications. The burgeoning service sector contributes to expanding employment opportunities, especially for women, and non-Jordanian nationals (ILO, 2025).

Against this backdrop, the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) 2023–2033 for Jordan emphasizes "accelerated growth through unleashing Jordan's full economic potential" as a key pillar (Jordan, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022). The education system has a key role to play in unlocking this potential and building the human capital needed to fulfil this vision for the future. The analysis in this chapter reveals a vast reservoir of untapped talent within the country and points to the education system's pivotal responsibility in optimizing this potential.

This chapter focuses on understanding the economic impact of the education system and its implications for education policy. Firstly, it provides an overview of the structure and dynamics of the labour market in Jordan, looking at labour market participation, wages and productivity and unemployment trends. Secondly, the chapter examines the employability of education system leavers and graduates, outlining the education profile of the labour force and exploring how educational attainment influences employment and unemployment rates. The chapter also analyses patterns in school-to-work-transitions, and of youth not in employment, education or training. The level of match between education attainment and job requirements is also assessed.

9.1 Labour market policy, structure and dynamics

This section provides an overview of the labour market policy landscape and highlights how low labour force participation and unemployment in Jordan plays out differently for different demographic groups, within an expanding service sector and growing informal economy.

9.1.1. Overview of labour market policy landscape

The policy initiatives of Jordan to address skills gaps and improve labour market outcomes are tied to overarching international and national development goals, with education and training playing a key role. The Jordan 2025 vision and the strategic objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision 2023–2033 highlight skill development as a growing priority, with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) positioned as a powerful lever to provide access to learning opportunities and work for all people, particularly youth. The Women Empowerment Strategy under the EMV highlights priorities, which include reviewing laws and regulations to enhance women's economic empowerment, developing and implementing an action plan to improve the ranking of Jordan in the Global Gender Gap Index and enhancing national monitoring and tracking of women's economic participation (Jordan, Government, 2015; Jordan, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2022). The National Human Resources Development Strategy 2016–2025 has also aimed to enhance the quality of education and vocational training to meet labour market demands (Jordan, Government, 2016).

Similarly, the Reform Matrix (2018–2024, updated in 2022) seeks to improve the operating environment for growth and address labour market inefficiencies. It comprises a set of policy and structural reforms aimed at maintaining macroeconomic stability, improving the business environment and increasing investments and exports, focusing on improving labour market efficiency, increasing private sector growth and enhancing social safety nets (World Bank, 2024).

While Jordan has made significant progress in implementing labour market reforms and improving workforce readiness, policy-related challenges remain. The establishment of the Reform Secretariat and the successful execution of specific reforms through the Reform Matrix are notable achievements. However, challenges persist, including high unemployment rates, particularly among youth and women, and the need for continuous adaptation of policies to address emerging labour market trends (World Bank, 2024). The ongoing mismatch between education and labour market needs underscores the importance of policy development that strengthens vocational training programmes and aligns educational outcomes with employer demands (Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2024).

Active labour market policies (ALMPs) play a crucial role in addressing unemployment and improving workforce readiness in Jordan. ALMPs can be described as government interventions designed to help unemployed people find work and improve the functioning of the labour market. In Jordan, ALMPs for reskilling and upskilling programmes, job-matching services and support for entrepreneurship, for example, were found to be effective and innovative in the context of the COVID-19 crisis (European Training Foundation, 2021). The need for targeted policies to support young people, particularly women, in their transition from education to employment is emphasized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (ILO, 2023). Despite these efforts, challenges remain, including the need for better coordination among stakeholders and the integration of gender-sensitive approaches to ensure inclusive labour market participation (European Training Foundation, 2021).

Education policy needs to take into account

labour market projections, which indicate that the demand for skilled labour and skill diversification in Jordan will continue to grow. Expansion is particularly anticipated in sectors such as engineering,[176] information technology and health care, suggesting a need for education initiatives that respond to increased demand for specialized technical skills in these sectors (Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2024; European Training Foundation, 2021). TVET and higher education policies should also align with future labour market trends, which show that Jordan will require more workers with advanced technical skills and digital literacy to leverage growth in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, food processing, agriculture and the garments and textiles sector (UNESCWA, 2024). Crucially, there is a need for better alignment between educational institutions and the private sector to ensure curricula foster soft skills, such as creativity, problem-solving and innovation, as well as technical and digital skills needed to meet evolving economic demands.

Increased investment in early childhood education and development (ECED) has also shown positive results in enabling women to join the workforce (ILO, 2024).

While the education sector is pivotal in developing human capital, it alone cannot solve labour market inefficiencies in Jordan. A holistic approach is necessary to eliminate structural bottlenecks and maximize the benefits of a more educated workforce for national growth. This approach involves several interconnected areas, such as improving labour market efficiency, fostering a more conducive business environment for private sector growth, streamlining governance and the regulatory framework, developing infrastructure and advancing technological adoption. If education reform goes hand in hand with improvements in these areas, Jordan can leverage its educated workforce and drive economic progress.

9.1.2. Participation in the labour market and employment

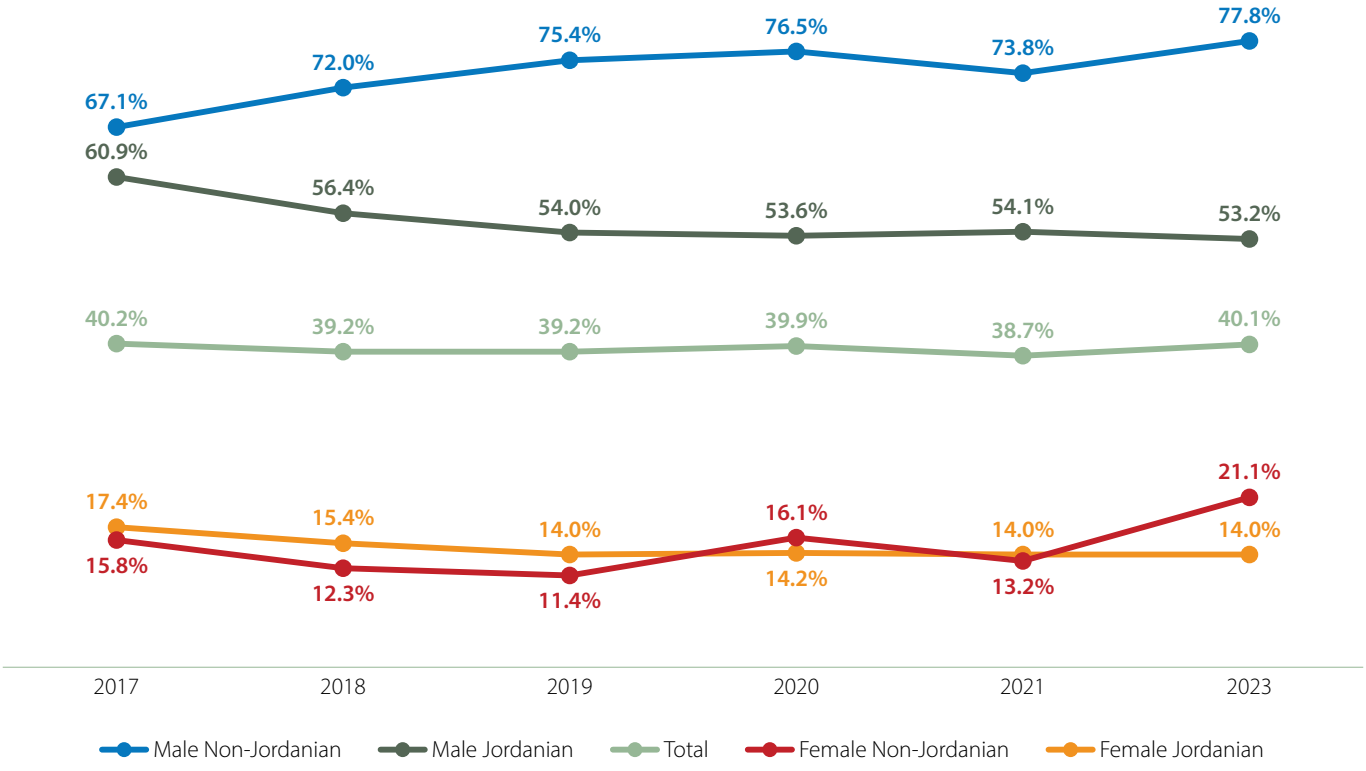
This section highlights that the declining participation of Jordanian nationals in the labour market, high levels of informal employment and persistent unemployment among youth and women collectively combine to create a shifting labour market landscape.[177]

Labour force participation

Jordan has consistently had one of the lowest rates of labour force participation in the region over the 2017–2023 period. Labour force participation was 40.1% in 2023, a figure that has remained relatively stable over the period, though it masks a decline for women and Jordanian citizens (see **Figure 9.1**).[178]

176 Engineering is a closed sector for refugees in Jordan.
177 Unless indicated otherwise, the analysis in this chapter is based on data from ILO's Labour Force Survey database (ILO, 2025).
178 The chapter primarily uses data from the ILO, which cover both Jordanians and non-Jordanians. Official labour statistics from the Department of Statistics refer only to Jordanians, with limited indicators available for non-Jordanians. The ILO provides a more comprehensive data set on the labour force in Jordan.

