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Middle East Education, Research, and Training Support **DISABILITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION STUDY**

FINAL REPORT

June 2022

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	
Table of Tables.....	
Table of Figures	
Acronyms.....	
Executive Summary.....	i
Reaching All Children And Youth With Disabilities.....	v
Coordination And Collaboration.....	vi
Raising Awareness and Visibility.....	vi
Pedagogical Practices/Teacher Training.....	vii
Study Purpose & Research Questions.....	1
Study Objectives	1
Study Stakeholders	1
Study Focus	2
Research Questions	2
Study Background.....	3
Study Approach.....	5
Findings and Conclusions.....	9
RQ 1: National Policies	9
RQ 1 Findings.....	9
Disability Laws	9
Inclusive Education Policies.....	11
Inclusive Interventions	13
Insights into Disability Inclusive Education Successes and Challenges.....	16
Coordination for Inclusive Education.....	17
RQ1 Conclusion.....	18
RQ 1a: Disability Data	19
RQ 1a Findings.....	19
Date on Populations.....	20
Education-Related Disability Services.....	23
RQ 1a Conclusion.....	26
RQ 2: Access to Higher Education.....	27
RQ2 Findings.....	27
Policies, Strategies, Laws	27
Interventions	29
Data from KIIs	29

Data from Desk Review	31
Effectiveness	32
RQ2 Conclusions	33
RQ3: Workforce Transitions.....	35
RQ3 Findings	35
Policies, strategies, laws	35
Interventions and Effectiveness.....	37
RQ3 Conclusions	38
RQ4: Underserved Students	39
RQ4 Findings	39
Policies	39
Interventions	39
RQ4 Conclusions	41
Lessons Learned & Implications for Further Disability Inclusive Education Programming	43
Reaching all Children and Youth with Disabilities	43
Coordination and Collaboration.....	45
Raising Awareness & Visibility	46
Pedagogical Practices/ Teacher Training	47
Annex I: Summary of Legal Frameworks, Interventions, and Disability Types.....	47
Annex II: Study Methods and Limitations.....	65
Methodology	65
Data Collection	65
Desk Review.....	65
Key Informant Interviews.....	65
KII Sample	66
Data Analysis	67
Desk Review.....	67
KII Analysis	67
Limitations	67
Annex III: Study Framework.....	62
Annex IV: References	64

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Lessons Learned/Implications for Reaching All Children with Disabilities	v
Table 2: Lessons Learned/Implications for Coordination and Collaboration	vi
Table 3: Lessons Learned/Implications for Raising Awareness and Visibility	vi

Table 4: Lessons Learned/Implications for Pedagogical Practices/Teacher Training	vii
Table 5: Research Questions and Strategy.....	3
Table 6: Integration vs. Inclusion	5
Table 7: Data on Populations	20
Table 8: PEERS for MENA Countries.....	24
Table 9: Lessons and implications for Children and Youth with Disabilities.....	43
Table 10: Lessons and Implication for Coordination and Collaboration	45
Table 11: Lessons and Implications for Raising Awareness & Visibility	46
Table 12: Lessons and Implications for Pedagogical Practices/Teacher Training	47
Table 13: Summary Table on Disability Inclusive Education.....	47
Table 14: Disability Inclusive Education Interventions.....	62
Table 15: Study Framework.....	62

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: KII Sample in Countries.....	ii
Figure 2: Three Categories for Current MENA practices.....	4
Figure 3: Socially Imposed Barriers	7
Figure 4: Various Model Approaches	8
Figure 5: Countries Participating in KIIS.....	10
Figure 6: UNICEF Intersectoral Interventions.....	14
Figure 7: School Attendance from “Disability in the Arab Region 2018”	21
Figure 8: Recommendations on Scaling Inclusive Education Projects	23
Figure 9: Example of Underserved and Marginalized Interventions	41
Figure 10: KII Sample Countries	66

ACRONYMS

AUC	American University of Cairo
BE	Basic Education
BZU	Bir Zeit University
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DPO	Disabled People Organization
EC	European Commission
EGRA	Early Grades Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESCWA	UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ESP	Educational Strategy Plan
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth, Development Office
GEM	Global Education Monitoring
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HE	Higher Education
HCD	Higher Council for the Rights of Person with Disabilities
ICF	International Classification of Functioning Model of Disability
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IES	Inclusive Education Strategy
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IUG	Islamic University of Gaza
K4D	Knowledge 4 Development
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LNGO	Local National Government Organizations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa

MoE	Ministry of Education
MNEVT	Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
PACES	Progression of Accessibility Center in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in North Africa
PEER	Profiles Enhancing Education Review
RQ	Research Questions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFD	Workforce Development
WGSS	Washington Group Short Set

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STUDY PURPOSE

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Disability Inclusive Education Study examined national laws and policies for disability inclusive education, as well as strengths and gaps in current policies. A review of interventions, including, where it was possible, policy and local organizations efforts designed to support students with disabilities and related literature, provide examples of where and how policies and interventions are being executed and implemented and draw out lessons learned from published data and key informants from across the region.

STUDY PARAMETERS

The primary focus of the study is on Basic Education, with a lighter touch on Higher Education. The countries included in the study are Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.

STUDY BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Despite growing commitment towards more inclusive policies and practices, in the MENA region persons with disabilities are still among the most marginalized and underserved groups. In the MENA region, children with disabilities may experience exclusion, segregation, or integration.

