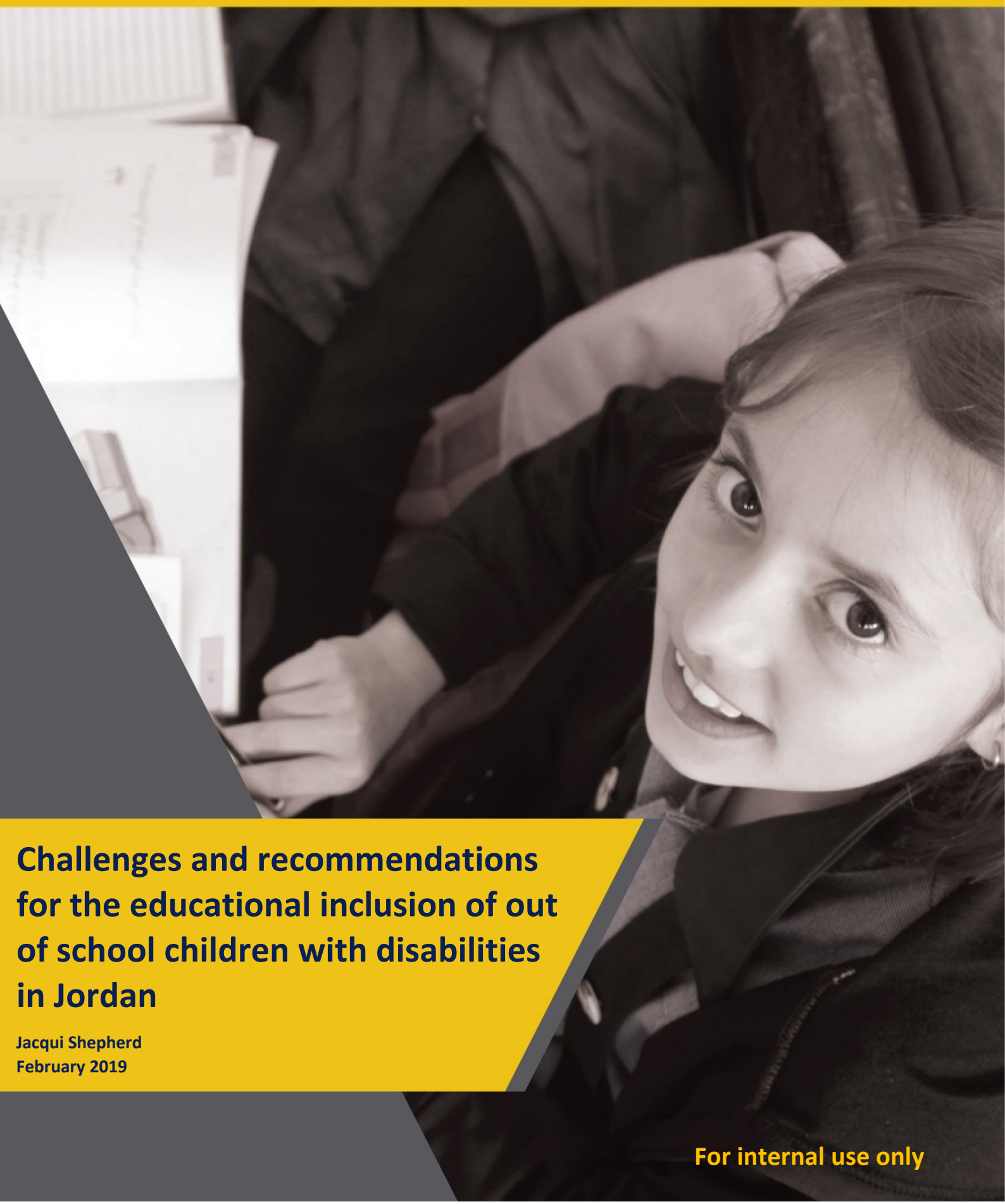




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Challenges and recommendations for the educational inclusion of out of school children with disabilities in Jordan

Jacqui Shepherd
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About the Evidence-driven Results in Learning (EDRiL) initiative

In an effort to improve the national evidence base of how to improve children's learning outcomes in Jordan, the 'Evidence-Driven Results in Learning' initiative aims to provide applied education research and analysis tied to the Ministry of Education's (MoE) Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (ESP), which is aligned with the Jordan National Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy 2016-2025. Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Canada (initially to May 2020), EDRiL is guided by an MoE-led Steering Committee which is responsible for defining and prioritising applied research to inform improvements in learning outcomes for all children in Jordan. QRF and the MoE Planning and Educational Research Department (the latter since 2019) function as the technical secretariat to the EDRiL steering committee; under the overall direction of the steering committee, the Secretariat creates annual work plans, and then conducts or commissions analytical research. By drawing on a range of partners from Jordan and internationally, the Secretariat ensures that the education analysis draws on international experience and good practice, while being grounded in the context of Jordan.

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- The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD)

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Glossary of Acronyms

CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DCU	Development Coordination Unit, MoE
DFID	Department for International Development
HCD	Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities
IE	Inclusive Education
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development

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Executive Summary

Background to the project

This project was commissioned by the Queen Rania Foundation for Education (QRF) on behalf of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to support the MoE in its goals of raising enrolment rates for out-of-school children with disabilities (CWD) in Jordan. This report is based on a scoping visit to four inclusive schools, meetings with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities (HCD). The desk based research consisted of reviewing international and national policies, institutional publications and research literature. There was a subsequent workshop to discuss the draft report and recommendations which included representatives from the MoE, HCD, DFID, international donors and QRF. A focus group with 20 parents (10 fathers, 10 mothers) of out-of-school children with disabilities (CWD) was also conducted to hear directly about the experiences of families.

1. Policies and strategies

While there is much evidence of commitment to inclusive education at an international and national policy level, only 5% (20,600) of children with disabilities are enrolled in public schools in Jordan (ESP, 2018), which clearly indicates that policies are not effectively translating into practice. Not all children fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education meaning that children with more significant disabilities are being denied their right to education. A clear vision of the kind of inclusive education system that Jordan wants to work towards is needed as well as greater coherence and alignment between the policies, strategies and donor funded projects on inclusive education.

2. Definitions of inclusive education (IE)

Clarity on the definition of IE and what it means in practice are essential if all schools are to work towards becoming more inclusive. At the moment it is not a concept that is clearly understood or widely shared by teachers, wider school staff, principals or ministers. There are existing definitions in some policy documents and in international conventions and guidance but there now needs to be some agreement. Once a definition has been adopted it can be used and circulated in all relevant documentation as a touchstone and reference point against which to evaluate the progress of IE.

3. Developing teacher capacity to implement IE

Teachers are concerned about their lack of training in inclusive education and special educational needs and disabilities and parents are also concerned that teachers do not know how to work with their children with disabilities. There needs to be a clear focus on IE pedagogy and practice both within pre-service and in-service training programmes. The inclusive approach modelled in some schools could be used to disseminate good practice for others as this is a valuable resource on which to draw.

4. Accessibility

There are significant barriers to accessing school buildings for children with physical disabilities and there are infrastructure challenges such as transport to and from school. These are known and are being addressed through the MoE Education Strategic Plan and the HCD 10 year plan, however, there are some low or no cost adaptations that can be made in the short term such as altering timetables and teaching rooms which would afford more access more quickly for this group. For IE to be successfully implemented, there also need for changes to pedagogical approaches, adaptations to the curriculum and changes to the school ethos.

5. Attitudes and awareness

One of the highest priorities for change in including CWDs in regular schools in Jordan is about the need for attitudinal change. This is true of some teachers, parents, ministers and communities and needs to be addressed at every level. Families with children with disabilities feel stigmatised, financially disadvantaged and isolated in their experiences of bringing up children with disabilities. Media campaigns, community based awareness and peer-to-peer support are all powerful ways in which to get these messages across. The research case for IE and its positive effects for all students as well as the positive attitudes demonstrated by children without disabilities in schools towards their peers with disabilities provide strong evidence for these messages on attitude change.

6. School leadership and recognition

In inclusive schools where good inclusive practice was being implemented, there was clear leadership and commitment from school principals. They had sometimes been prompted to take the lead on IE through a dedicated and enthusiastic staff member, but where principals took the lead then change happened across the school. Principals also commented that they would like to be able to reward their staff for their hard work on including CWDs as they felt that the work in this area was not valued beyond the school and there was no incentive to become more inclusive. Developing some quality assurance standards in relation to IE and a framework for accreditation would support and encourage schools to move forward.