Figure 9.1. Labour force participation rate by sex and nationality (per cent), 2017–2023

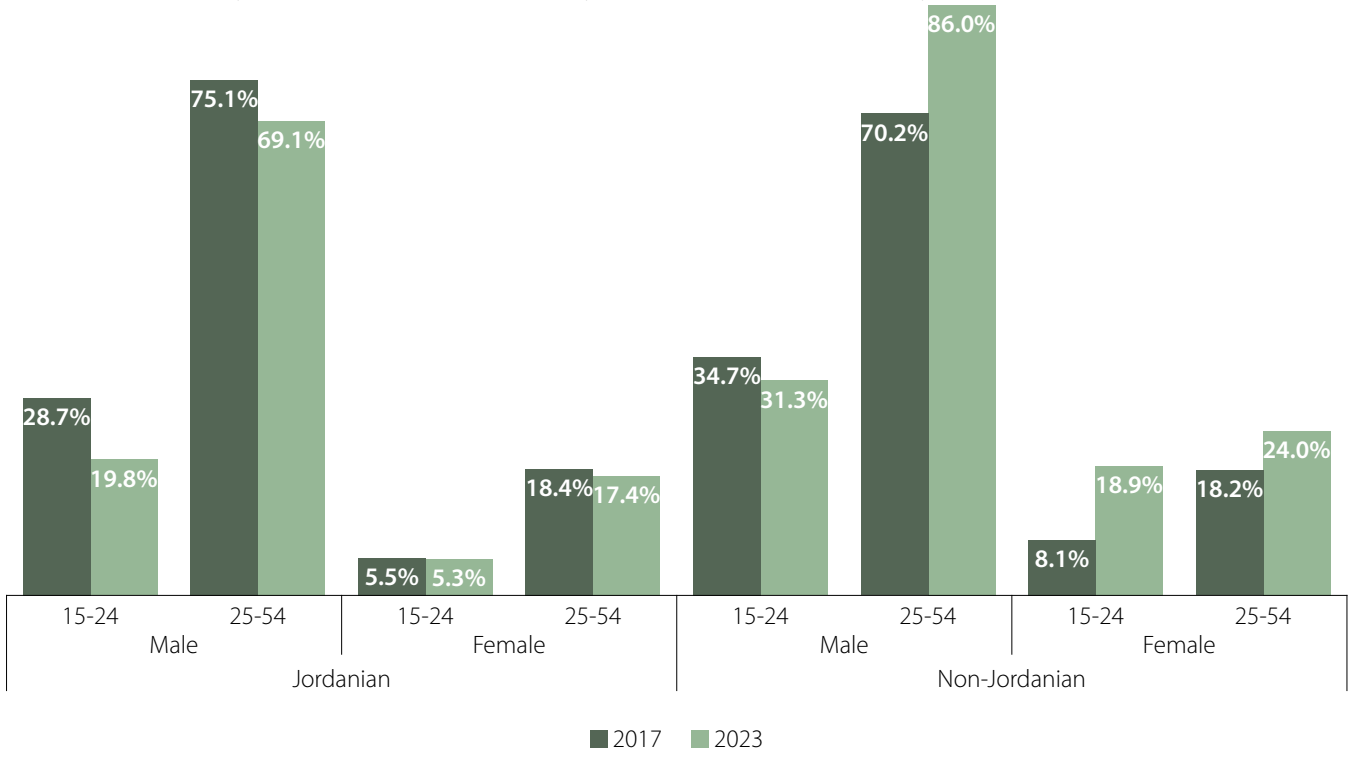


Source: ILO (2025).

Employment patterns

One in three adults residing in Jordan was employed in 2023 (33.5%), when the employment-to-population ratio recorded its highest value for the period (2017-2023). However, the likelihood of employment varies considerably according to sex, age and nationality. Non-Jordanians are more likely to be employed than Jordanians of either sex and any age, except young women (15–24). One in every two non-Jordanians were employed in 2023 (50.7%), with the highest employment-to-population ratio being observed among prime-aged workers (86%, male 25–54, 24%, female 25–54). Among Jordanian prime-aged men, who account for most active workers in Jordan, the employment ratio declined to 69.1% in 2023 from 75.1% in 2017 (see **Figure 9.2**).

Figure 9.2. Employment/population ratio by sex, age and nationality (per cent), 2017–2023



Source: ILO (2025).

The vast majority of the workforce in Jordan is concentrated in the expanding service sector,[179] while other sectors have declined. Approximately 80% of employment in Jordan was in the service sector in 2023, a slightly higher share than in 2017 (77%). However, the contribution of the public sector to total employment declined from 18% in 2017 to 14% in 2023. Similarly, the share of manufacturing dipped from 11% to 8%, and that of construction from 8% to 7%. During the same period, agriculture accounted for just 3% jobs in Jordan on average.

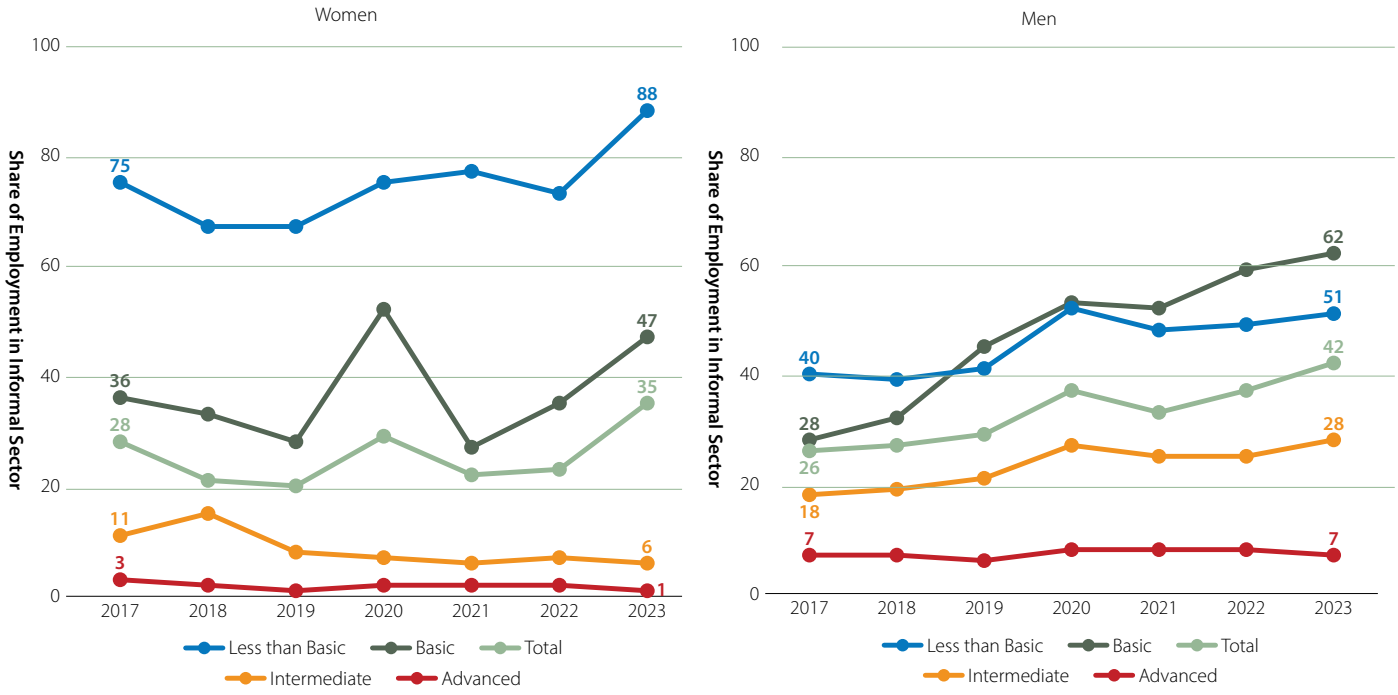
The expansion of the service sector in recent years is largely due to the increased participation of non-Jordanians in the labour market and is accompanied by the expansion of the informal economy (Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2024; European Training Foundation, 2021; ILO, 2023; World Bank, 2024).

In 2023, informal jobs accounted for 55% of total employment in Jordan, a 10-point increase compared to 2017. This increase is mainly explained by the increased informality among workers with basic education, and notably among women.