The study was informed by The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Rights Based and Social Model of Disability, and International Disability Alliance (IDA), within the overarching theme of the Sustainable Development Goal #4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

STUDY METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

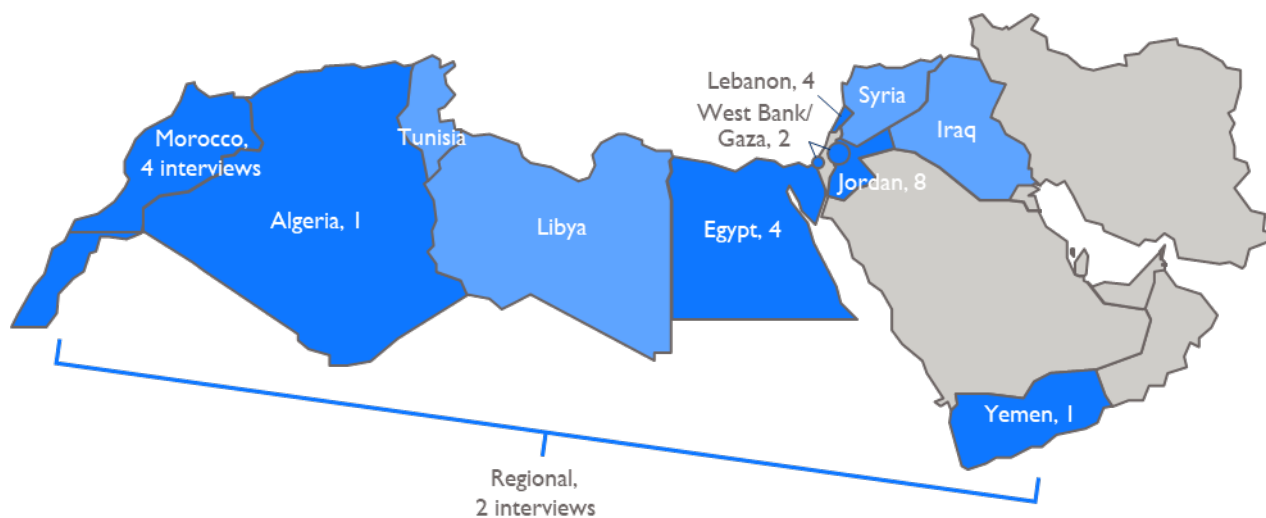
The study was conducted over three phases. During phase one, the inception report was reviewed, finalized, and approved. Phase two entailed an in-depth analysis of available literature, the completion of key informant interviews (KIIs), and finalization of this study report. Phase three is expected to include further collaboration with USAID and other organizations involved in disability education in the region.

Data collection consisted of in-depth literature review on legislation, policies, and interventions on disability inclusive education across the target countries. Based on the literature review findings, the team conducted a limited number of KIIs to gain a more robust understanding of the current environment in which interventions are being implemented and gaps between policies and practices.

KIIs sampling was purposeful and included institutional and community representatives. Respondents at the institutional level included MOE representatives; donors, United Nations (UN) Agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and local national government organizations (LNGOs) engaged in disability inclusive education programming. Respondents at the community level included disabled peoples' organization (DPOs) representatives. KII sampling included an initial group of prospective respondents whose contacts were kindly provided by UNICEF, USAID, and team members.

Figure 1: KII Sample in Countries

This study focused on the 11 countries in USAID's MENA portfolio. The study team conducted interviews in seven countries as well as with regional representatives.



The team experienced five main types of limitations:

- Availability of Information: literature available provided an incomplete overview of all countries.
- Regional Data: aggregated data available from studies at regional level were difficult to use.
- Stakeholder Coordination: the snowballing method resulted in waves of KII contacts.
- Gender Analysis: Little gender disaggregated data about students with disabilities.
- Representation: representation of participants from each of the KII categories was not equal.

KEY FINDINGS



RQ1: What is the current state of national policies and interventions designed for education that is inclusive of students with disabilities at the basic education level?

Disability Laws:

- Gap between policy and implementation was a theme revealed by the majority of respondents.
- Existing laws have a particular focus on persons/students with visible disabilities such as physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities making those with non-visible disabilities less represented in existing disability laws.

Inclusive Education Policies:

- Apart from Morocco, policies address inclusive education holistically, meaning that they include disability as one of the many dimensions of inclusive education.
- Countries of the MENA region rely on funding received from donor organizations to implement disability inclusive education related initiatives. Consequently, national plans for disability inclusive education are rarely matched with a suitable budget.



RQ 1a: What data is captured on different education-related disability services and populations? What lessons can be drawn from examining both the data and support provided to students with disabilities and how does it vary - if at all - based on different disability types and other factors?

Data:

- Overall, KII confirmed the need for better data to be gathered regarding children with disabilities.
- Where existing, data collected focused exclusively on enrollment. In Morocco, through UNICEF assistance, data collection relates also to academic performance.

Education Related Services:

- From KII interviews it emerged that services related to disability inclusive education are not provided in a systematic fashion. A positive example in this regard is the use of assistive technologies, as part of the [Inclusive Education Pilot Schools Project in Lebanon](#) implemented by UNICEF and MOHE.
- In Jordan, through the recently launched National Referral Pathways System, efforts are made at providing services to students with disabilities starting from pre-primary education.
- The [Global Education Monitoring, Inclusive Education Report \(2020\)](#) highlighted that differentiated learning supported by technology was infrequently used, mainly due to lack of relevant teacher education. Thus, when discussing education related disability services this should also be paired with complementary capacity building focused initiatives for teachers (in addition to the students themselves and family members).