7. Diagnosis, data and monitoring

There are plans (ESP, 2018) to open three diagnostic centres in different regions of Jordan as well as two mobile units and this would improve access for some families but additional resources are also required to expand further. The reliability of data on the numbers of CWDs both in and out of school is limited and there are contradicting statistics from the MoE and the Department of Statistics due the different categories that they employ to collect the data. Improving this baseline and identifying further community-based approaches to data collection would build towards a more robust system. However, the lack of reliable data should not be a barrier to moving forward with IE.

8. Severe developmental and intellectual disabilities

Currently children with severe developmental and intellectual disabilities are not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and therefore are denied their right to education. They do not have access to free schooling and can only attend specialist centres if they pay for this. This continues to marginalise and exclude this group and creates further economic and social disadvantage for their families.

Summary of recommendations

1. Recommendations: Policies and Strategies
1.1 Ensure that an IE Steering Group led by the MoE but comprising broad membership is accountable for the vision and implementation of IE in Jordan.
1.2 Ensure that education for ALL children becomes the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (including those with severe developmental and intellectual disabilities).
1.3 Work with the HCD to develop, adopt and disseminate a vision for IE for Jordan and how this will be implemented in schools.
1.4 Develop, review and disseminate a guidance handbook for schools on the implementation of IE.
1.5 Develop greater coherence between the various IE initiatives that are funded by NGOs and international donors to avoid negative impacts on children and ensure sustainability.
1.6 Align all recommendations and action plans from existing policies (HRD, ESP, HCD etc) and accelerate the pace of change.
2. Recommendations: Definitions of Inclusive Education
2.1 Identify and adopt a clear and focused definition of IE in line with international definitions to be widely disseminated and used in all policy documents.
2.2 Based on the vision for IE in 1.3 develop an inclusive ethos within all schools to include all children – a single IE system.
2.3 Clarify and disseminate definitions of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities.
3. Recommendations: Teacher Capacity
3.1 Develop pre-service training programs for all teachers more speedily than ESP suggests. Any training programs should incorporate philosophies and pedagogies of IE.
3.2 Develop in-service training for current teachers on IE.
3.3 Capitalise on the expertise that exists in model inclusive schools to share and disseminate good practice.
4. Recommendations: Accessibility
4.1 Exploit a range of low-cost adaptations (to the physical and the learning environment) that could be made as soon as possible, such as moving classrooms to the lower level in order to accommodate children with physical disabilities.
4.2 Ensure that all new school buildings adhere to the national building code for persons with disabilities (HRD and HCD plans).
4.3 Make appropriate adaptations to the physical environment of existing schools to increase accessibility.
4.4 Make appropriate adaptations to teaching and learning strategies and curricula to ensure that all children with disabilities can access the learning.
4.5 Seek additional funding to ensure the financial costs of the above can be met.
5. Recommendations: Attitudes
5.1 Promote the importance of education for CWDs and the improvement of their life chances through public awareness campaigns.
5.2 Ensure that teachers are aware of the evidence base for inclusion and wider communities understand that CWDs in local schools do not negatively impact the learning of others.
5.3 Raise awareness of the importance of early identification and screening to parents.
5.4 Develop high profile case studies of people with disabilities across a range of sectors.
5.5 Explore peer-to-peer initiatives for collaborative learning, social inclusion and

community participation.
6. Recommendations: School Leadership and Quality Assurance
6.1 Develop a comprehensive training programme for ALL school staff including headteachers, teachers, administrative staff, support and shadow teachers as cited in the ESP.
6.2 Develop an accreditation framework for IE in order to demonstrate progress – use the steering group partnership referred to in 3.4 to do this.
7. Recommendations: Diagnosis, Data and Monitoring
7.1 Strengthen, develop and extend current systems for data collection and dissemination.
7.2 Co-ordinate with the Department of Statistics, HCD and MoE to have accurate data on children with disabilities.
7.3 Identify methods to determine the number of out-of-school children with disabilities in order to measure progress both nationally but also at school level.
7.4 Improve data collection for Syrian CWDs both in and out of school.
7.5 Improve access to diagnosis.
7.6 Further research is required on the numbers, types of disability and reasons for out-of-school CWDs.
8. Recommendations: Severe Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
8.1 Develop fully inclusive schools for all learners (including those with severe developmental and intellectual disabilities) through specifically trained teachers, funded shadow teachers and resource rooms.
8.2 Acknowledge children's wishes and rights to be educated with their peers.

Challenges and recommendations for the educational inclusion of out of school children with disabilities in Jordan

Introduction

Internationally the drive towards inclusive education (IE) has been apparent for more than two decades, since the widespread commitment to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). Subsequent legislation such as the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2007) and more recent global initiatives on Education for All and the Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2015) continue that drive. The range and extent of international conventions and frameworks around inclusion and disability have added complexity as well as impetus to the drive towards inclusive education and must be interpreted and enacted at a country level in terms of national legislation, policy and practice.

As well as adopting the Salamanca Statement in 1994, Jordan was one of the first countries to endorse the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. It has therefore demonstrated policy commitment to the principles of inclusive education for all and for persons with disabilities to be able to access free and inclusive education in their local communities (UNCRC, 2007). Despite the excellent progress on enrolment rates for basic education in Jordan at 98% (World Bank, 2017), there are clearly significant difficulties in the much slower pace of enrolment for children with disabilities in school, estimated to be at only 5% (MoE, 2018). The Ministry of Education, however, is committed to improving this over the next 5-10 years as evidenced in the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022 (MoE, 2018) and the National Strategy for Human Resource Development (NCHRD, 2016).

The challenge now facing Jordan along with many other countries in the Global North and South is to implement IE successfully across the country, to significantly improve the enrolment rates of out-of-school children with disabilities and sustain a quality inclusive education system. There is an exciting opportunity for Jordan to be the IE lead in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region but it also requires wholehearted commitment, imagination, creativity and, of course, resources.

Methodology

This report and action plan is based on ten days of desk-based research and a three day scoping visit to Jordan. The methodology employed in the desk-based research involved a non-systematic internet based search and consultation of policy documents relating to disability and inclusive education in Jordan. The resources referenced in this report include institutional or 'grey' literature including international policy documents as well as some academic studies. The resources consulted were published in English. A scoping visit to Jordan (October, 2018) encompassed visits to four model inclusive schools (2 public, 2 private) meeting teachers, children and parents but the scope of the visit did not extend to meeting out-of-school children and their families. There were also meetings with the Ministry of Education and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and a later workshop to discuss this draft report and recommendations. There was also a subsequent focus group organised by the Queen Rania Foundation with 20 parents of children with disabilities who were out of school (10 mothers and 10 fathers). Many thanks to everyone who gave up their time to be consulted on this work. This report reviews existing policy, programming and practice in Jordan and makes recommendations and actions based on both international best practices and guidelines but also based on local, contextual and cultural considerations.

1. Policies and strategies

While the legislative and policy commitment to inclusive education in Jordan, and the intention to include children with disabilities in regular schools is undeniable in reality there is a gulf between the intention of policy and the enactment of practice. There are many plans in place but these need to be streamlined and aligned so that they work more effectively and synergistically than they are currently doing. For example, the Education Strategic Plan covers the period 2018-2022 (MoE, 2018) whereas the Human Resource Development (NCHRD, 2016) strategy goes from 2016-2025 and the newly developed Ten-Year Inclusive Education Plan from the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD, 2018) goes from 2018-2028. Linking together the timeframes of the action plans from these policies would create a really powerful pathway to the realisation of inclusive education and setting priorities with the HCD once their plan has been formally adopted in February 2019.

After 2002, the responsibility for the education of children with disabilities transferred from the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to the Ministry of Education (MoE) except for children with moderate and severe learning difficulties – who remain under MoSD. This has led to a segregated system of special education provision which is counter to the IE approach recommended in the Salamanca Statement. This dual ministry involvement also needs to be addressed according to UNESCO and DFID guidelines so that all children with disabilities are the responsibility of one ministry. DFID for example recommends that governments, *'ensure the education of children with disabilities is under the authority of the mainstream education ministry and not seen as a separate issue or charitable act. Major constraints to inclusion can arise where the education of some groups comes under the responsibility of different ministries, which can increase segregation according to medical classifications of disability'* (DFID, 2010, p8). This results in further marginalising children with more significant disabilities and denying their right to education and requiring them to pay for any tuition, therapies or day care. Parents commented on the expense of sending their children to specialised centres and they are mostly unable to afford it. These children are sitting at home and not engaged in meaningful activities effectively being denied access to education.