Most workers outside the formal sector are women with less than basic education working in low-skill occupations, and men with secondary education in medium-skill jobs. In 2023, nine out of 10 employed women and five out of ten employed men with less than basic education were employed outside the formal sector (88% and 51%, respectively), compared to only 1% of women and 7% of men with higher education. Completing basic education significantly reduces the likelihood of informal employment, particularly for women, highlighting the benefit of basic education in accessing formal job opportunities (see **Figure 9.3**).

179 E.g. government services, communication technology, financial services, distribution and tourism, construction and transport, Lloyds Bank

Figure 9.3. Share of employment in informal sector by gender and education (per cent), 2017–2023



Source: ILO (2025).

Education improves youth's chances to enter the formal sector, especially for women. In 2023, only 3% of young workers with higher education were employed outside the formal sector. In contrast, as many as one in two young workers with less than basic education was employed outside the formal sector, and one in four of those with basic or secondary education. Formal employment in services is dominated by the public administration and education sectors, with notable representation of women. Public administration and education accounted for 31% of service sector employment and 16% of total formal jobs in 2023, illustrating the importance of the public sector in the formal labour market in Jordan. The education sector in particular accounted for 40% of female employment in formal jobs in Jordan in 2023.

The share of jobs requiring low/intermediate skills has expanded, creating opportunities for non-Jordanians, while the share of high-skill jobs, primarily held by Jordanians, has declined. In 2023, two-thirds of total employment in Jordan was in occupations requiring intermediate skills, up from 13% in 2017, with more than half of those jobs held by non-Jordanians (53%). Conversely, the share of high-skill jobs has seen a 4-point decline, accounting for 21% of total employment in 2023. This slight change in the skill profile of occupations is largely explained by the increased participation of foreign citizens working in low-skill jobs over the period. Indeed, by 2023, 69.2% of low-skill jobs in Jordan were occupied by foreign citizens, but the figure was less than 10% for high-skill jobs, which are dominated by Jordanians.

Wages

The purchasing power of the average hourly earnings of employees decreased on average by 6% between 2017 and 2023, though patterns in wage differentials for jobs requiring different levels of skill are complex. The decrease in purchasing power is mainly explained by lower average salaries paid to men in occupations requiring medium skills. A key contributing factor is the increased participation of foreign citizens in the labour market in Jordan. By contrast, salaries in both low-skill and high-skill occupations have increased (by 3% and 4%, respectively) between 2017 and

2023. This means that the wage gap between pay for low-skill jobs and pay for medium-skill jobs has narrowed, decreasing from a 38% differential in 2017 to just 23% in 2023. By contrast, the salary disparity between high-skill occupations and others has widened. In 2023, workers in high-skill occupations were paid on average 79% more than workers in medium-skill occupations and 120% more than those in low-skill jobs, compared to 57% and 116%, respectively, in 2017. This evolving wage structure points to a growing financial incentive for pursuing higher education, as the salary advantages for high-skill occupations have become more pronounced. At the same time, the labour market has not generated sufficient opportunities to absorb all its graduates, introducing a fierce level of competition for these high-paying jobs.

Despite some signs of improvement, gender wage gaps persist, particularly in low-skill jobs. Women working in low-skill jobs in 2023 were still paid 60% less than men in similar jobs, a disparity unchanged since 2017. By contrast, gender wage gaps among medium and high-skill occupations have shown some signs of improvement in recent years. In occupations requiring medium skills, women's average hourly earnings have been higher than men's since 2018, with women being paid on average 7% more than their male peers in 2023. The situation is, however, reversed for the case of high-skill occupations, where women were paid on average 7% less than men in similar jobs, a gap that seems to be widening again since 2020, when parity levels were recorded. These trends suggest investment in girls' education is paying dividends up to a certain point, but also that gender discrimination continues to work against equal pay for women and men.

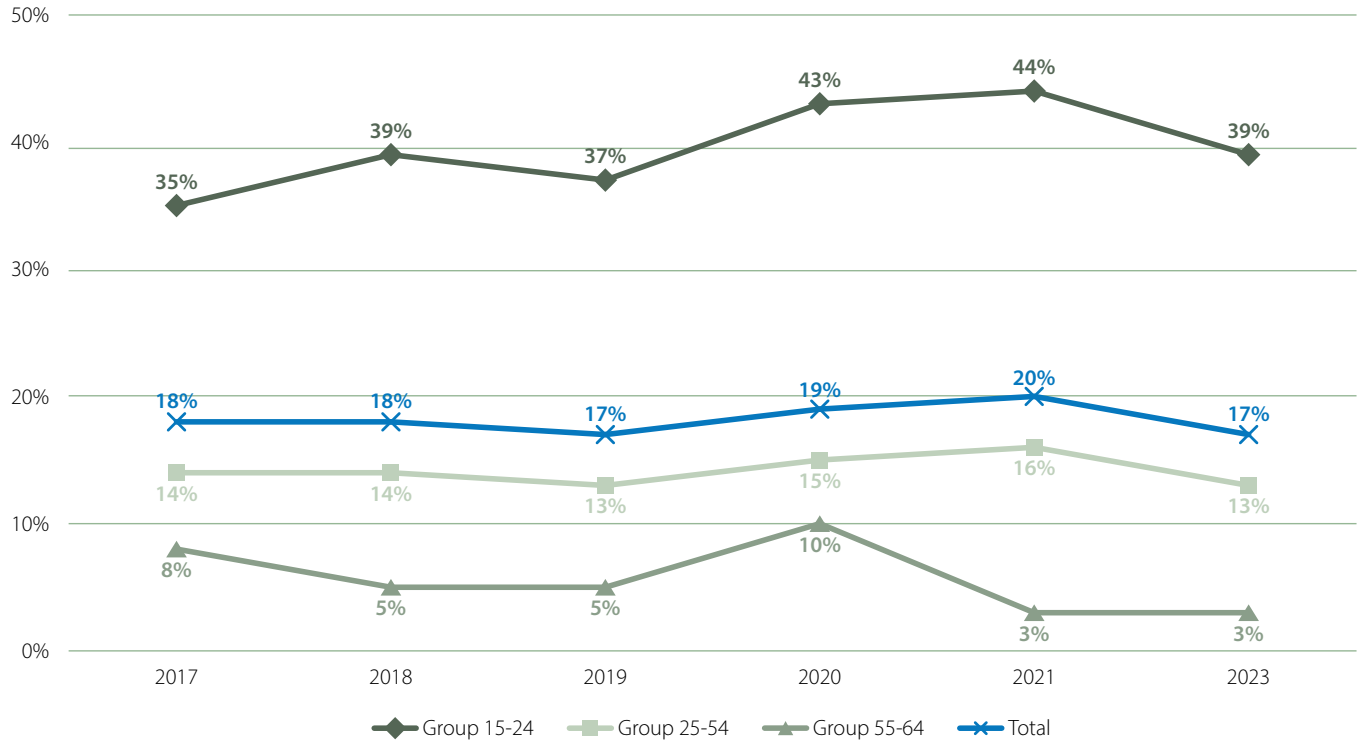
9.1.3. Unemployment trends in Jordan

This section illustrates that national unemployment rates are high overall, and particularly so for young people, university graduates and women, with Jordanian men increasingly affected.

Unemployment disproportionately affected young people, as 39% of unemployed people were younger than 25 years old in 2023,[180] compared to a national average unemployment rate of 17% the same year. Young workers (15–24) are more than three times more likely to be unemployed compared to prime-aged workers aged 25–54 years (39.2%, compared to 12.7%), reflecting a significantly higher risk of joblessness among youth. Of this group, a high number were looking for their first job, though rates varied greatly by gender (70% of unemployed women, compared to 29% of unemployed men), indicating that the transition to work is particularly challenging for young women (see **Figure 9.4**).