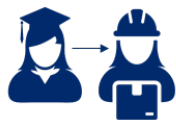
RQ 2: What policies and interventions have been implemented to support students with disabilities' access to and success in higher education (and training)? What is known about their effectiveness?

Policies and Interventions

- Policies generally address education in general (BE and HE) rather than being specific for HE.
- Interventions at the HE level are limited. Ongoing initiatives are being implemented in Egypt, Jordan.
- Elements of success of ongoing initiatives include provision of devices, and training on their use, to students with disabilities; networking; staff study visits abroad; and initiatives aimed at raising awareness.

Effectiveness and Challenges

- As programs/initiatives are ongoing, little is known about their long-term effectiveness at delivering results such as improving enrollment or employment rates of persons with disabilities.
- Challenging elements include limited human and financial resources and low awareness in governorates away from the capital, low quality of pre-higher education, and barriers encountered by students at physical, technological, and attitudinal level.



RQ 3: What policies and interventions have been implemented to facilitate students with disabilities' transition from higher education (and training?) to the workforce, and what is known about their effectiveness?

Policies and Interventions

- In the countries considered, labor and disability laws set quotas for the employment of persons with disabilities; however, they are generally not implemented.
- Existing labor and disability laws do not reference facilitating the transition of persons with disability from education settings to the workforce.
- In Egypt, documented initiatives constitute a significant example of successful employment of persons with disabilities in jobs appropriate for their qualifications.

Effectiveness and Challenges

- As initiatives are ongoing, little is known about their long-term effectiveness or programs' effectiveness at delivering results, such as improving enrollment or employment rates for persons with disabilities.
- Quotas for the employment of persons with disabilities are generally not implemented.
- Transition to the workforce is also hampered by negative stereotypes about productivity of persons with disabilities.



RQ 4: What policies and/or interventions have been implemented for students with disabilities in underserved or marginalized communities such as those affected by chronic conflict, hard-to-reach locations, or negative cultural practices around disability? What is known about these interventions' effectiveness?

Policies, Interventions, Effectiveness, and Challenges

- Students with disabilities in underserved and marginalized communities, such as those affected by chronic conflict, hard-to-reach locations, and negative cultural practices around disability are not systematically referred to in the implemented disability inclusive education policies nor in strategies.
- Negative behaviours and attitudes generally result from a lack of awareness about disability inclusive education.
- Many disability inclusive education interventions target easier to reach children and are non-governmental.

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DISABILITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The study team identified some lessons learned and related implications for disability inclusive education programming, below clustered within overarching themes, that deserve further investigation in considering programming of disability inclusive.

REACHING ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Table 1: Lessons Learned/Implications for Reaching All Children with Disabilities

Lessons Learned	Implications for Disability Inclusive Education Programming Design and/or Support of Initiatives:
Inclusive education policies address disability as one of the dimensions of inclusive education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the country or regional level, initiatives should be aimed at reviewing inclusive education policies to ensure alignment with the CRPD and to develop action plans to remedy gaps.
While the narrative of inclusive education policies addresses education at large, the disability dimension of inclusive education policies focuses mostly on basic education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy review should highlight transition points across grade levels and incorporate contextually relevant strategies that support transitions from: primary to secondary, secondary to tertiary, and secondary or tertiary into the workforce.
Students with non-visible disabilities or multiple disabilities are generally not yet considered by disability inclusive education initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiatives should include awareness and detection of multiple and non-invisible disabilities.
There is a need for greater awareness on the prevalence and support needed by those with multiple disabilities and non-visible disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiatives should include support for awareness campaigns about accommodations, as well as the actual provision of accommodations at school and family level.
The needs of students with disabilities in underserved and marginalized communities are incorporated in inclusive education approaches, but their specific needs remain, in general, neglected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiatives should be aimed at improving access of students with disabilities in marginalized communities to accommodations and referral services, in particular through partnership with local NGOs. ▪ Initiatives should consider the promotion and enforcement of an overall disability responsive approach at both the development level and humanitarian assistance level.
Disability inclusive education initiatives at the government level are generally implemented in the absence of reliable and accurate data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an inventory of currently available data to establish national baselines at the country and regional level. ▪ Use the sets of questions developed (or regionally adapted) by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and UNICEF at the country level.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update education management information systems (EMIS) to include data on students with disability that consider enrollment, retention, academic performance and disaggregation by sex, type of disability, location and type of education setting at the country level. ▪ Within USAID programming and/or globally, integrate gender-responsive disability analysis in program MEL.
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COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Table 2: Lessons Learned/Implications for Coordination and Collaboration

Lessons Learned	Implications for Disability Inclusive Education Programming Design and/or Support Initiatives:
There is a need to strengthen collaboration within line ministries, at inter-ministerial level and with INGOs and NGOs to support disability inclusive education initiatives and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider interventions that explore and pilot the role of NGOs within regular school settings at the country level. ▪ Create or strengthen coordination mechanisms that specifically look at lessons learned from ongoing and/or completed initiatives at the line ministries level.
Within HE, there is a lack of cooperation amongst stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aim to bridge the gap between education entities regarding students with disability transition from secondary education to HE and to workforce at the country level.