The definition of a person with a disability in the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (HCD, 2017) is broadly in line with international definition from the UNCRPD where *'a person with disability is defined as a person who has a long-term, physical, sensory, intellectual, mental, psychological or neurological impairment, which, as a result of interaction with other physical and behavioural 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'* (Article 3). The definition makes clear that the interaction of the impairment with the environment constructs the disability and creates barriers to full participation.

The strong wording of the Jordanian Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20 for the Year 2017, which states that it is *'forbidden to exclude someone from any educational institution on the basis of, or because of, disability'* suggests that all students with disabilities should be accepted into schools. However, statistics show that 95% of these children are not accessing education (MoE, 2018). The way in which CWDs are admitted to the inclusive schools as seen on the scoping visit indicated that teachers are using their discretion about which children to admit or refuse. In one school, the resource room teacher said she was quite open with parents about whether the school could include their child or not and that they could not accept children with long term mental disabilities. In relation to children with

severe learning difficulties, one school reported that they are not allowed to accept them, that it is out of their hands. The HCD reported that schools cannot deny a CWD a place at school unless there are physical disabilities that the school cannot accommodate. One of the private schools visited was not able to accept children with physical disabilities as their buildings would not accommodate them. Both private schools reported that they had quotas for CWDs that they could not exceed.

Those 5% of children with disabilities who have accessed education are not well supported as schools are not making appropriate adaptations for them which might increase enrolment numbers but does not constitute full inclusion, *'in fact, the lack of the effective implementation has created a gap between the framework of this law and the provision of services, resulting in a lack of special education services for most students with disabilities'* (Abu-Hamour and Al-Hmouz, 2014, p106). There was evidence for this in some of the model inclusive schools where, for example, a visually impaired student did not have access to enlarged print and found it hard to read writing from the board. Another school felt unsupported by the MoE making enlarged textbooks available; this is because a parent has to pay for it first and then get reimbursed by the MoE, and if the parent did not have the money to do that, it never happened. In order for full inclusion to take place, rather than just the enrolment of children with disabilities in regular schools, adaptations to the curriculum have to be made and individual needs have to be met.

Article 17b of Law No (20) suggests that if reasonable accommodations are not available then the student should be supported to attend an alternative school, yet there seem to be few available alternatives. Given that many schools do not yet have physical accommodation, such as ramps, or appropriate learning materials (e.g. enlarged written formats) then it is highly likely that many children with disabilities will not be able to attend local schools. The scoping visit indicated that schools were limited in who they could accept. There is clearly a need to focus on adapting school environments in order to accommodate more children with disabilities.

A clear vision of the kinds of inclusive schools that the MoE is aiming for would be helpful drawing on international expertise, the HCD ten year plan and the model inclusive schools within Jordan. The journey to achieve full inclusion can then be planned with a clear destination in mind. Given that most people including teachers, parents and professionals have not experienced inclusive education themselves, it is critical to imagine the type of school structure and ethos to which all should be aspiring to bring the vision into being. Working towards a more inclusive education system not only meets the requirements of human rights but also builds towards a more inclusive society when children with and without disabilities grow up alongside each other. The concept of inclusion is still not completely understood by the MoE, schools and teachers according to the Secretary-General. Evidence of this was seen, or reported on, in all of the model inclusive schools and reflected these principles from the Salamanca Statement *'regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all'* (UNESCO, 1994).

In order to implement and enact the vision around inclusive education, a handbook of guidance for all schools and teachers is necessary to raise awareness and inform effective practice, and such a 'procedural guide' is also recommended by the HCD (2018) Ten-Year Plan. This should cover definitions of IE, of disabilities and special educational needs, approaches to teaching and learning as well as key reference to laws and international conventions. According to the MoE, such a handbook has existed since 2015 but has not been disseminated and there has been no training to

go with it. It is now urgent to review this handbook and implement the associated training.

There are many inclusive education projects funded by international donors but this can lead to fragmentation of delivery with some areas benefiting from several initiatives while others get relatively little. One of the schools visited as part of this research study had support from an international donor to create a resource room, others had received training from them and other donors on IE, but there was no sustainability to these initiatives. As suggested by UNICEF, there is *'an apparent lack of planning, coordination and cooperation between the agencies and ministries that manage disability and rehabilitation programmes'* (UNICEF 2014, p53). It also means that children are at the mercy of transitory resources and this can have a very disruptive and harmful effect on their education and progress. One model inclusive school, for example, reported on a donor funded initiative on inclusive education that supported Downs Syndrome and autistic children to access the school by providing specialist teachers and transport. This project was cut short because of administrative issues and the children were no longer able to attend despite the hard work of all the teachers. The children were sent back to specialist centres or back home if their parents could not afford to pay for the specialist centre.

1. Recommendations: Policies and Strategies

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| 1.1 Ensure that an IE Steering Group led by the MoE but comprising broad membership is accountable for the vision and implementation of IE in Jordan. |
| 1.2 Ensure that education for ALL children becomes the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (including those with severe developmental and intellectual disabilities). |
| 1.3 Work with the HCD to develop, adopt and disseminate a vision for IE for Jordan and how this will be implemented in schools. |
| 1.4 Develop, review and disseminate a guidance handbook for schools on the implementation of IE. |
| 1.5 Develop greater coherence between the various IE initiatives that are funded by NGOs and international donors to avoid negative impacts on children and ensure sustainability. |
| 1.6 Align all recommendations and action plans from existing policies (HRD, ESP, HCD etc) and accelerate the pace of change. |

2. Definitions of Inclusive Education (IE)

While the term ‘inclusive education’ is widely used in policy documents in Jordan, there does not seem to be an agreed definition evident in the documentation or in common currency. This lack of clarity is not unique to Jordan but is experienced across many countries struggling to identify a culturally sensitive definition of inclusion (Shyman, 2015). There has been a lack of consensus and shared understanding of what inclusive education means: *‘the scope of inclusive education and its overall meaning are still under debate’* (UNICEF, 2013, p1). It is critical that a clear definition is discussed, developed, agreed upon and widely shared if teachers, parents and communities are to fully understand the concept of IE and its far-reaching implications for education but for society. There are many existing definitions in the international arena as well as national and local interpretations and some are worth further discussion here.

A full inclusionist statement is best reflected by the National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI) in the US which defines inclusion as, *‘the provision of services to students with disabilities, including those with severe impairments, in the neighborhood school, in age-appropriate general education classes with the necessary support services and supplementary aids (for the child and the teacher) both to assure the child’s success—academic, behavioral and social—and to prepare the child to participate as a full and contributing member of the society’* (NCERI, 1995, p3). This emphasises that inclusive education applies to ALL children regardless of dis/ability and that all children have a right to attend a local neighbourhood school and to be fully included within regular classrooms. Children with severe impairments are specifically identified as also being included within this definition and must be provided for in regular, local schools in age appropriate classes. The logic of a full inclusionist position is to develop truly inclusive and appropriately resourced schools to accommodate the needs of all children.

The Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) has been widely disseminated and adapted in over 40 countries (Arabic translation is available) as a self-assessment framework and guide to developing inclusive practice. The focus here is on the dynamic nature of inclusive education: *‘it is an unending process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It is an ideal to which schools can aspire but which is never fully reached. But inclusion happens as soon as the process of increasing participation is started. An inclusive school is one that is on the move’* (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, p3). This definition can help to support practitioners in schools and guide them through the journey of IE emphasising its process rather than necessarily the end result. This implies ongoing activity across all Jordanian schools which can start immediately and would work towards a state of full inclusion. An Index for Inclusion (or something similar) could provide a useful framework to guide this along with a bespoke handbook for the implementation of IE in Jordanian schools (as recommended in 1.4).

Some of the countries in the Global North have developed segregated systems of special education provision, for example in the US where the legislation allows for a child to be educated in the ‘least restrictive environment’ (IDEA, 2004) and in the UK where, for more severe impairments, there is a legal obligation to allow parental choice to determine a regular or special school placement for their child. However, *‘Countries that have few or no special schools would, in general, be well advised to concentrate their efforts on the development of inclusive schools and the specialized services needed to enable them to serve the vast majority of children’* (Salamanca

Statement, 1994). For Jordan, it is worth considering the appropriate development of inclusive schools with specialised resource centres rather than a system of separate, special schools that are costly and indeed contentious in their ability to answer to broader definitions of IE and social inclusion.