180 See section 10.2.3 for further analysis on the school-to-work transition and youth labour market.

Figure 9.4. Unemployment rate by age group (per cent), 2017–2023

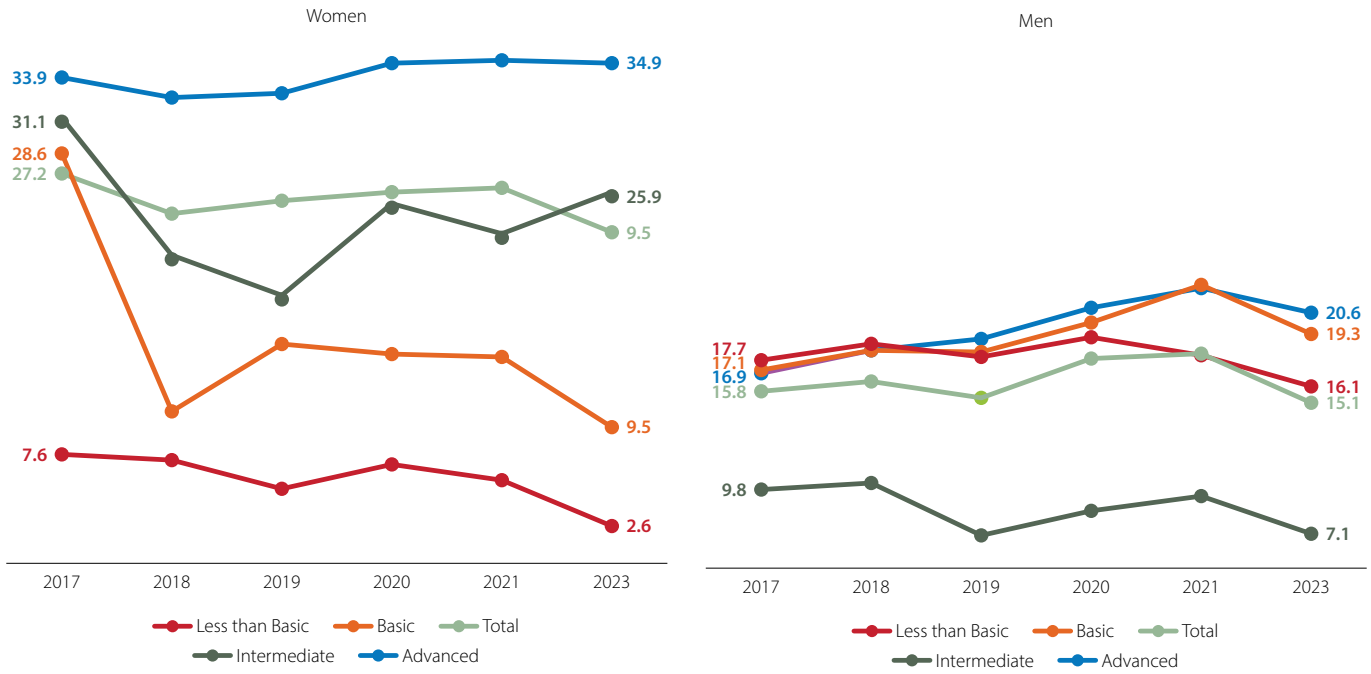


Source: ILO (2025).

Unemployment is also notably higher among workers with higher education. Educated young workers appear to be more affected by unemployment than workers with less than basic education. For example, women with higher education accounted for 20% of total unemployment and were mostly of Jordanian nationality (92%). By contrast, only 2% of young women and 38% of young men with less than basic education were unemployed in 2023, compared to 72% of women and 55% of men under the age of 25 with higher education. In 2023, the highest unemployment rate was recorded among non-Jordanian women with higher education (42%), followed by their Jordanian peers (34%). Non-Jordanian men with higher education were also twice as likely to be unemployed than non-Jordanian men with basic education only (21%, compared to 11%). Jordanian men with higher education, however, have similar chances of being unemployed as Jordanian men with just basic education, and only slightly higher chances than Jordanian men with no education at all or secondary education only.

Women in Jordan face disproportionately high unemployment rates compared to men, with Jordanian women particularly disadvantaged. In 2023, women were 50% more likely to be unemployed than men, at 23.1% versus 15.1%. Among university graduates, female unemployment was significantly higher than male unemployment, as shown in **Figure 9.5**. In 2023, those facing the greatest risk of being unemployed were young women between the ages of 20 and 25 with higher education, at 72%. In contrast, unemployment among Jordanian women with just basic education fell from 36% to 16%, and from 10% to just 2% for non-Jordanian women. Overall, a Jordanian prime-aged woman is 3.5 times more likely to be unemployed than a non-Jordanian woman of the same age (24.1% versus 6.8%).

Figure 9.5. Unemployment rate by gender and education (per cent), 2017–2023



Source: ILO (2025).

Childcare and family responsibilities are key factors keeping women out of the workforce. The share of women outside the labour force due to childcare is 65% in Jordan, compared to just 0.8% of men (ILO, 2024). When the category is broadened to include the share of people who are outside the labour force "due to personal or family reasons", the Jordan figure rises dramatically to 95.4% for women (versus 61.4% for men). An implication is that additional investment in the care economy, particularly in early childhood care and education, would help free up women to become economically active. A recent study notes that "[i]n countries that invest more in pre-primary education, the share of women outside the labour force due to care responsibilities tends to be lower than those in countries investing comparatively less" (ILO, 2024), further underlining the potential economic returns for Jordan of increasing its investment in ECED (see also **Chapter 6**).

While unemployment has declined significantly among less educated women and non-Jordanians, Jordanian men have faced increasing challenges. The unemployment rate for Jordanian men rose from 44% to 53% over the 2017–2023 period, with prime-aged (25–54 years) Jordanian men accounting for one-third of total unemployment in 2023. Notably, Jordanian prime-aged men are 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed than their non-Jordanian counterparts. These trends highlight the complex dynamics of the labour market in Jordan, which cut across age, education level, gender and nationality.

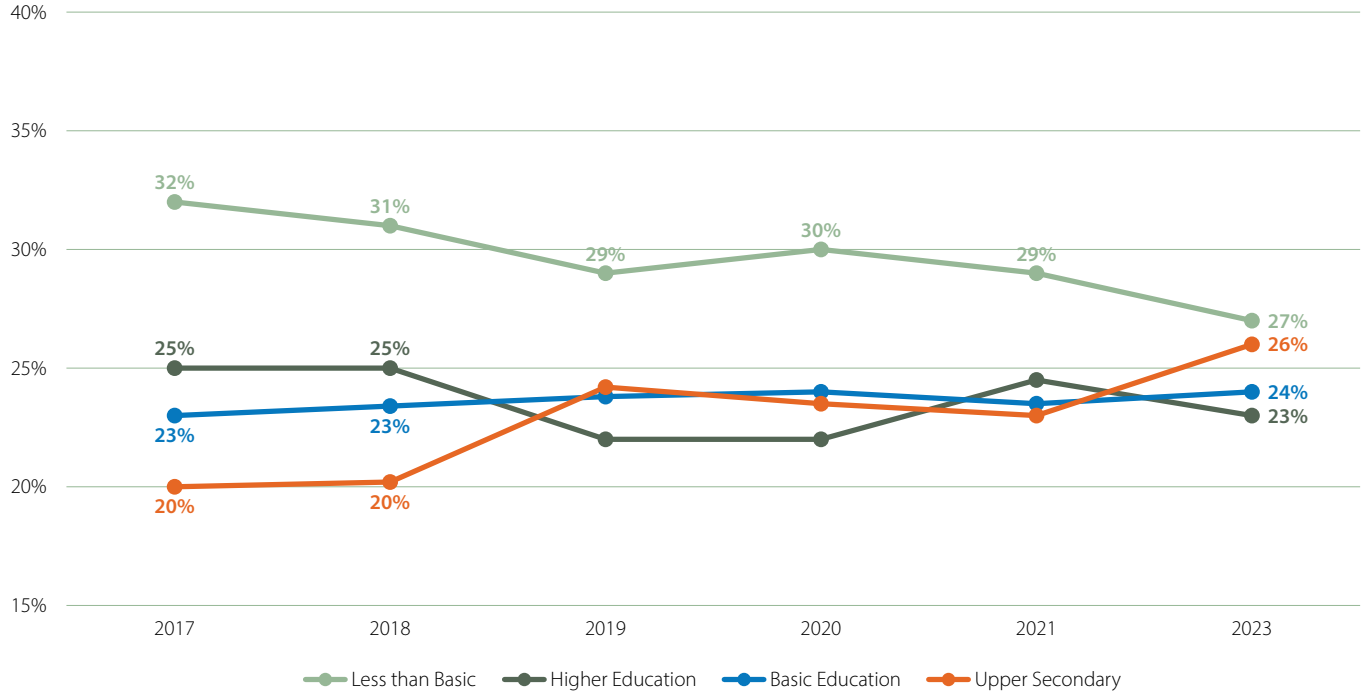
9.2 Employability of education system leavers

9.2.1. Educational profile of the labour force

This section analyses shifting trends in the education profile of the Jordanian workforce, highlighting the particular challenges faced by those with lower educational attainment, especially non-Jordanian women.

The labour force in Jordan experienced a modest improvement in its educational profile between 2017 and 2023. The proportion of economically active people with less than basic education decreased from 32% in 2017 to 27% in 2023. Conversely, the share of economically active people who completed upper secondary education increased from 20% to 26%. Workers with higher education maintained a relatively stable presence in the workforce, accounting for 23% of the labour force in Jordan in 2023, a figure that has shown little fluctuation in recent years (see **Figure 9.6**). These changes suggest a gradual enhancement in the overall educational attainment of the workforce in Jordan, strengthening its human capital pool.