RAISING AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY

Table 3: Lessons Learned/Implications for Raising Awareness and Visibility

Lessons Learned	Implications for Disability Inclusive Education Programming Design and/or Support Initiatives:
There is a need to increase awareness about disability inclusive education at all levels, despite generally improved attitudes towards persons with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At country level, in countries with ongoing disability inclusive education initiatives, these could focus on public awareness campaigns about the importance of disability inclusive education for all students. • At country level, initiatives to improve awareness of disability inclusive education at the line ministries management level and school level (including management, teachers, administrative and auxiliary staff, and parents) are warranted.
There is a need to increase the involvement and visibility of persons with disabilities within the public and private sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interventions should increase the involvement and visibility of persons with disability within the public and private sector at country level.

PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES/TEACHER TRAINING

Table 4: Lessons Learned/Implications for Pedagogical Practices/Teacher Training

Lessons Learned	Implications for Disability Inclusive Education Programming Design and/or Support Initiatives:
<p>Coordinated action plans for the implementation of teachers' capacity building initiatives on disability inclusive education are generally lacking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Standardize in-service teacher training on disability inclusive education.
<p>There is a need to review disability inclusive education teachers' pre-service training that considers a bottom-up approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At country level, include disability inclusive education training as part of HE pre-service teacher training, through a UDL approach.

STUDY PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Disability Inclusive Education Study reports on the current state of education for persons with disabilities across the MENA region, including the following countries where the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) works: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.

The key objectives of the Study were to:

1. Identify and report lessons learned from USAID and other donor projects, especially noting the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initiatives to support students with disabilities in the region. In this regard the study looks broadly at initiatives to support students with disabilities in the region.
2. Analyze if and how different populations of learners with disabilities (i.e., children and youth who are blind, children and youth with intellectual disabilities, children, and youth with multiple or complex disabilities, etc.) are accommodated and supported in policy and practice, and identify what gaps exist.
3. Contextualize findings to suggest how disability inclusive education programming in the region can improve access, retention, and quality of learning for all learners with disabilities, including those from marginalized and underserved populations, and what actionable steps USAID can take with its programming.

STUDY STAKEHOLDERS

The study's stakeholders cover different categories, including:

Donors:	USAID and other donors engaged in Disability Inclusive Education programming in the region;
Implementing Agencies at Non-Institutional / Institutional Levels:	Line ministries and other governmental entities, United Nations (UN) agencies (primarily UNICEF and UNESCO), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and local national government organizations (LNGOs);
Community Associations and Organizations:	Disabled peoples' organization (DPOs), parents' associations;
Stakeholders at the School Level:	Teachers/school staff, parent teacher associations, students.

The primary audiences for the Study were USAID's Middle East Bureau and the USAID missions across the MENA region. The study is also intended to be of use to ministries, donors, and organizations who design and implement disability inclusion interventions across the region.

STUDY FOCUS

The central focus of the Study is on basic education (BE), with a lighter examination of higher education (HE). For both areas of focus, the Study examined national laws and policies for disability inclusive education, as well as strengths and gaps in current policies. This also included a review of interventions including, where it was possible, policy and local organizations efforts designed to support students with disabilities; and related literature, providing examples of where and how policies and interventions are being executed and implemented. Finally, the team identified lessons learned from published data and key informants from across the region.

Basic Education. At the BE level, the study examined relevant issues in disability inclusive education, including:



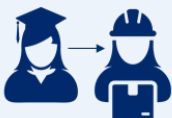
- Current initiatives and their connection to available early detection and referral systems;
- Availability and use of data on learners with disabilities by key stakeholders;
- Availability and level of implementation of disability-inclusive education policies and strategies.
- Initiatives aimed at capacity building of teachers and overall coordination amongst stakeholders;
- Attitudes towards students with disabilities and barriers to school access, retention, and learning outcomes.

Higher Education. In HE, the team explored a variety of parameters, including access of students with disabilities to HE programs, and pathways beyond HE and into workforce development. Across both BE and HE, the study used the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework to examine instructional practices, teacher training and access to and provision of accessible education technology.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study answered four main research questions (RQ) and an additional sub-question, to analyze disability inclusive education policies, legislation, and interventions in the MENA region at the level of BE, HE, workforce transition, and marginalized and underserved communities. These questions probed the overall status of disability inclusive education across the region at the aforementioned levels/dimensions, drawing on country-level examples to identify needs and gaps for possible Disability Inclusive Education programming. The study focused on the RQs in the design of instruments, analysis tools, and in the overall findings, conclusions, and lessons learned in the report. Table 5 below illustrates the research questions.

Table 5: Research Questions and Strategy

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	
	1. National Policies. Across the MENA region, what is the current state of national policies and interventions designed for education that is inclusive of students with disabilities at the basic education level?
	1a. Disability Data. What data is captured on different education-related disability services and populations? What lessons can be drawn from examining both the data and support provided to students with disabilities and how does it vary - if at all - based on different disability types and other factors?
	2. Access to Higher Education. What policies and interventions have been implemented to support students with disabilities' access to and success in higher education (and training?), and what is known about their effectiveness?
	3. Workforce Transitions. What policies and interventions have been implemented to facilitate students with disabilities' transition from higher education (and training?) to the workforce, and what is known about their effectiveness?
	4. Underserved Students. What policies and/or interventions have been implemented for students with disabilities in underserved or marginalized communities such as those affected by chronic conflict, hard-to-reach locations, or negative cultural practices around disability? What is known about these interventions' effectiveness?