Bringing these ideas together in the definition below helps to focus on local interpretation of international conventions and definitions: *'Inclusive education is primarily about restructuring school cultures, policies and practices so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality. It sees individual differences not as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for enriching learning and for education systems to embrace change. It is a dynamic, continuing process of facilitating the participation of all students, including those with disabilities'* (Leonard Cheshire Foundation, 2013). For Jordan an understanding of the range and prevalence of disabilities within the Jordanian and refugee populations is key to responding appropriately in terms of resources and making all reasonable accommodations to teaching and learning. There is still much evidence of the medical model approach in practice and the 'othering' of CWD rather than a positive approach to diversity. In one mixed-gender school visited as part of this study, a boy with speech and language difficulties was classed as 'a bit of a troublemaker' and threatened with being sent to the boys-only school if he did not improve and, in another school, a child with autism was described as having 'weird habits' but he was able to 'control his impulses'. These children were perceived as not 'fitting' the education system rather than the system adapting for their needs.

Unless there is recognition of the need to develop fully inclusive schools, a segregated and discriminatory culture will persist that continues to marginalise those with more significant impairments. Too often the lack of effective understanding of inclusive education means that in many countries: *'IE programmes have often been reduced to simply having children with disabilities present in class, rather than genuinely included and learning'* (Law et al., 2004 cited in Bakhshi, Kett, & Oliver, 2013, p7). In Jordan, there has clearly been a segregation of those children with more significant impairments who do not seem to have their rights to free inclusive education met when they are either paying to go to resource centres or are being taught separately from their peers, *'in these segregated settings [specialist provision], about 2700 students with mild to severe intellectual disabilities are being served'* (Abu-Hamour, & Al-Hmouz, 2014, p109). This is also echoed in the Human Resource Development Strategy, *'it is common for students with disabilities to be segregated in specialised centres, or placed in mainstream schools but separated for the majority of the day in different classrooms from their peers'* (NCHRD, 2016, p99).

During the scoping visit, one school explained that if a CWD wanted to participate in regular classrooms then there were two options: either to have a shadow teacher (but the parent must pay for this) or that the mother becomes the shadow teacher. Given the high prevalence of disability with poverty, this doubly disadvantages CWDs and their families and is a barrier to accessing education. Another school reported that they could not accept children with severe learning difficulties and that it was too difficult to make accommodations for these children but there were specialist centres which again parents had to pay for. The MoE advocates the continuation of separate schools for children with hearing impairment claiming that mainstream environments are not appropriate for them and yet, it is the right of these children to be educated alongside their peers – this was evidenced by one young girl with a hearing impairment who was included in one of the model schools because she wanted to be there.

There also needs to be some clarity established around definitions of disability and special educational needs to ensure that teachers, parents and other professionals all share the same understanding when they use this terminology. The legal definitions used in Law No 20 acknowledge the importance of adapting the environment to enable students to access learning rather than trying to ‘fix’ the impairment and ‘fit’ the child to the school (UNICEF, 2012). This concurs with the WHO definition and also relates to the legal definitions used in. However, this understanding needs to extend to all documentation and discussion with schools, teachers and parents as there is some evidence that different interpretations of disability are made, not least across government departments. The Jordanian Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Education use different definitions for disability, which are also used in common currency; *‘the term disability in common parlance is only used to describe visible physical impairment’* (Thompson, 2018, p6). Sub-categories of disability may need to be explored and explained in the Handbook for implementing IE. Special Educational Needs (SEN) need to be clearly identified as separate from disability to acknowledge that some groups, such as those with physical disabilities or autism, may not have additional cognitive difficulties. This is important so that teachers understand what appropriate accommodations are required in school environments and in their teaching and learning strategies.

2. Recommendations: Definitions of Inclusive Education

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| 2.1 Identify and adopt a clear and focused definition of IE in line with international definitions to be widely disseminated and used in all policy documents |
| 2.2 Based on the vision for IE in 1.3 develop an inclusive ethos within all schools to include all children – a single IE system |
| 2.3 Clarify and disseminate definitions of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities |

3. Developing teacher capacity to implement Inclusive Education

The capacity to implement effective inclusive education in Jordan will be largely determined by the commitment, training, attitudes and readiness of the education workforce to embrace and deliver on IE goals. While there is provision for teacher training through undergraduate BA education programmes, in-service training and concurrent undergraduate academic and teaching programmes there is little evidence of a specific focus on special educational needs and disabilities apart from the specialist BA in Special Education (Amaireh, 2017). All teacher training in Jordan and the national teaching standards will need to incorporate inclusive pedagogies as part of the professional expertise required. Inclusive pedagogies need to be predicated on a social model or rights based approach to disability as this is critical to improving the education of children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2008). The MoE are aware that more needs to be done and are working with UNICEF on a comprehensive manual to train teachers in inclusive education. This will focus on the practical skills required to implement IE. All four schools visited commented on the lack of training for teaching CWDs. One school said they were 'less than 50% trained' and another said there was one specialist teacher who dealt with accommodations. Generally, specialist teachers had followed the BA Special Education undergraduate degree which had prepared them to work in resource centres in schools or to help other teachers support CWDs. All the teachers wanted more training. The parents consulted during the focus groups all identified the lack of teacher training and expertise as a key barrier to their children with disabilities being included in school. Without this training their children would continue to be marginalised, excluded, stigmatised and bullied in school.

Recruitment

There are issues with recruitment to teaching in Jordan, identified and to some extent addressed, in the MoE's Education Strategic Plan. The shortage of teachers is being addressed by recruitment via the MoE but also through regional directorates by 2022 (MoE, 2018). The need to recruit more special education teachers was also identified to support the learning and development of regular teachers in inclusive education (RTI, 2017). There perhaps needs to be some form of recognition or incentive for those with a more fully developed IE skillset. Parents (some of whom were teachers) commented on the low pay of teachers and how many have to have a second job which undermines their commitment and ability to do the job well.

Pre-service training

Teachers in Jordan must hold a Bachelor's degree in order to apply through the civil service bureau for teaching opportunities. The only other training requirement prior to starting work as a teacher is an induction training conducted by the MoE (QRF, 2017). In addition, the Ministry has recently developed General Teaching Standards for all teachers to achieve. Similarly, clear standards on IE need to be established. The Queen Rania Teacher Academy is the only pre-service one-year course currently available to prospective teachers and aims to train between 5000-7000 teachers over the next 5 years. The Education Strategic Plan does seek to create a more integrated approach to pre-service training in partnership with Jordanian universities and the Queen Rania Teacher Academy but this also needs to address the principles of inclusive education as identified by the HCD 10 year plan.

In-service training

There is some evidence of continuous professional development from a National Teacher Survey carried out by Queen Rania Foundation. However, only 39% of grade 1-6 and 26% of grade 7-10 Ministry of Education teachers reported receiving any in-service training on inclusion of students with disabilities or special learning needs in the past 5 years (Jordan's National Teacher Survey, unpublished data, 2018). It is unclear to what extent the recommendations of the ERfKE II report (World Bank, 2009) have been implemented specifically in relation to professional standards for in-service professional development and the policy framework for special education. In relation to teacher standards, it would appear that some work has taken place but the incorporation of inclusive pedagogies needs to be threaded through the standards, as Alshurfat points out: *'In recent years, efforts have been made in Jordan to develop a centralized system of teaching standards, and a team of national and international expertise has been formed. This team was charged with the task of developing nationwide standards that reflect what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at all stages of their careers'* (Alshurfat, 2016, p62).

IE training

There is a lack of understanding about inclusive education among the teaching profession as it does not form part of their training or experience. The exception to this is teachers who studied for the BA in Special Educational Needs and these teachers appear to be the champions of inclusion in the model schools visited. There is little reference to embedding inclusive education into the proposed changes to pre and in-service training in the MoE Education Strategic Plan and it needs to be interwoven into every course. The HRD strategy similarly recommends, *'mandatory modules on disability and inclusion in BEd specialisation and in-service compulsory training courses on inclusive, student-centred learning'* (NCHRD, 2016, p112) but this also needs to be extended to pre-service training for all teachers.

There is a growing bank of specialist and experienced teachers in the model inclusive schools and this expertise could be harnessed to provide training for other schools. One of the private schools visited exhibited a long-term commitment to IE over many years with their resource centre having been established in 1995 in response to the Salamanca Statement. They had developed very sophisticated systems of ensuring that all children were welcome in the school, that teachers and support teachers met regularly to plan the learning and plan the Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). They also had a very clear philosophy of IE which permeated the whole school. Overall the school was a really positive model of IE from the classroom through to the whole school culture. They had over 50 support teachers so that one could be in every classroom and give the children the support they needed within the class – not in a separate space. Although it would be difficult to disseminate to all schools, this would make an excellent case study for exploring the idea of introducing Support Teachers to MoE schools.