Figure 9.6. Labour force participation by education level (per cent), 2017–2023



Source: ILO (2025).

Gender disparities in educational attainment are particularly pronounced among prime-aged workers in Jordan. Most economically active women in this age group (54%) had higher education. In contrast, active prime-aged men were more likely to have completed secondary (31%) or basic education (26%). Despite these variations, it is important to note that a quarter of all economically active men and women in their prime working years had not completed basic education, highlighting the country's ongoing challenges in producing an educated workforce.

Jordanian workers typically achieve higher levels of education than non-Jordanians. In 2023, 35% of Jordanian workers had completed higher education, compared to only 5% of

non-Jordanian workers. Conversely, 43% of non-Jordanian workers had not completed basic education, in contrast to just 15% of Jordanian nationals. This pattern is partly explained by the presence of a substantial portion of non-Jordanians with refugee status, which exposes them to multiple vulnerabilities that affect their access to education, including limited financial support to continue their studies beyond compulsory education.

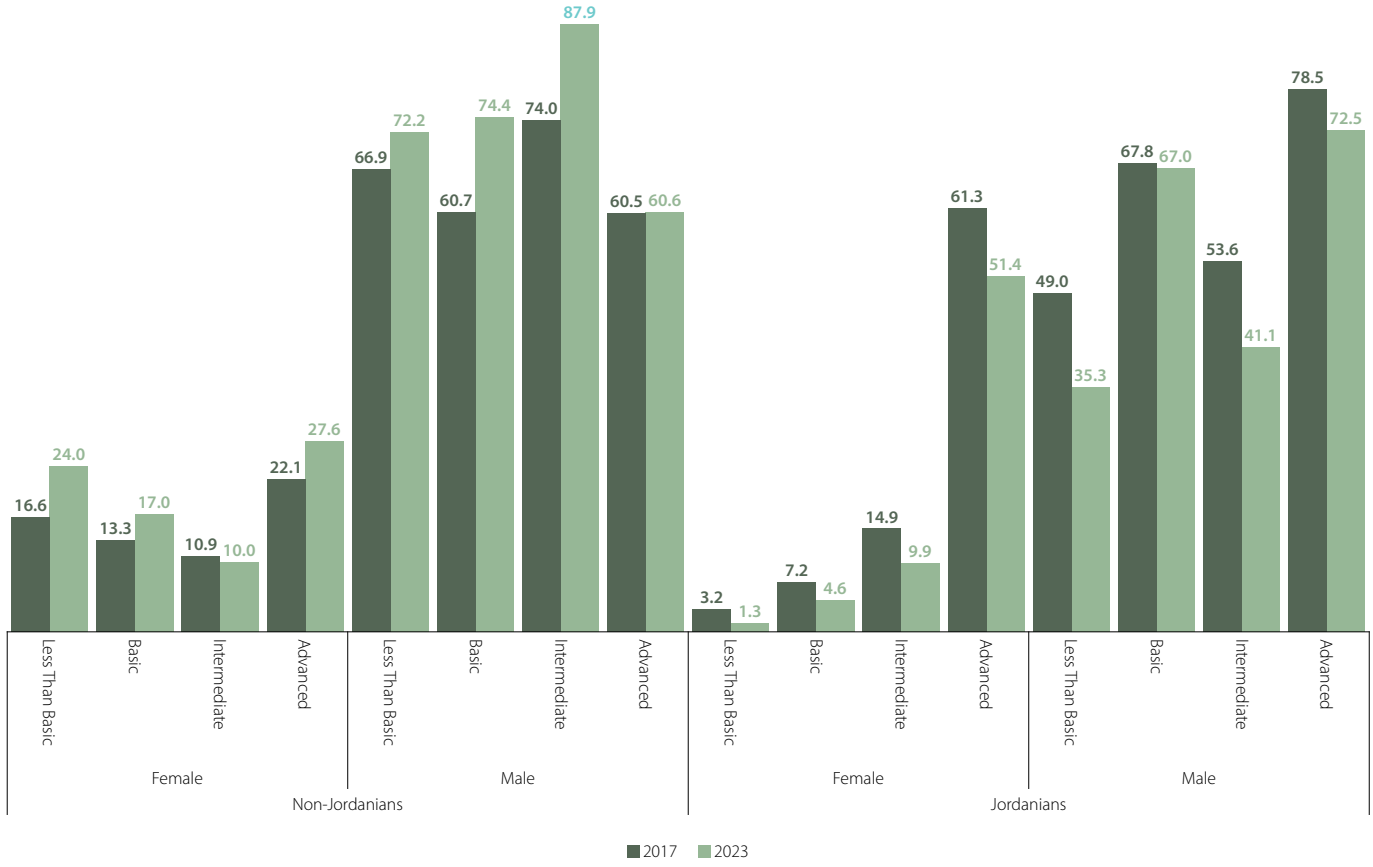
The educational gap is even more pronounced when considering the intersection of nationality and gender. A striking 72% of Jordanian women participating in the labour force had attained higher education. This stands in stark contrast to non-Jordanian women, where 70% of those working or seeking employment had less than basic education. Among men, the disparity persists but is less extreme: 39% of non-Jordanian men had less than basic education, compared to 19% of Jordanian men. Notably, only 3% of Jordanian women in the labour force had less than basic education, underscoring the substantial educational progress of this group.

Higher levels of education continue to strongly correlate with increased workforce engagement. Men and women with higher education diplomas are five times more likely to enter the labour force than their counterparts with just secondary education. The differential is even starker between graduates and those with only basic education, with graduates more than 10 times more likely to be employed than those with only basic education. While higher education significantly increases the likelihood of labour force participation for individuals under 30, the data indicate that these individuals face greater difficulties in securing stable employment compared to their less educated peers. Seventy-nine per cent of the population aged 15–29 having completed higher education were in the labour force in 2023, of which just 41% were employed in a stable or satisfactory job (ILO, 2025).

For Jordanian men, the correlation between education and labour market participation follows a mixed pattern. While those with higher education show the highest labour market participation rate at 72.5%, men with basic education (67%) are more likely to enter the labour market than those with secondary education (41%). The participation rate for Jordanian men with less than basic education has seen a significant decrease, falling from nearly half (49%) in 2017 to one in three in 2023.

For non-Jordanians, the relationship between educational attainment and labour market participation is complex and varies significantly by gender. Strikingly, among non-Jordanian men, those with higher education have the lowest participation rate at 60.6%. By contrast, men with less than basic education show a substantially higher participation rate (72.2%). Among non-Jordanian women, however, the trend differs. Women with higher education are the most likely to join the labour market, though participation rates are still low (27.6%). Those with less than basic education follow closely at 24%. However, participation rates decrease for women with basic education (17%) and drop even further for those with secondary education (10%). These anomalies suggest that factors other than formal education may be driving labour market engagement for this demographic (see **Figure 9.7**).

Figure 9.7. Labour force participation rate by education, sex and nationality (per cent), 2017–2023



Source: ILO (2025).