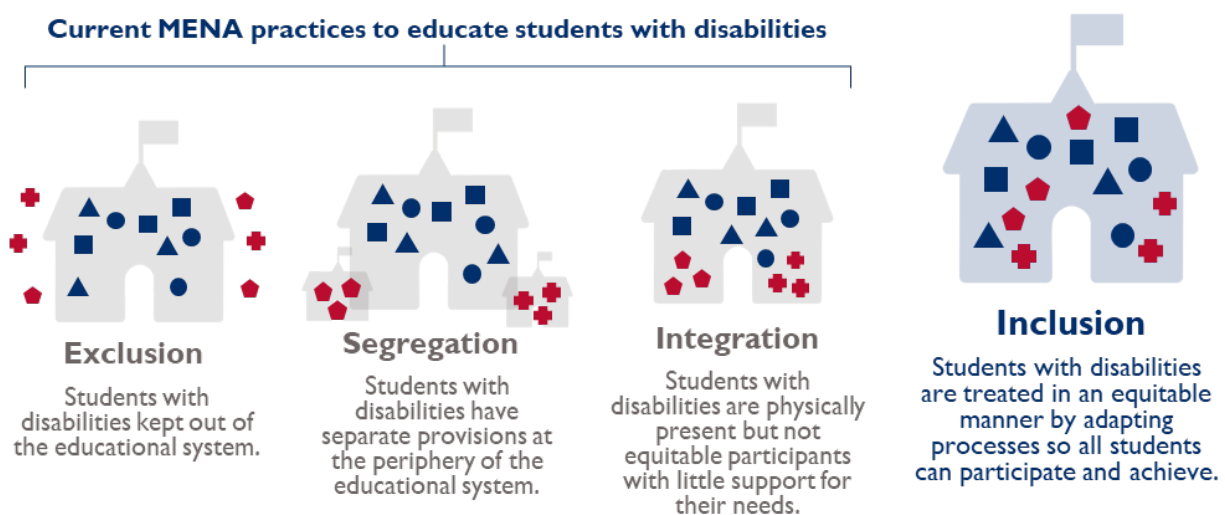
STUDY BACKGROUND

Interest in disability inclusive education has grown globally. In the MENA region, persons with disabilities face several environmental, institutional, and attitudinal barriers that hinder, restrict, and prevent them from practicing their rights and reaching their potential on an equitable basis with others. The interest in the education of children and youth with disabilities in general education settings started to emerge during the last quarter of the twentieth century and has continued to gain traction during the twenty-first century; however, the segregation of this population in special schools is still commonplace in the region. Despite commitment from governments across the region to move towards more inclusive policies and practices, persons with disabilities are still among the most marginalized and underserved groups in the societies of the MENA region.

Understanding inclusion, and how it can be applied in all schools and classrooms, has been subject to change across the globe. Different countries are at different stages of development along this road.¹ Some countries still exclude children and youth with disabilities from education while others offer them a segregated education system. Other countries integrate by physically bringing them into schools with learners without disabilities, rather than include them in classes and meeting their needs. Some countries have progressed to designate certain schools as inclusive. These practices vary from country to country and between schools within those countries. Examples of successful inclusive practices do exist, although they are scattered or under-researched.

The education of children and youth with disabilities in the MENA region often falls into three broad categories: Exclusion, Segregation, and Integration (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Three Categories for Current MENA practices



In the three current practices, students with disabilities are either excluded from or on the periphery of the educational system, or they are physically present but without enjoying equitable participation. None of these educational modalities, however, refer to inclusive practices. To understand the meaning of inclusion, it is important to distinguish between it and its antithesis, namely integration. Although these two terms have been used interchangeably by some educators to refer to the education of children and youth with disabilities in general education settings, they are very different in meaning and application:²

¹ Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587>

² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020). Arab States, Solid Steps On A Long Path Towards Inclusive Education. Paper commissioned for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, Inclusion and Education.

Table 6: Integration vs. Inclusion

<i>Integration</i>	<i>Inclusion</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treating all students attending the same classroom in the same way ▪ Ensure physical presence of students in education settings, but does not encourage engagement or participation ▪ Teachers don't use differentiated pedagogical practices towards inclusion of students with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treating students with disabilities in an equitable manner ▪ The student is situated at the center of teaching and learning processes in order to adapt those processes to include all students ▪ Ongoing process of identifying and removing barriers to learning and adjusting the system to meet individuals needs of students

In the MENA region, 'inclusion' has been understood to refer to the presence of some children and youth with disabilities, who are believed to be able to manage for themselves, in general education settings, or the partial attendance of those students in general education settings.³ This clearly resembles the practice of integration more closely than inclusion. This confusion is reflected in the frequent use of the same terminology to describe both integration and inclusion in the region and has been exacerbated by the fact these terms have been translated to Arabic in a number of different ways, within any one country.⁴

In the current study, the understanding and application of these concepts is foundational to the review of disability inclusion policies and practices across the countries of the MENA region.

STUDY APPROACH

The MENA Disability Inclusive Education Study was utilization-focused to ensure that the information generated by the Study was useful to USAID. The overall approach was based on the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) as a foundation piece and the [International Disability Alliance](#) (IDA) definition of inclusive education, as follows:

Inclusive education is the only way to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 for all children and youth – including those with disabilities – wherever and whenever they are. Inclusion is not a placement, but rather an experience with a sense of belonging. Inclusive education requires an educational transformation, with accessibility to enable full participation; it is not an add-on to existing education systems.

The approach based on the IDA definition of inclusive education presupposes a **human rights-focused approach** and a **social model of disability reference framework**, as illustrated below.