3. Recommendations: Teacher capacity

3.1 Develop pre-service training programs for all teachers more speedily than ESP suggests. Any training programs should incorporate philosophies and pedagogies of IE.

3.2 Develop in-service training for current teachers on IE.

3.3 Capitalise on the expertise that exists in model inclusive schools to share and disseminate good practice.

4. Accessibility

There are significant barriers to the inclusion of CWDs across Jordan and part of this is related to the infrastructure of both school buildings but also transport links and roads. One of the issues for many CWDs in Jordan is that once they have a diagnosis they find it difficult to find a suitable school as pointed out by the UNICEF report on out-of-school children in Jordan, *'it is very rare that children find a school that suitably equipped to handle their disability and is close to their home'* (UNICEF, 2014, p54). However, attention must also be given to the accessibility of the curriculum in terms of both pedagogy and practice and in relation to assistive technologies and resources as the majority of the learners are more likely to have learning difficulties than physical impairments. Not all accommodations and adaptations need to be high cost and many adjustments can be made to suit the local context which are low or no cost to implement (Stubbs & Lewis, 2011). In line with the social model of disability, adaptations to schools, environments, teaching and learning all need to be made in order to properly include children with disabilities. Without these adjustments CWDs will fail as they will not 'fit' the existing systems. Parents currently do not see their children being accommodated in schools as these adaptations have not yet been made.

Accessing the Buildings: Physical Environment and Transport

Clearly the fabric and layout of school buildings can present obvious barriers to children with physical disabilities accessing education and the MoE cites the use of rented schools as an additional barrier to these adaptations. Buildings are problematic and adaptations potentially very costly, but can be addressed both through a range of activities from the high cost building works to put in ramps and lifts through to much lower cost accommodations such as adapting the timetable to suit the student's particular needs. Many of the planned improvements to school buildings and infrastructure are detailed in the Education Strategic Plan (MoE, 2018) and this addresses some of the physical barriers for CWDs gaining access to schools. Toilet and washing facilities for children with physical disabilities also need to be considered when making schools fully accessible. One government-supported school was not able to take children with physical disabilities as they had no lift and no special bathroom. One teacher who was a wheelchair user did not eat or drink all day as she could not use the bathroom at school.

Infrastructure issues also have a real impact on the willingness of the school to admit certain children, for example some schools saying they could not accommodate wheelchair users as there were no ramps or lifts in the building. Conversely, there is evidence that teachers' acceptance of inclusion increased as school buildings were made more physically accessible (Al-Zyoudi, 2006). However, it could be argued that low cost temporary accommodations can be made where a school is committed to IE by timetabling the wheelchair user in downstairs classrooms, moving offices upstairs where necessary and lifting the wheelchair into school. While not ideal, it would provide more immediate and cost-effective solutions to include more students with physical disabilities in the short-term. One school claimed that it was well known that administration offices had to be on the ground floor to allow easy access for parents so they could not make a simple timetable accommodation to put children with physical disabilities on the ground floor. Longer-term solutions would need to be

incorporated in to new school building plans from the outset employing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.

Equally important is access to free school transport for children with disabilities. Transport to and from school was problematic, unreliable and unsuitable for some of the more vulnerable children according to parents and teachers on the scoping visit. One mother had to bring her child to school on public transport, as her daughter was too vulnerable to travel alone.

Accessing Support: Assistive Technology and Resources

A range of resources need to be made available in schools and these are not all high cost items (see table below) as lower technology items such as magnifying glasses, large print books, hearing loops etc could be supplied at a lower cost while also budgeting for the more expensive items such as AAC devices, brailers, screen readers and customised software (RTI, 2017). There were resource rooms in place in the model inclusive schools visited, although some had many more facilities than others, some were dependent on international donor projects which can be intermittent and disjointed and one was a full diagnostic centre. Not all the resource rooms had many resources and some were not well used. However, it is clear that the adaptations required for some children are not being met, for example, the lack of resources available in an enlarged print size for visually impaired students or suitable toileting facilities for children with physical disabilities. Conversely, one private school had adopted a more fully inclusive approach by installing microphones in every classroom, using Sonar spray to eliminate echo and organising additional time in examinations (with agreement from the IBO) for CWDs.

Low cost: pencil grips, book holders, reading stands, sign language, gesture, Makaton, book overlays, white cane

Medium cost: hearing aids, Braille paper and styluses, magnifying glasses, talking calculator

High cost: computer-based technology, including large keyboards, screen readers, Braille display and scan/read software, Dolphin pen. (DFID, 2010)

Equally, complementary therapies such as speech and language, physiotherapy and occupational therapy need to be developed through resource centres and made available to CWDs in schools. The private schools were better able to offer therapies such as speech and language therapy, diagnostic rooms and psychosocial support. They also had better equipment and spaces such as observation rooms and dedicated play areas or sensory rooms – all of which benefits CWDs from more affluent backgrounds.

Accessing the learning: pedagogy and practice

There is a lack of expertise on how to adapt curricula for children with disabilities and this is a huge barrier to inclusive education. Inclusive education should be *‘delivered through a pedagogy which reflects the way children learn, and creates a learning space which includes rather than excludes children. Finally, it needs to be delivered in an environment which is respectful of the cultural, protection and participation rights of children – in other words, an environment in which they are safe, their*

physical integrity respected and their voices heard and taken seriously” (UNICEF, 2012, p30). Teacher training should take the ‘twin-track’ approach of teaching inclusive pedagogies as well as deepening teacher understanding of a range of special educational needs and appropriate accommodations required.

Teachers need to be aware of the international policy context on inclusive education including the Salamanca Statement and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Jordanian Law no 20 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, the Sustainable Development Goals and the rights of children with disabilities to education. Without this wider knowledge, it will be harder for them to understand the rights of all children to an inclusive education.

As indicated in section 3, teacher capacity and understanding of inclusive education including learner-centred methodologies need to be developed in order to attract and retain more CWDs into schools (UNESCO, 2008). Some curriculum adaptations were evident in some schools, children having some extra time with the teacher and accommodations made for exams in terms of having additional time. Some of the best practice was seen where CWDs were included within regular classes with a support teacher if required and the adaptations were made to the learning in order for the child to succeed.

Knowledge content in the curriculum was found to be inappropriate to the abilities of CWDs especially those with severe learning difficulties who rarely had the opportunity to learn maths, science or reading (RTI, 2017). However, the RTI report also found little evidence of teachers adapting the curriculum to make it accessible for ALL learners. Teachers also need to be trained in developing IEPs and monitoring student progress in this way. There was evidence of good practice of the use of IEPs in one of the private schools visited where teachers and support teachers worked well together. All the supporting paperwork for each child was shared and the IEP planning undertaken collaboratively through regular and frequent meetings.

Encouragement and engagement in extra-curricular activities would also be helpful to support the full participation of CWDs in school life. When visiting one of the schools, a child with a disability was able to say how she helped the children to line up after lunchtime and she also helped out the school nurse – having these additional responsibilities were very positive for her self-esteem and her social inclusion. Another child in another school was supported to go to summer camp.

4. Recommendations: Accessibility

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| 4.1 Exploit a range of low-cost adaptations (to the physical and the learning environment) that could be made as soon as possible. |
| 4.2 Ensure that all new school buildings adhere to the national building code for persons with disabilities (HRD and HCD plans) |
| 4.3 Make appropriate adaptations to the physical environment of existing schools to increase accessibility |
| 4.4 Make appropriate adaptations to teaching and learning strategies and curricula to ensure that all children with disabilities can access the learning |
| 4.5 Seek additional funding to ensure the financial costs of the above can be met |

5. Attitudes and awareness

Teachers

'Jordan has a strong tradition of addressing disability issues and as a country has been internationally recognised for its efforts. It is often viewed as a regional leader on disability issues' (Thompson, 2018, p6). However there is also evidence of negative teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of CWDs in regular classrooms among teachers (Hamaidi et al., 2012). Teacher attitudes do vary according to the length of time they have been teaching, sometimes by teacher gender and also by the nature and severity of the disability (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004; Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Amaireh, 2017; Al-Shahrani, 2014). Explanations for this can be found in societal attitudes towards disability but also that teaching a CWD can be more demanding for a teacher and require more time, preparation and imagination about how to help them learn. One principal of a model inclusive school talked about IE being a *'headache, emotionally draining and a financial burden'* despite her commitment to it. Where children with disabilities experience discriminatory attitudes or are not welcomed into their local schools, more needs to be done to raise teacher awareness and change attitudes. Parents commented on their children not being able to attend school because of the teacher and headteacher attitudes where they did not welcome CWDs. Along with teacher training they felt that attitudes were the most important priority to address inclusion in education.