9.2.2. School-to-work transition[181]

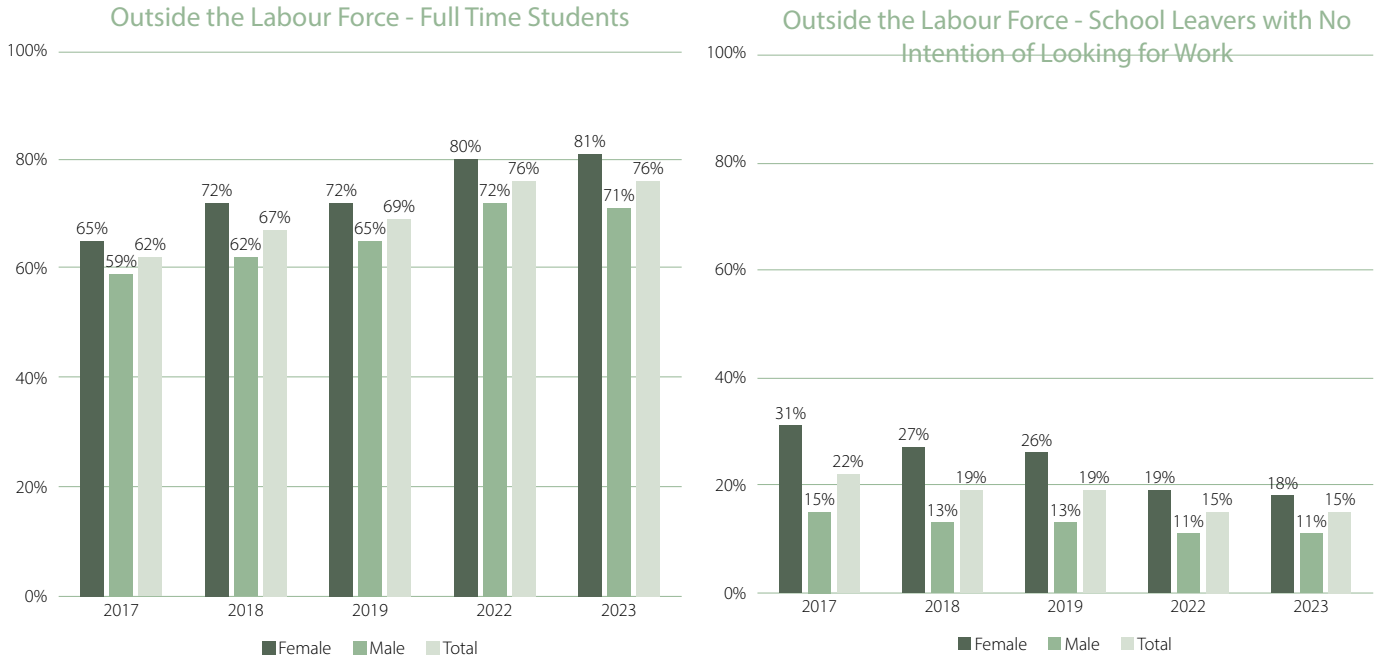
A successful school-to-work transition for young people in Jordan is shaped by a range of key determinants besides education level; transition pathways also matter. Key determinants include educational attainment, social capital (*wasta* or "nepotism"); gender; work experience; legal status (for example, several sectors and occupations are not open to refugees); economic conditions and personal attributes. These interact dynamically with different transition pathways to produce different transition outcomes. Prospects of entering the workforce thus will differ depending on students' determinants and whether they transition from compulsory education, from vocational education, from tertiary education to the public sector, from tertiary education to the private sector, or are returning to education (Al-Batayneh, 2024). Another factor affecting the transition is young people waiting to find work in the public sector due to its prestige, job security and the associated benefits package and working conditions. However, job opportunities in the public sector are limited, and young graduates end up queuing for years to get such positions, which extends their transition period to the labour market (Jordan, Ministry of Education, and UNESCO, 2023). The interplay between these elements and pathways highlights the multifaceted nature of labour market transitions and the importance of addressing both structural and individual factors to improve employment outcomes for young people in Jordan (Al-Batayneh, 2024).

Teenagers in Jordan are deciding to stay longer at school. Between 2017 and 2023, the share of full-time students among late teenagers (15–19-year-olds) has increased from 62% to 76%, and the share of school leavers with no intention of working has dropped from 22% to 15%. In 2023,

181 This analysis is based on data from ILO's Youth Labour Market Indicators database (ILO, 2025).

81% of young women and 71% of young men between the ages of 15 and 20 were outside the labour force studying, and 18% of women and 11% of men had left school but had no intention of working. Eight per cent of men of that age had left school and were unemployed, but looking for a job (see **Figure 9.8**).

Figure 9.8. Youth working-age population (15–19-year-olds) by forms of transitions and gender (per cent), 2017–2023

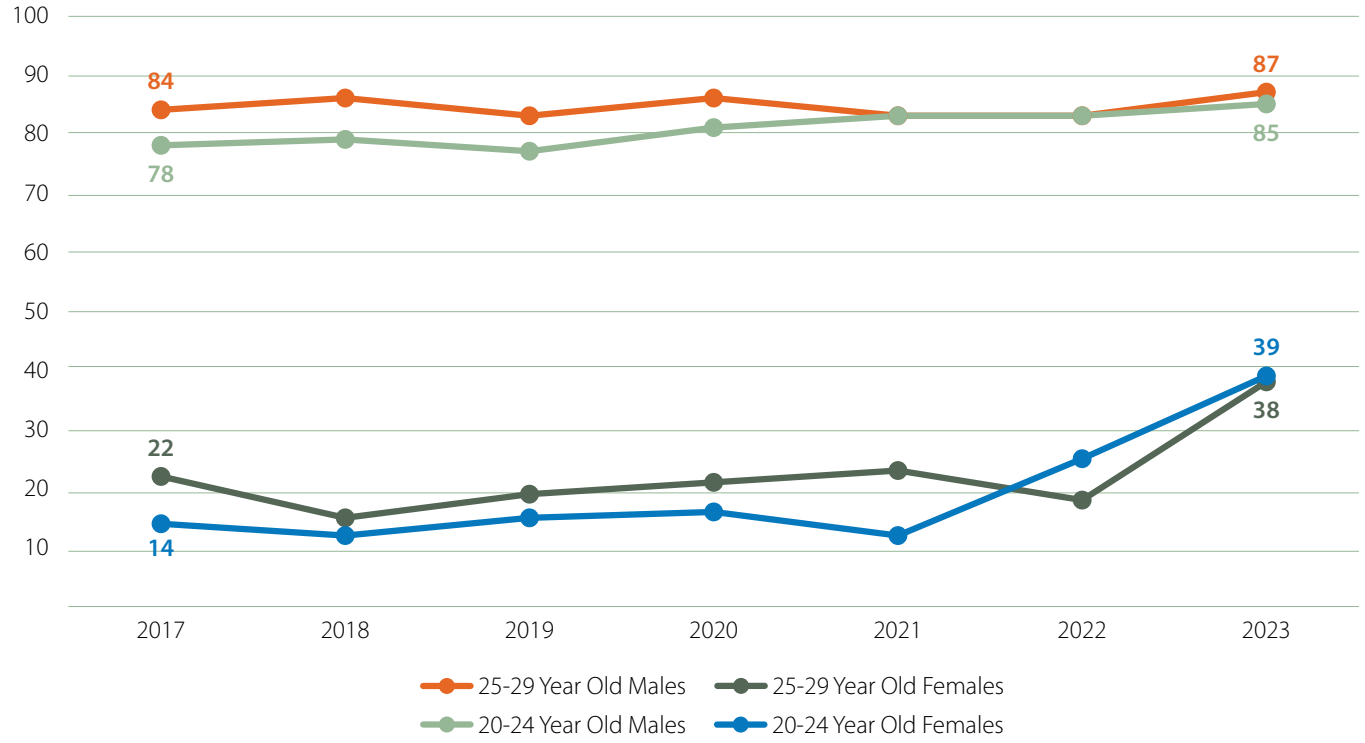


Source: ILO (2025).

A trend in delayed transition into the labour market is also noted among young adults between the ages of 20 and 24. In 2023, 30% of young adults (33% of young women and 29% of young men) were outside the labour force or studying, compared to 23% in 2017. Among women, the share of school leavers with no intention of working dropped considerably from 48% in 2017 to 39% in 2023, partly explained by the increased share of women having transited into a stable job. Sixteen per cent of the 20–24-year-old population (11% of these women and 22% of these men) were unemployed, and 11% of men of that age were employed but wanting to change jobs.

However, young people aged between 20 and 24 with less than basic education are entering the labour market earlier, compared to 2017. Activity rates have noticeably increased among youth aged 20–24 with less than basic education, climbing from 14% to 39% for women and from 78% to 85% for men between 2017 and 2023, closing the gap in relation to the immediately older group (25–29-year-olds), as shown in **Figure 9.9.**

Figure 9.9. Youth labour force participation with less than basic education by gender and age group (20–24 vs 25–29) (per cent), 2017–2023



Source: ILO (2025).

By the age of 25–29, most residents of Jordan who are willing to work have managed to transit into a stable or satisfactory job, but women and men face different difficulties to complete their transition. Most women (58%) stay outside the labour force after completing their studies, potentially due to social norms that expect women to take on family and care responsibilities. However, of the women who did participate in the labour market, about two-thirds were employed in a stable or satisfactory job in 2023. By contrast, under half (47%) of men between the ages of 25 and 29 were in stable employment in 2023, while a sizeable 20% were still unemployed, and 19% were either employed in an unstable job or wanting to change jobs.