Human Rights-based Approach: A rights-based approach to education is informed by seven basic principles of human rights. These principles need to be applied in the development of legislation, policy, and practice relating to the right to inclusive education:⁵

³ Gaad, E., *Inclusive education in the Middle East*. (Abingdon, United Kingdom, Routledge, 2011).

⁴ Khochen-Bagshaw, M., *Inclusive education development and challenges: Insights into the Middle East and North Africa region*. (Prospects, 2020, 49, 153-167).

⁵ UNICEF, *The Right of Children with Disability to Education*, 2012



Universality and Inalienability. Human rights are universal, inalienable, and are the entitlement of all people everywhere in the world. An individual cannot voluntarily give them up nor can others take them away.



Indivisibility. Human rights are indivisible. Whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social, they are all inherent to the dignity of every person.



Interdependence and Interrelatedness. The realization of one's right often depends, wholly or in part, on the realization of others.



Equality and Non-Discrimination. All individuals are equal as human beings, and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each person, are entitled to their rights without discrimination of any kind.



Participation and Inclusion. Every person and all people are entitled to active, free, and meaningful participation in, contribution to and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development.



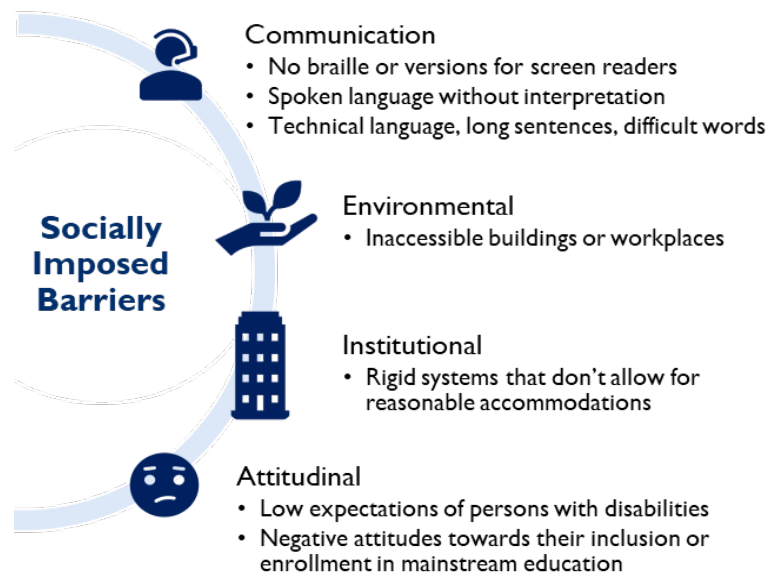
Empowerment. Empowerment is the process by which people's capabilities to demand and use their human rights grow. The goal is to give people the power and capabilities to claim their rights in order to change their own lives and improve their communities.



Accountability and Respect for the Rule of Law. A rights-based approach seeks to raise levels of accountability in the development process by identifying 'rights holders' and corresponding 'duty bearers' and to enhance the capacities of those duty bearers to meet their obligations.

Social Model of Disability: The social model of disability was initially developed by persons with disabilities in the UK and US during the latter stages of the twentieth century and has since started to gain traction across the globe including in the MENA region. For advocates of this model, disability is represented in socially imposed barriers that prevent people with impairments from participating fully, and on an equal basis with others, in mainstream activities.⁶ These barriers can be categorized in a number of ways, including communication, environmental, institutional, and attitudinal. Figure 3 shows examples of these barriers.⁷

Figure 3: Socially Imposed Barriers



Socially imposed barriers can be broken into four types: communication, referring to lack of braille or screen reader versions and interpretation, and dense, technical language; environmental, concerning poor physical access; institutional, where rigid systems do not allow for reasonable accommodations; and attitudinal, referring to low expectations or negative attitudes towards people with disabilities and their inclusion in mainstream education.

USAID takes a social model approach to conceptualizing disability, where disability is not inherent to having certain functional conditions like difficulty seeing or walking, but rather results when a person with a physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment is faced with an unaccommodating environment that limits their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.⁸ The “medical model” typically focuses on “curing” individuals, whether or not they can or wish to be cured. The “charity model” situates persons with disabilities as passive recipients of charity, which can be disempowering and deprive individuals of agency and autonomy. This is not to say that providing charity or medical services is negative, but as a frame of disability, these models have been rejected by the disability rights community as

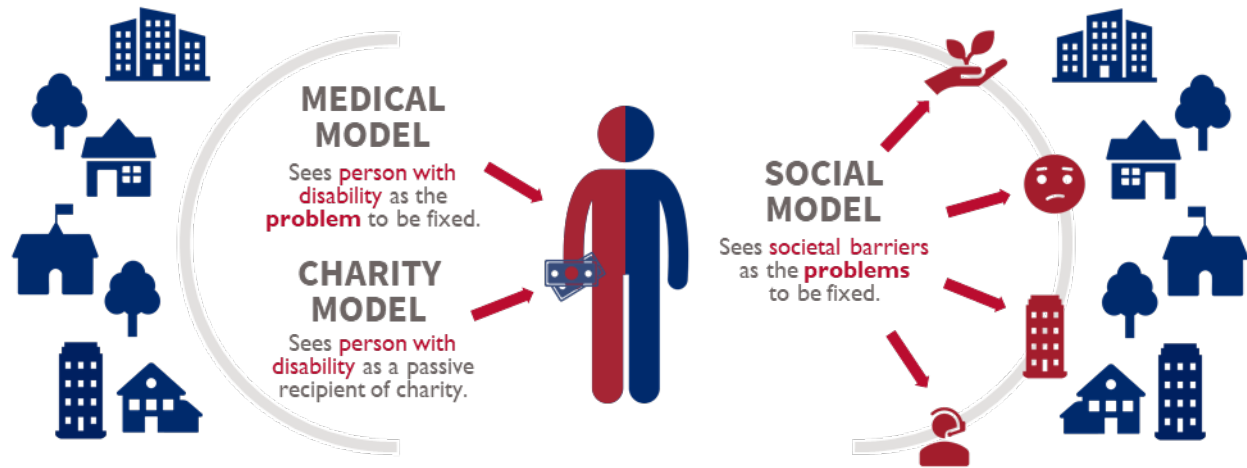
⁶ Methodological Guidelines UNESCO, UNICEF, GPE p41