Even within inclusive schools there was evidence of a 'charity' or pity model approach rather than viewing CWDs as young learners with great potential and with their own aspirations. One teacher talked about teachers falling into two categories in relation to CWDs either that *'they can't teach them because it is too upsetting and they cry all the time out of pity or the other group who just can't be bothered.'* The evidence from Handicap International (2016) suggests that many teachers do not accept the inclusion of CWDs in regular schools and classrooms and felt that the curriculum was not suitable, that they lacked the understanding of special education methods, that there was a lack of expertise on IE to help achieve it and that more accommodations needed to be made around attendance and attainment for CWDs. They believed that all CWDs require different teaching methods and this needs to be addressed through on-going training to show that a 'twin-track' approach is beneficial to develop the learning of all.

Parents and Families

At the moment there is no real advantage or incentive to disclose disability – in fact, the opposite is true. In the focus group some parents commented on how judged they felt by others, that they received more support when someone died than they did in having a child with a disability. They felt blamed for having a child with a disability and not supported by their communities as well as being financially disadvantaged and having to become an expert in their child's condition. They felt very isolated. Commonly held traditional beliefs about stigma and disability (for example that acknowledging the existence of a child with a disability could negatively impact girls' chances of getting married) need to be challenged at all levels in society. However, cultural beliefs about the causes of disability need to be more fully explored and understood as there is some evidence that parents who perceive their child's disability as God's will or fate are more likely to have positive aspirations for them (Al-Dababneh, 2017). Opportunities later in life, to go to university, to get a job

or to get married need to be considered in relation to inclusion to ensure that students with disabilities can look positively towards their progression into adult life. The capability and potential of CWDs need to be highlighted rather than a focus on their difficulties or deficits. Positive role models and case studies of people with disabilities who have been successful would help with this. CWDs can become victims of their own parents' ignorance where many are not aware of their child's right to be educated alongside their peers (Handicap International, 2016) and others felt that there was no point sending their children to school as they would not be able to participate in society in adulthood (UNICEF, 2014). One of the schools visited commented on the success of a support group for mothers of CWDs where they offered a space for mothers to come into school and talk about their children and how to overcome some of the barriers facing them. In another school the parents commented that they felt confident in their children coming to school and being properly supported by the teachers. And yet, in the focus group with parents some felt that their children would not be able to attend school as they would not be well supported and that their children also needed some affection and compassion from teachers. One parent/teacher commented that his school was not fit to take students with disabilities and that there were no teachers specialised in more significant disabilities. Where parents had been able to afford a specialist tutor – even for a short time – they reported real improvements in their children but this was not available to all of them.

Communities

One school suggested that 90% of the Jordanian population don't know what inclusive education means. One school talked about the prejudice from parents of children without disabilities about the negative impact of inclusive education and having children with disabilities in their child's classes. It is important to challenge errantly held beliefs that the presence of children with disabilities in the classroom can negatively impact on the learning of others, *'the research evidence also demonstrates the positive effects of IE on all children – contrary to beliefs where it is held that the presence of disabled children holds others back'* (Reiser, 2012). UNICEF also recommended stronger partnerships between the MoE, mosques and local councils in order to further the cause of inclusive education, *'examples of the subjects that Imams can address through their weekly meetings include ... mentioning the service providers who take care of and educate disabled children'* (UNICEF, 2014, p61). Some of the parents in the focus group talked about the role of the media in raising awareness and changing attitudes and also thought that the local imam and religious institutions should talk about this in their sermons. Then parents can teach their children without disabilities how to treat those with disabilities nor was it financially sustainable for others.

Children without disabilities' attitudes to children with disabilities in schools

The positive aspect of all this is that future generations are becoming more accepting of disabilities and leading the way towards a more inclusive society. In all of the model inclusive schools visited, teachers reported on the positive interactions between students with and without disabilities including the students without disabilities inviting CWDs to their birthday parties and integrating them socially. One

school talked about changing parental attitudes through the children going home and talking about the children with disabilities in school and inviting them to social events. In one class, the teacher took in a wheelchair prior to a boy with a disability joining the class and allowed the children to try it out and ask questions before the boy started at school. When she asked who wanted to be his friend, they all put their hands up. These positive attitudes were also identified by the Handicap International Report on inclusion in Jordanian primary schools as they found evidence that children with and without disabilities formed good relationships and they co-operated and accepted each other (Handicap International, 2016).

Voices of children with disabilities

Children with disabilities also have voices and opinions on their own education that need to be heard. This may require imagination and creativity on the part of the teachers to enhance the communication abilities of CWDs but it is important that they are engaged in their own education planning. On the scoping visit, some of the children with disabilities were able to articulate how they enjoyed coming to school and playing with friends and others talked about their aspirations for the future with one girl planning to become a doctor. Conversely, for those out-of-school children, parents commented on how they were stuck at home with little to do except watch television or play computer games and they got bored. Asking the out-of-school children what they would find helpful both in school and in their communities would add insight to the range of provision needed.

5. Recommendations: Attitudes

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| 5.1 Promote the importance of education for CWDs and the improvement of their life chances through public awareness campaigns |
| 5.2 Ensure that teachers are aware of the evidence base for inclusion and wider communities understand that CWDs in local schools do not negatively impact the learning of others |
| 5.3 Raise awareness of the importance of early identification and screening to parents |
| 5.4 Develop high profile case studies of people with disabilities across a range of sectors |
| 5.5 Explore peer-to-peer initiatives for collaborative learning, social inclusion and community participation. |

6. School leadership and recognition

The implementation of inclusive education will not be achieved without clear vision and commitment from school leaders and as, the HCD commented, principals are the 'change agents'. There was evidence of such commitment in some of the model inclusive schools either initiated by the principal or initiated by an enthusiastic teacher who was able to harness the support of the principal. Where there was a strong lead from the principal, the model inclusive schools were able to develop their visions of IE, *'things work here because we make it work – the principal is committed and without this it wouldn't happen'* in the words of one teacher. In this school the principal wanted to be able to reward her teachers for the hard work they do on including CWDs. The true development of IE, however, involves all the staff, all the children and all the associated families of the school. Of the schools visited, there was much to commend in terms of inclusive practice but this seemed to be happening as a result of one or two committed staff – in the first instance – and then wider commitment by the school. While the two private schools did seem to share some of their expertise with others, this would be an important area to capitalise on when moving forward with IE. School leadership team training in IE needs to be developed to ensure a system-wide shift towards IE.

Teachers in the inclusive schools felt that their work on inclusion was not valued and mostly felt unsupported by the MoE. They did feel that some parents recognised their work and were grateful and one teacher had received a letter from a district supervisor acknowledging her work after they had observed her lesson. Developing an accreditation framework in line with the recommendations of the HCD Ten-Year Plan (HCD, 2018) would provide a way of tracking progress towards inclusion and would also help schools to understand the expectations of them. Alongside this recognition for both schools and for teachers for exemplary work in IE would be a really helpful motivational tool. Those recognised in this could then go on to be role models and provide training for other schools and communities. It would also be worth considering cash incentives to schools to provide a higher quality learning environment for children with disabilities for example in Kenya and the Czech Republic schools are provided with a higher capitation grant per child with a disability (DFID, 2010).

6. Recommendations: School Leadership and Quality Assurance

6.1 Develop a comprehensive training programme for ALL school staff including headteachers, teachers, administrative staff, support and shadow teachers as cited in the ESP

6.2 Develop an accreditation framework for IE in order to demonstrate progress – use the steering group partnership referred to in 3.4 to do this

7. Diagnosis, data and monitoring

Jordan boasts high enrolment rates of 98% in Basic Education and 72% in Secondary Education but there are over *'110,000 children of school age not currently enrolled in formal education in Jordan'* (HRD, 2016 ,p99). However, there is a lack of accurate data on the numbers of out of school children of the pre-primary and primary ages.