9.2.3. Youth not in employment, education or training[182]

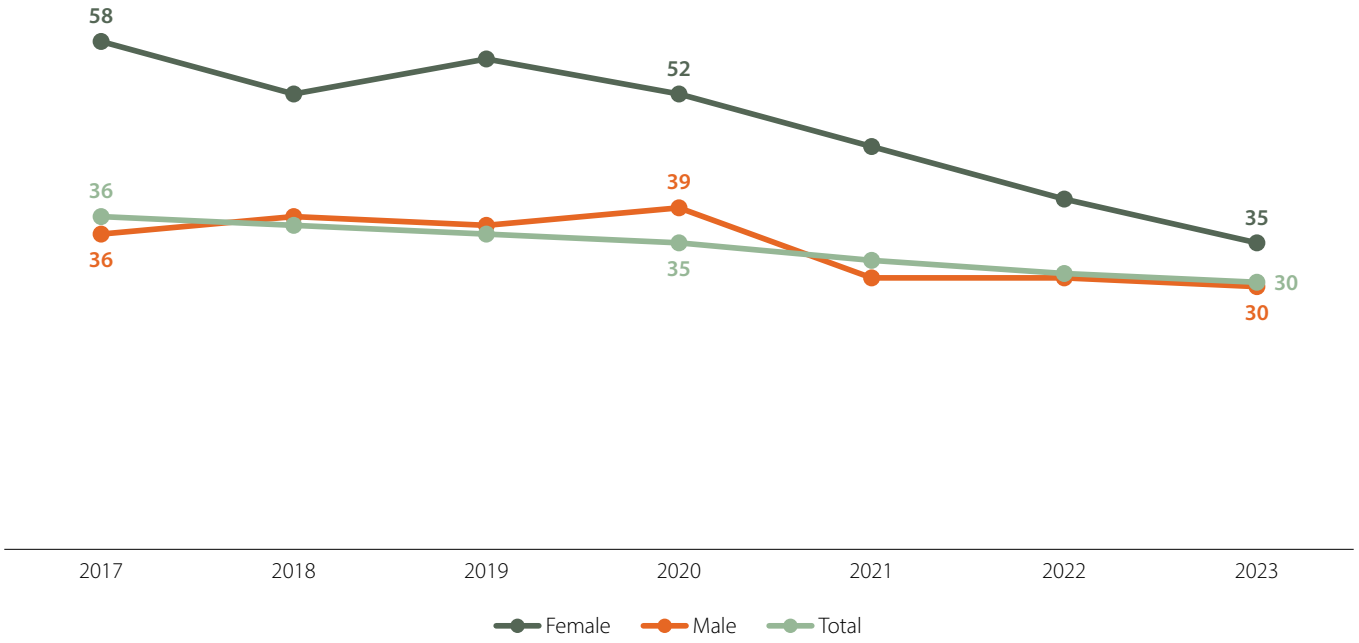
Close to three out of 10 residents of Jordan between the ages of 15 and 24 were neither studying nor working in 2023. While the share of 15–24-year-old youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) has been declining since 2017 (when it stood at 38%), it remained high at 30% in 2023. By 2023, two out of three youth not engaged in work or study were between the ages of 20 and 24. Jordanian and non-Jordanian youth have similar probabilities of not engaging in study or work. These concerning levels indicate a substantial untapped potential among young people in Jordan, suggesting a critical need for policies and initiatives to harness this latent workforce and drive economic growth.

The decline of the share of NEET youth has been particularly marked among uneducated youth. In 2023, about one-third (35%) of women and a slightly smaller proportion of men (30%) aged 15 to 24 with less than basic education were

182 This analysis is based on data from ILO's Youth Labour Market Indicators database (International Labour Organization, 2025).

neither studying nor working, compared to 58% and 36%, respectively, in 2017 (see **Figure 9.10**). This trend indicates a substantial improvement in engagement of the least educated youth in either education or the workforce, with young women showing the most dramatic reduction in NEET rates. This trend may, however, also point to growth in the availability of informal, low-paid, unskilled work.

Figure 9.10. NEET youth with less than basic education by gender (per cent), 2017–2023



Source: ILO (2025).

Most youth in Jordan who are NEET have low levels of education. In 2023, seven out of 10 (69%) of the youth NEET population had at most completed basic education, with 41% having basic education (men, 21%; women, 19%) and 28% having less than basic education (men, 14%; women, 15%). This trend suggests a strong correlation between lower educational achievement and the likelihood of being NEET among Jordanian youth, highlighting the critical need for improved educational opportunities and targeted interventions for this vulnerable group.

9.2.4. Education-skills match and labour market returns of education

This subsection examines how far educational attainment and job skill levels in Jordan are aligned to deliver the strongest labour market returns, highlighting a complex mix of match and mismatch between education and employment opportunities.

Aligning educational outcomes with labour market needs is essential to ensure that graduates possess the appropriate level of skills required by employers and are able to transition successfully to the labour market (European Training Foundation, 2021; ILO, 2023). Conversely, education mismatches with labour market needs can have several negative effects on individuals, employers and the broader economy. In Jordan, mismatches where individuals are over-educated for their jobs is a significant issue, which diminishes the returns of education investments and leads to lower earnings, underutilization of skills and unrealized human capital potential. Better alignment between educational outcomes and labour market demands is essential to improve not only the employability of

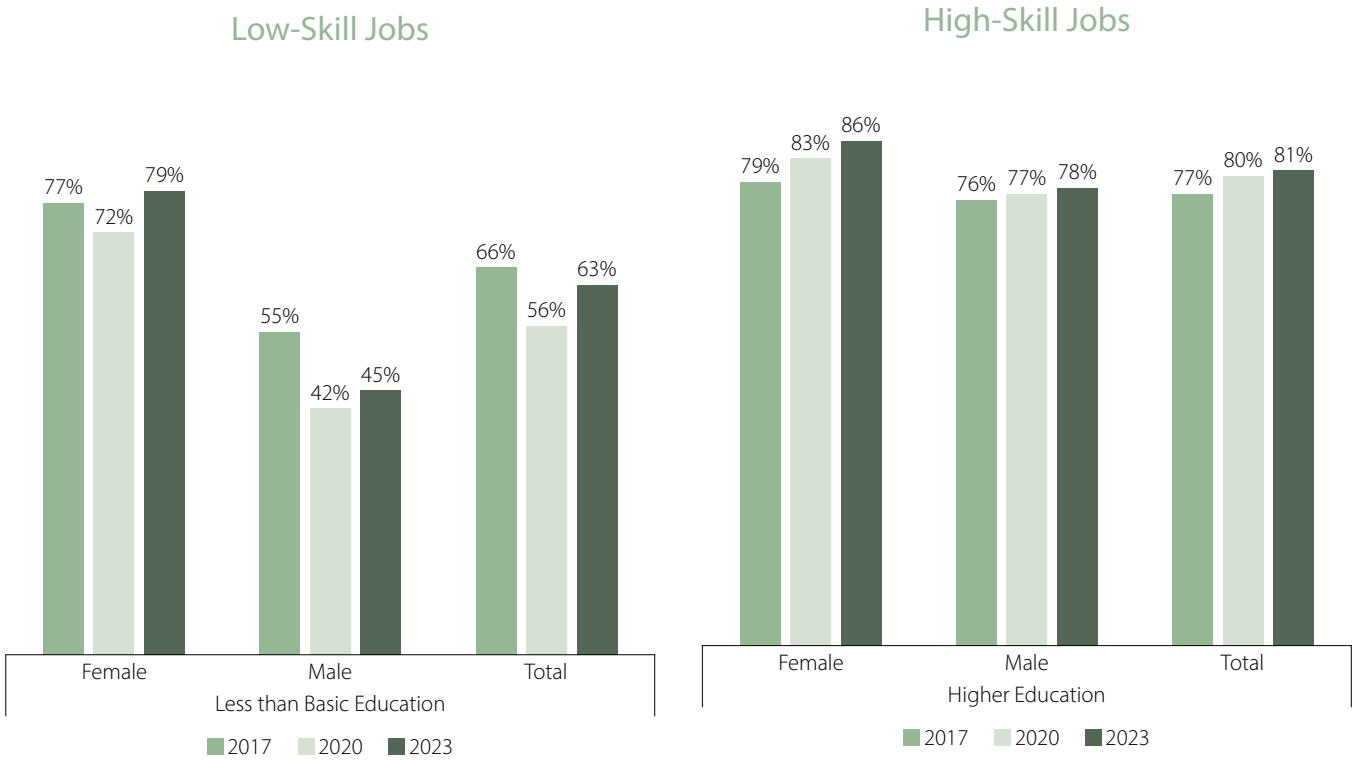
graduates but also to increase labour market returns to education (Jebeniani and Trabelsi, 2020).

The labour market in Jordan faces significant challenges related to skill mismatches, which hinder economic growth and employment opportunities. A notable gap has been identified between the skills possessed by jobseekers and those demanded by employers, particularly in the industrial and service sectors (Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2024). Jordanian small and medium-sized enterprises require both soft skills, such as communication and teamwork, and technical skills specific to sectors like manufacturing, engineering and information technology. However, many workers, including Syrian refugees, lack these competencies due to limitations in education and vocational training opportunities (European Training Foundation, 2021).

These trends underscore the need for better alignment between the education system in Jordan and labour market demands. Policy-makers should consider strategies to address overqualification and skills mismatch, such as enhancing vocational training programmes, improving career guidance services and encouraging the creation of high-skill jobs that can absorb the growing number of educated workers. Additionally, efforts to upskill less educated workers in medium-skill positions could help to maintain their employability in an increasingly competitive job market.