⁷ CDC. (2018). Disability and Health Disability Barriers. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability-barriers.html>

⁸ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 13, 2006, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crpd/pages/conventionrightspersonswithdisabilities.aspx>

promoting inequality and failing to address disabling societal barriers. It should be noted that the social model supports access to healthcare and medical services by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others—indeed, ensuring such access is consistent with the social model approach of removing environmental barriers and promoting full inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Figure 4: Various Model Approaches



The IDA definition of inclusive education, the human rights-based approach, and the social model of disability constitute the overarching dimensions that shape the study's framework, as illustrated above.

The above overarching dimensions of Disability Inclusive Education shaped the study's framework. The framework is based on the UNICEF and International Institute for Educational Planning - UNESCO "[On The Road to Inclusion](#)" and served to look at the study's main thematic areas (BE, HE, transition to workforce and marginalized and underserved communities) through a disability inclusive lens and indicate a way of examining what needs to be considered to include children and youth with disabilities (see the Annex III).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS



RQ I: NATIONAL POLICIES

Across the MENA region, what is the current state of national policies and interventions designed for education that is inclusive of students with disabilities at the basic education level?

RQ I FINDINGS

The following section of the report is concerned with existing policies and laws in the MENA region at the BE level. More specifically, it is concerned with the state of existing laws and policies related to BE and the extent to which they support, or fail to support, disability inclusive education in their respective countries. To this end, this section of the report offers insights into the perspectives of the study's key respondents about the state of existing policies and laws in their respective countries of those focusing on the BE level.