The diagnosis of children with disabilities, the collection and monitoring of data are clearly posing significant challenges for Jordan and there are a variety of statistics quoted in different contexts that make it difficult to accurately plan for full inclusion. *'Consistently, researchers in Jordan have stated in numerous reports and articles that the Jordanian educational system is in need of valid assessment tools to identify students with special needs and provide them with an appropriate intervention'* (Abu-Hamour, & Al-Hmouz, 2014, p112). More information is needed about the types and prevalence of specific disabilities. It is also clear that definitions of disabilities need to be clarified so that the MoE, the Department for Statistics and other government agencies are quoting comparable figures. From the MoE Education Strategic Plan (2018-22), *'As of 2016, the total number of children with special educational needs (visual, hearing, learning disabilities) was estimated to be 20,600'*. However, this only represents some categories of disability.

According to the ESP 2018 only 5% of children with disabilities are enrolled in schools and the plan is to increase this to 10% by 2022. Currently it seems that this equates to over 7000 students with disabilities currently enrolled in nearly 750 schools in Jordan (Thompson, 2018) that would therefore mean increasing to 14,000 by 2022. The pace of increased enrolments should be accelerated.

Diagnosis

Given the lack of accuracy in statistical reporting on the numbers of children with disabilities and the classification of disability by type, it is critical to invest further in diagnostic centres and in staff training in school-based resource centres in order to identify children with special educational needs and disabilities early in life and then to capture this data. In the Education Strategic Plan (2018-22) there are plans to open diagnostic centres in three regions of Jordan as well as two mobile diagnostic centres with appropriately trained staff. This will improve the number (up to 7000 being seen by 2022/3) and timeliness of diagnosis that could improve early intervention and early enrolment to KG or basic education. However, a lack of diagnosis should not be a barrier to being enrolled in school nor should the power reside with physicians to determine a child's access to education (Rocha, 2015). A multi-disciplinary approach to diagnosis and assessment of children with disabilities or special educational needs should be introduced.

Data and monitoring

There are inherent contradictions in data collected by the Department of Statistics and the MoE and different numbers have been reported in different documents (as reported by the MoE). There is an estimated number of 500,000 children with disabilities under the age of 18 in Jordan (Jordan Times, 2019), and according to the MoE, only 5% of children with disabilities are enrolled in public school (ESP). It is clear that more needs to be done on locating out of school children and their families, the range of disabilities and the range of accommodations required as well as the

barriers facing them in accessing education. There is reference (MoE, 2018) to the development of and training in OpenEMIS and WebGIS in order to collect robust and reliable data but it is not clear to what extent this will focus on collecting data on CWDs both in and out of school. More needs to be done to follow up on Jordanian general census findings with appropriate studies and surveys on out of school children (RTI, 2017). Supplementing the nationally collected data should be an attempt to consider 'bottom-up' approaches to data on out-of-school children with disabilities at the school and community level (Croft, 2013). However, the lack of accurate data should not be a barrier or delay the development of inclusive practice in schools.

The plan for ID cards to be issued to all persons with disabilities (who are Jordanian nationals) including the personal information of the holder, the type, nature and degree of disability is to be cautiously welcomed and will certainly provide more accessible data on children with disabilities and the numbers who are out of school. However, ID cards could potentially be stigmatising for children with disabilities and could focus on their deficits and a medical model approach to 'fixing' the child to fit the system; the focus needs to remain as a rights-based approach and developing inclusive schools where difference and diversity are welcomed.

Syrian refugees

The influx of Syrian refugees across the border into Jordan has heavily strained Jordan's education system and resources. The intersection of disability with poverty and refugee status are likely to compound the barriers for Syrian children accessing the education system in Jordan. A policy-related barrier that concerns children of non-Jordanian nationalities is the legislation that prevents them from entering public schools without having certain legal documents (UNICEF, 2014). According to recent reports in the Jordan Times (2018), there are over 70,000 Syrian refugee children out of school and, of those, it is estimated that 26% have a physical, sensory or intellectual impairment (Handicap International & HelpAge, 2014) let alone those experiencing psychosocial difficulties as a result of the conflict.

The Education Strategic Plan makes reference to the numbers of double shift schools where refugees are typically educated in the afternoon or second shift of the school with different teachers. This has had the effect of reducing the number of hours available to Jordanian students so the plan now proposes to reduce the number of shift schools over the next five years.

7. Recommendations: Diagnosis, data and monitoring

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| 7.1 Strengthen, develop and extend current systems for data collection and dissemination |
| 7.2 Co-ordinate with the Department of Statistics, HCD and MoE to have accurate data on children with disabilities |
| 7.3 Identify methods to determine the number of out-of-school children with disabilities in order to measure progress both nationally but also at school level |
| 7.4 Improve data collection for Syrian CWDs both in and out of school |
| 7.5 Improve access to diagnosis |
| 7.6 Further research is required on the numbers, types of disability and reasons for out-of-school CWDs |

8. Severe developmental and intellectual disabilities

As mentioned in sections 1 and 2, a clear vision of IE in Jordan is necessary to move forward more quickly in its implementation. If this vision is not conceptualised and widely shared there is a danger of having a two-tier system where children continue to be segregated. Many lower income countries have attempted to include CWDs in mainstream education programmes but they not always include all disability groups. This can lead to a 'hierarchy of the excluded', with some impairment groups being further marginalised and excluded (Kalyanpur 2008). Inclusive schools consulted on the scoping visit did not see children with severe learning difficulties (or "severe developmental and intellectual disabilities") as their responsibility. Continuing to locate responsibility for children with more severe learning difficulties with the Ministry for Social Development perpetuates this segregation and continues to marginalise them in society. They do not have access to regular schools but only to private specialist centres for which their parents have to pay and many cannot afford *'students with speech and language impairments are considered to be the sole responsibility of their families who should seek help from the speech and language specialist in the private sector'* (Abu-Hamour & Al-Hmouz, 2014 p110).

Currently, there are 69 centres and special day schools for children and youth with intellectual disabilities administered by the MOSD in Jordan (Abu-Hamour & Al-Hmouz, 2014). Visually impaired students are taught in specialist provision and there are at least 10 schools for the deaf with approximately 755 students in these schools. So there is already a growing separate provision for sensory impairments where these children could learn alongside their peers where appropriate adaptations are made and resources made available. However, there were students seen on the scoping visit who had visual impairments and hearing impairments who were being successfully accommodated, and were thriving, in inclusive schools.

8. Recommendations: Severe Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

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| 8.1 Develop fully inclusive schools for all learners (including those with severe developmental and intellectual disabilities) through specifically trained teachers, funded shadow teachers and resource rooms |
| 8.2 Acknowledge children's wishes and rights to be educated with their peers |

Conclusion

It seems that there is a real opportunity for Jordan to become the regional MENA champion of inclusive education that would sit well with its remarkable international reputation for a humanitarian approach in welcoming refugees and fostering their integration. There is clearly a need for further research into the barriers facing out-of-school children with disabilities particularly in the poorer rural areas of the country and among refugee populations. Inclusive education in Jordan will not happen at the pace demanded by the SDGs without wholehearted commitment from the Ministry of Education to significantly improve teacher training, challenge and change prevailing attitudes and adapt school environments and these should now be addressed as urgent priorities in order to realise the ambitions of an inclusive education system for all.

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Appendix A: Four Year Action Plan for Inclusive Education 2019-2022

1. Recommendations:	Action Plan: Policies and strategies	2019	2020	2021	2022	By 2028
1.1 Ensure that an IE Steering Group led by the MoE but comprising broad membership is accountable for the vision and implementation of IE in Jordan.	1.1.1 Develop an IE steering group, building on existing group but also comprising MoSD, QRTA, HCD, the university of Jordan, a model inclusive school, possibly UNWRA and international donors to oversee the vision for IE in Jordan The steering group will be responsible for overseeing some of the recommendations in this action plan including 1.3, 1.4, 2.1					
1.2 Ensure that education for ALL children becomes the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (including those with severe developmental and intellectual disabilities).	1.2.1 Negotiate timing of this with MoSD – the two departments should continue to work very closely but the MoE to take full responsibility for the education of those with severe learning difficulties in order that their human right to education are respected					
1.3 Work with the HCD to develop, adopt and disseminate a vision for IE for Jordan and how this will be implemented in schools.	1.3.1 IE steering group to develop and adopt the vision for IE set out by HCPD and the key principles enacted in the schools 1.3.2. Produce leaflet to summarise the vision for Jordan to disseminate to all schools and parents					
1.4 Develop, review and disseminate a guidance handbook for schools on the implementation of IE.	1.4.1 IE steering group to review and disseminate the existing handbook as a guide for implementing IE in schools covering admissions, making reasonable accommodations for all students, working with shadow teachers					
1.5 Develop greater coherence between the various IE initiatives that are funded by NGOs and international donors to avoid negative impacts on children and ensure sustainability.	1.5.1 Map out priorities for donor funding in relation to IE and create framework to ensure that initiatives are sustainable beyond the funding period. 1.5.2 Reflect on, research and identify key donor interventions that have had an impact on developing IE – build on existing strengths and successes in order to improve sustainability of IE					
1.6 Align all recommendations and action plans from existing policies (HRD, ESP, HCD etc) and accelerate the pace of change.	1.6.1 Identify a clear time frame to which all policies and action plans adhere 1.6.2 Review and accelerate (where possible) the targets in these plans, for example, whether the increased enrolments of CWDs from 5-10% by 2022 could be more ambitious.					
2. Recommendations:	Action Plan: Definitions of inclusive education	2019	2020	2021	2022	By 2028
2.1 Identify and adopt a clear and focused definition of IE in line with international definitions to be widely disseminated and used in all policy documents.	2.1.1 Drawing on the vision for IE outlined in 1.3.1 agree on definition to be used in all communications and training materials as well as in policy documents to ensure that everyone is working towards the same definition					
2.2 Based on the vision for IE in 1.3 develop an inclusive ethos in all schools.	2.2.1 Promote the vision of IE to all schools and communities and with the Handbook for Implementation for IE, ensure that all schools are working towards becoming more inclusive					