Overall, most jobs requiring either high or low skills are filled by workers with the educational level expected for the job. For example, 86% of women and 78% of men employed in high-skill jobs had higher education in 2023, while 79% of women and 45% of men employed in low-skill occupations had less than basic education, indicating a relatively positive match between education levels and job requirements at these levels (see **Figure 9.11**).

Figure 9.11. Main educational level of workers in low and high-skill jobs (per cent), 2017–2023



Source: ILO (2025).

For high- and medium-skill jobs, the skill-education match in the labour market has improved since 2017. In 2023, 81% of the high-skill jobs were occupied by workers with higher education, up from 77% in 2017. Of medium-skill jobs, 38% were held by workers with secondary education, a 14-point increase compared to 2017 (24%). This positive trend indicates a growing alignment between education and skills requirements at the upper end of the labour market.

However, less-educated workers still occupy a considerable portion of medium-skill jobs, although the share has decreased. Workers with basic education accounted for 31% and workers with less than basic education accounted for 28% of employment in medium-skill occupations in 2023. Their joint share in medium-skill occupations has, however, declined by 12% since 2017, when they accounted for 71% of all medium-skill jobs. This trend indicates a gradual transition towards a more educated workforce in these positions, which could potentially lead to improved productivity in medium skill jobs but may also create challenges for less educated workers in finding suitable employment.

Higher education does not necessarily guarantee better employment outcomes, as many graduates struggle to find jobs that match their qualifications. While educational attainment has improved, with an increase in the number of individuals completing higher education, the labour market has not fully absorbed these graduates. Many young people face challenges in finding jobs that match their qualifications, leading to underemployment and frustration among graduates. Local customs, patriarchal norms and nepotism (wasta) also play a key role in shaping these transitions (Al-Batayneh, 2024).

Overqualification remains a persistent issue in the labour market in Jordan, particularly affecting women in medium-skill jobs and men in low-skill occupations. In 2023, 19% of women in medium-skill jobs had higher education, a figure that has remained relatively constant since 2018, though an increase from 12% in 2017. Fifty-four per cent of men in low-skill jobs had basic or secondary education in 2023, though this represents a ten-percentage point decrease from 2017 (see **Table 9.1.**). These patterns of overqualification suggest a mismatch between the skills acquired through higher education and the demands of the job market, potentially leading to underutilization of human capital and reduced job satisfaction.

Table 9.1. Workers by gender, occupation skill level and education (per cent), 2017–2023

	2017		2020		2023	
	Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
Occupation (skill level): Skill level 1 ~ low						
Less than basic education	77%	55%	72%	42%	79%	45%
Basic education	16%	28%	23%	31%	17%	32%
Upper secondary	5%	15%	4%	26%	4%	22%
Higher education	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Occupation (skill level): Skill level 2 ~ medium						
Less than basic education	23%	38%	19%	34%	14%	28%
Basic education	30%	34%	30%	30%	28%	31%
Upper secondary	35%	23%	36%	32%	39%	38%
Higher education	12%	5%	16%	4%	19%	3%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Occupation (skill level): Skill levels 3 and 4 ~ high						
Less than basic education	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%
Basic education	0%	2%	0%	4%	0%	4%
Upper secondary	20%	20%	17%	17%	14%	17%
Higher education	79%	76%	83%	77%	86%	78%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: ILO (2025).

Women's work earnings increase commensurately with educational attainment. In 2017, an employed woman with basic education was remunerated on average 32% more than a woman with less than basic education. Average hourly earnings of women with secondary and higher education were, respectively, 95% and 16% higher than those of uneducated women. Between 2017 and 2023, wage gaps among female workers with different levels of instruction slightly increased, suggesting that the labour market returns for education are positive for women and might have improved during the period.

Among men, however, it is only higher education that consistently yields higher wage premiums, while other levels of education show diminishing returns. In 2017, men with higher education earned on average 73% more than those with less than basic education. This substantial wage differential has persisted, with highly educated men earning 68% more than their uneducated counterparts in 2023. However, for men with lower levels of education, the earnings advantage has eroded over time. Men with secondary education earned 6% more than those with less than basic education, but by 2023, this advantage had not only disappeared but reversed, with secondary-educated men earning 15% less than those with minimal education. Similarly, the wage premium for basic education has drastically decreased. From a peak of about 20% in 2018–2019, it fell to just 3% in 2023.

These troubling trends suggest that the labour market returns on education for men in Jordan are increasingly polarized. While higher education continues to offer substantial financial benefits, the economic value of basic and secondary education appears to be diminishing. This shift has significant implications for education, potentially discouraging investment in basic and secondary education and leading to increased dropout rates. It could also exacerbate income inequality, widening the gap between highly educated workers and the rest of the workforce. Furthermore, it suggests a mismatch between the skills provided by basic and secondary education and those valued by the labour market. Further efforts to enhance the relevance and quality of basic and secondary education, including the vocational track, as well as initiatives to create more specialized high-skill job opportunities stand out as important to ensure that education at all levels translates into improved economic outcomes. These efforts are crucial to addressing the changing dynamics of education and earnings in the labour market in Jordan and to promoting a more balanced and equitable educational and economic landscape for all.

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

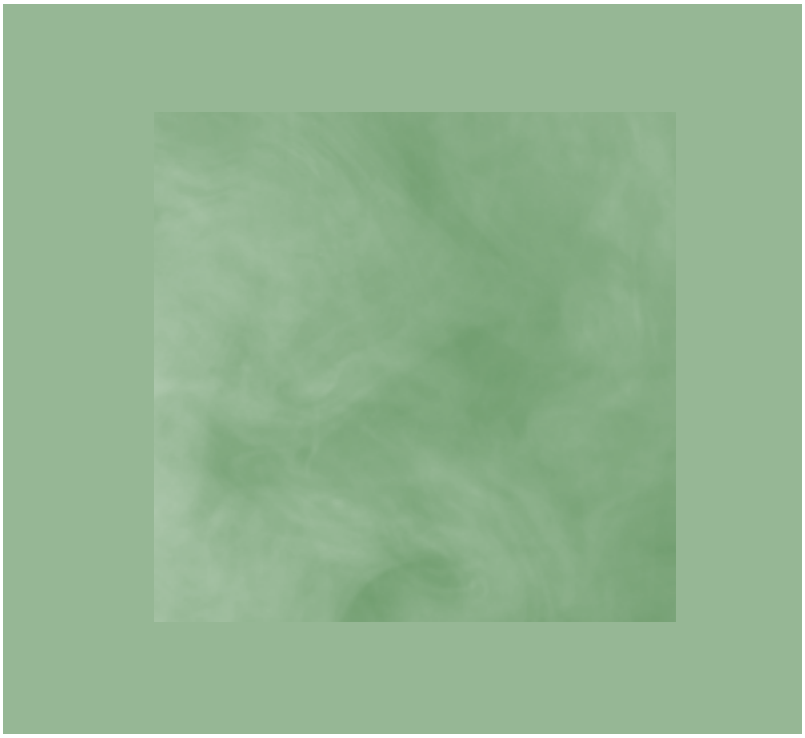
Improving the alignment between the education and training system in Jordan and the needs of the labour market is a key objective driving recent reforms. Education and training, particularly TVET, are central to these efforts. The Jordan 2025 Vision and the Economic Modernisation Vision 2023–2033 both highlight skills development as a strategic priority to improve labour market outcomes and expand employment opportunities, especially for youth.

Jordan has consistently recorded one of the lowest labour force participation rates in the Arab region over the 2017–2023 period. In 2023, the participation rate stood at 40.1%, a figure that has remained relatively stable but conceals a decline among women and Jordanian nationals. The vast majority of the workforce is concentrated in the expanding service sector, which accounted for approximately 80% of employment in 2023, up from 77% in 2017. Informal jobs represented 55% of total employment in 2023, a 10-percentage point increase since 2017.

Unemployment remains disproportionately high among youth, with 39% of the unemployed population under the age of 25 in 2023, compared to the national average of 17%. Women, particularly Jordanian women, continue to face significantly higher unemployment rates than men. Unemployment is also notably higher among individuals with higher education qualifications.

In 2023, nearly 30% of youth aged 15–24 were NEET, down from 38% in 2017, but still a major concern. Most NEET youth are between the ages of 20 and 24 and have a low level of education, with 69% having completed only basic or less than basic education. While NEET rates have dropped, especially among young women with less than basic education, this may reflect a rise in low-skill work in the informal economy.

The labour market in Jordan faces persistent skill mismatches that constrain economic growth and limit employment opportunities for graduates. In 2023, 31% of workers in medium-skill jobs had only basic education, and 19% of women in such jobs held higher education degrees, underscoring both underqualification and overqualification. Although high and low-skill jobs generally align with expected education levels, many young graduates continue to experience underemployment due to a lack of suitable opportunities, further compounded by structural barriers.



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