	2.2.2 Review content of teaching materials and textbooks to include images and references to disabilities					
2.3 Clarify and disseminate definitions of special educational needs and disabilities.	2.3.1 Definitions of disability should be included within the Handbook for implementation (1.4)					
3. Recommendations:	Action Plan: Teacher capacity	2019	2020	2021	2022	By 2028
3.1 Develop pre-service training programs for all teachers.	3.1.1 Develop content of pre-service training to include pedagogies and philosophies of IE (overseen by Steering Group) 3.1.2 Increase the number of trainee teachers accessing pre-service training that covers IE philosophies and pedagogies from the outset 3.1.3 Involve organisations for people and teachers with disabilities in the design and delivery of IE training wherever possible					
3.2 Develop in-service training for current teachers on IE.	3.2.1 Design a range of short CPD courses (half day, one day, one week etc) in order to support current teachers to access specific training for IE 3.2.2 By 2028, ensure that all in-service teachers have accessed some IE training 3.2.3 Monitor attendance and engagement with IE CPD training as an ongoing activity					
3.3 Capitalise on the expertise that exists in model inclusive schools to share and disseminate good practice.	3.5.1 Use the considerable experience of some of the model inclusive schools already existing to showcase and disseminate good practice through inviting other schools to observe the practice, running seminars and workshops and formally recognising those schools					
4. Recommendations	Action Plan: Accessibility	2019	2020	2021	2022	By 2028
4.1 Exploit a range of low or no cost adaptations (to the physical and the learning environment) that could be made as soon as possible.	4.1.1 Carry out costings of key resources that could be sent to schools to develop their resource rooms (e.g. the low and medium cost items listed in section 4 of the report) 4.1.2 Explore no cost adjustments such as timetabling options to include those with physical disabilities in ground floor classrooms					
4.2 Ensure that all new school buildings adhere to the national building code for persons with disabilities (HRD and HCD plans)	4.2.1 With all new school buildings ensure that accessibility is incorporated into their design					
4.3 Make appropriate adaptations to the physical environment of existing schools to increase accessibility	4.3.1 Make adjustments to existing schools including ramps and lifts where 4.1.2 is not possible					
4.4 Make appropriate adaptations to teaching and learning strategies and curricula to ensure that all	4.4.1 Building on definitions of IE, SEN and disability, increasing the understanding of the implementation of IE through the dissemination of the Handbook and improving the availability of in-service training, monitor how					

children with disabilities can access the learning	teachers are adapting their teaching and learning strategies to include all children.					
4.5 Seek additional funding to ensure the financial costs of the above can be met	4.5.1 Costing the above plans and preparing priority investment areas to attract international donors					

5. Recommendations	Action Plan: Attitudes	2019	2020	2021	2022	By 2028
5.1 Promote the importance of education for CWDs and the improvement of their life chances through public awareness campaigns	5.1.1 MoE to work with HCD to develop public awareness campaign about disability rights as outlined in Education Strategic Plan and HPCD 10-year plan 5.1.2 Develop awareness campaign targeting parents, families, CWDs and non-CWDs about the importance of education for all					
5.2 Ensure that teachers are aware of the evidence base for inclusion and wider communities understand that CWDs in local schools do not negatively impact the learning of others	5.2.1 Develop teacher awareness and understanding of international and national policy 5.2.2 Disseminate evidence-based research on the impact of CWDs in schools and the lack of evidence for negative impacts on the learning of others					
5.3 Raise awareness of the importance of early identification and screening to parents	5.3.1 Meetings in local communities to explain the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention and the benefits of Early Years education					
5.4 Develop high profile case studies of people with disabilities across a range of sectors	5.4.1 Use known case studies and seek out success stories of people with disabilities in different fields including extending media representations of disability					
5.5 Explore peer-to-peer initiatives for collaborative learning, social inclusion and community participation.	5.5.1 Build on the positive attitudes of children without disabilities in schools to buddy with CWDs to support their learning in school and to support their social participation both within school and in their local communities 5.5.2 Identify inclusion champions among the children and reward both children with and without disabilities 5.5.3 Explore roles and responsibilities that can be allocated to CWDs to improve their self-esteem and to give them a participative role in the school (e.g. helping the office staff, collecting books, giving out resources etc.)					

6. Recommendations	Action Plan: School leadership and recognition	2019	2020	2021	2022	By 2028
6.1 Develop a comprehensive training programme for ALL school staff including headteachers, teachers, administrative staff, support and shadow teachers as cited in the ESP	6.1.1 Embed IE pedagogies and philosophies into school staff training with a specific focus on leadership for IE					
6.2 Develop an accreditation framework for IE in order to demonstrate progress	6.2.1 Use the IE steering group to develop an accreditation framework for IE in order that progress towards IE can be evidenced and good practice shared – <i>this should cover both a basic quality assurance standard of inclusive education and also an accreditation framework as an incentive for</i>					

(6.3 deleted as too similar to 6.2)	further reward and recognition.					
7. Recommendations:	Action Plan: Diagnosis, data and monitoring	2019	2020	2021	2022	By 2028
7.1. Strengthen, develop and extend current systems for data collection and dissemination.	7.1.1 Strengthen and develop the current systems for data collection and dissemination through EMIS 7.1.2 Develop mechanism for schools to report on numbers of CWDs enrolled within their schools 7.1.3 Explore more creative approaches to data collection within communities via a 'bottom-up' approach					
7.2 Co-ordinate with the DoS, HCD and MoE to have accurate data on children with disabilities.	7.2.1 Work with the Department of Statistics to agree common methods of data collection and agreed categories of disability					
7.3 Identify methods to determine the number of out-of-school children with disabilities in order to measure progress.	7.3.1 As in 7.1.3 explore more creative methods to identify the numbers of out of school children and their disabilities through bottom up data collection					
7.4 Improve data collection for Syrian CWDs both in and out of school.	7.4.1 In line with the ESP, reduce the numbers of double shift Syrian schools in order to improve social integration of Syrian children (with and without disabilities) and to increase teaching hours for all children 7.4.2 Identify the numbers of out of school Syrian CWDs 7.4.3 Remove documentation barriers to enrolling in school					
7.5 Improve access to diagnosis.	7.5.1 Build the three identified diagnostic centres in three regions of Jordan but also provide an outreach diagnostic service for those who will be unable to attend diagnostic centres					
7.6 Further research is required on the numbers, types of disability and reasons for out-of-school CWDs.	7.6.1 Commission local research to investigate the out-of-school CWD population to better understand the barriers to accessing education and the types of disability most likely to be excluded from school					
8. Recommendations	Action Plan: Severe developmental and intellectual disabilities	2019	2020	2021	2022	By 2028
8.1 Develop fully inclusive schools to accommodate all learners (including those with severe developmental and intellectual disabilities).	8.1.1 All school staff need to welcome and celebrate the diversity of CWDs attending the school 8.1.2 Ensure that shadow teachers or support teachers are fully financed and that families are not expected to pay for this or become shadow teachers themselves					
8.2 Acknowledge children's wishes and rights to be educated with their peers.	8.2.1 Work with parents and CWDs to support their inclusion in regular schools as their human right.					

	8.2.2 Learn from parents about what support would help their child the most					
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