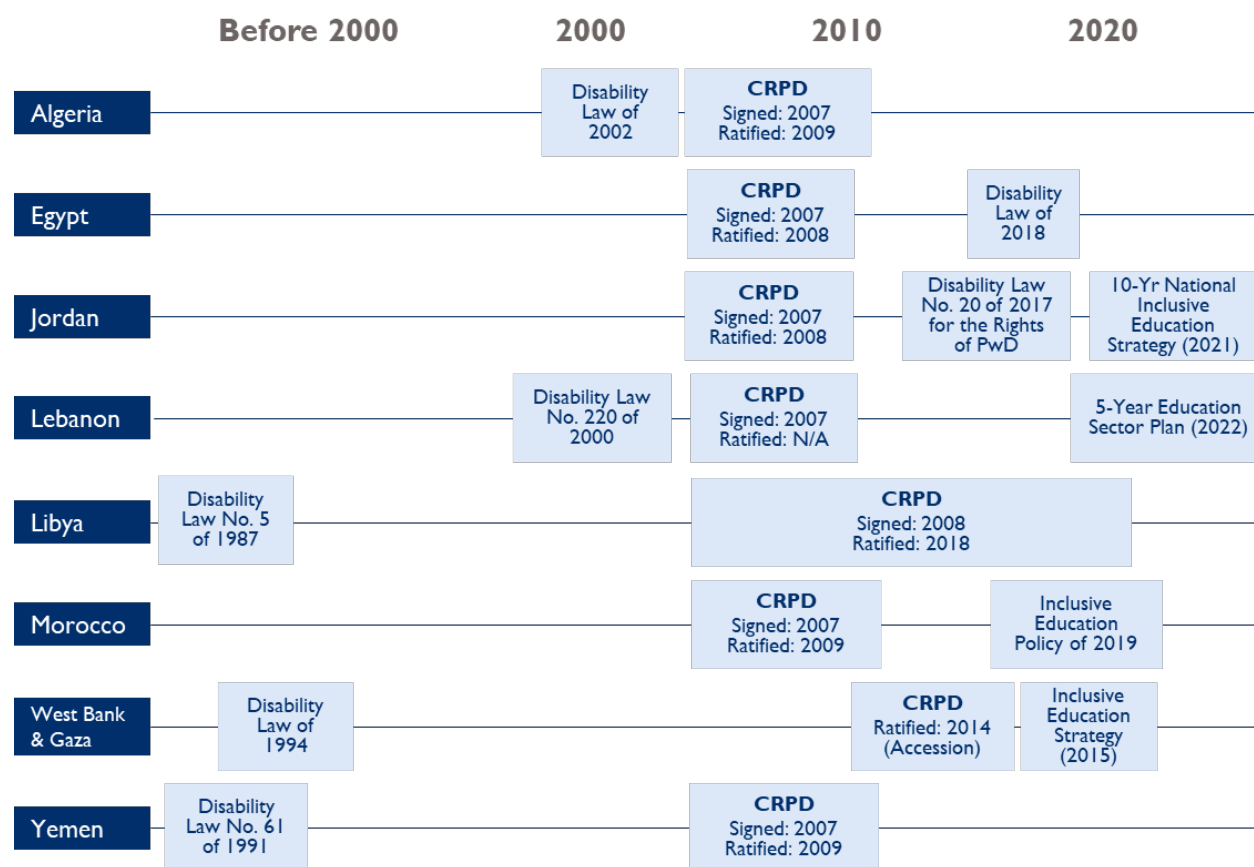
DISABILITY LAWS

All respondents referred to having laws in place that address the education of students with disabilities in BE in the countries where they were based. For example, in Jordan, there is [Law 20 of 2017](#) for the rights of persons with disabilities. In Lebanon, there is [Law 220 of 2000](#). In Egypt, there is the [Disability Law of 2018](#). In the West Bank & Gaza, there is the [Disability Law of 1994](#). All these laws state the rights of persons with disabilities in different aspects of society, including in education.

These laws state the rights of persons with disabilities in education and declare their rights to attend general educational settings. Indeed, in Article 24, the CRPD guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities the right to participate in all forms of general education with appropriate support. Apart from Lebanon, that has only signed the CRPD, most MENA countries have not only signed the convention but have gone further to ratify it. In doing so, these countries not only agree with the content of the CRPD but commit to aligning their policies and practices in line with its requirements.

In the current study, gathered data about available laws revealed that apart from a few countries, such as Egypt and Jordan, most countries had their disability related laws in place before signing the CRPD. This may suggest that the content of such laws may neither be in line with the social model of disability nor adopt a human rights approach to the education of children and young people with disabilities as introduced by the CRPD. Figure 5 below presents information about the countries participating key informants of this study represented, regarding the date each country signed and ratified the CRPD, and relevant existing laws and inclusive education related policies that are in place in those countries.

Figure 5: Countries Participating in KIIS



When asked to report on their views of existing disability inclusive education related laws and policies, many informants revealed that such laws are either not implemented or partially implemented. None of the respondents considered them to be implemented in full. Some respondents further stressed the focus on visible disabilities in existing laws. Others also emphasized missing elements from existing laws related to inclusion, such as early intervention and inclusive education.

This was echoed by some respondents asserting that the issue was not with the availability of laws, but rather with the implementation and enforcement of existing laws. Even though these laws state the rights of persons with disabilities to inclusive education, this right is not enforced, despite being if these laws make this right the stated policy aim.



In **Lebanon**, the disability law mentions that it is the right of persons with disabilities to receive education in any type of education institution, without mentioning inclusive schools nor inclusive systems. There is no statement in Lebanese law about inclusive schools and inclusion (DPO-Lebanon). Furthermore, Lebanon’s [Law 220/2000](#) does not talk about early intervention programs. This suggest that this law is not only not implemented, but also not aligned with the CRPD. It was revealed by most respondents that existing laws in Lebanon have a particular focus on those with visible disabilities such as physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities making those with non-visible disabilities less represented in existing disability laws.



In Jordan, Article 19 of the [Law of 2017](#) on the rights for persons with disabilities mandates the provision of the optimal level of inclusive education for students with disabilities. It has been revealed that even though inclusive education is mentioned in the law, the term nevertheless is not defined in this law. One respondent mentioned that UNESCO and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), as capacity building partners, are currently working with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to agree upon a wide definition of inclusion.

To summarize thus far, the gap between policy and implementation was a theme that was revealed by most respondents. Some countries, such as Jordan and Egypt, have ratified their respective disability laws after signing and ratifying the CRPD. This would suggest that disability laws in these countries are aligned with the CRPD in terms of adopting a social model of disability supplemented by a human right approach. Similarly, countries that had their disability laws in place before the CRPD may need to revisit the content of their laws to bring them in line with the social model of disability and adopt a human rights approach to disability inclusive education.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES

'The issue is not with having more policies it is rather with enforcing and implementing existing policies.' (KII, Egypt).

In addition to disability related laws, some countries went further to establish education strategies and inclusive education policies. Importantly, apart from Morocco, policies addressed inclusive education holistically, meaning that they include disability as one of the many dimensions of inclusive education. While these policies and strategies are concerned with the education of persons with disabilities, it seems that they have a particular focus on school education and ultimately on school-age children. Countries that have adopted such initiatives are still recent in the region, hence the implementation of their inclusive education strategies is still in its infancy. This section outlines the inclusive education policies for the countries where interviews were conducted.

Implementation Funding. The KIIs revealed that different countries of the MENA region rely on funding received from donor organizations to implement disability inclusive education related initiatives. Consequently, national plans for disability inclusive education are rarely matched with a suitable budget. Even in Morocco, where there has been an increased budget allocation over the last three years, the disability inclusive education budget is limited. In Jordan, whilst a need for the MoE to allocate budget and have monitoring and evaluation mechanisms has been revealed through KIIs conducted with officials, these were not in place. Instead, the Jordan MoE relies on international organizations to fund inclusive education related programs.

Examples of Inclusive Strategies.



In Jordan, an [Educational Strategy Plan](#) (ESP) (December 2021) was developed, alongside a [ten-year national inclusive education strategy](#) and three-year action plans to guide its implementation. Such strategies defined roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders for implementation and set the roadmap to increasing the number of children with disabilities enrolled in inclusive schools to reach ten percent of the total

number of students by 2031. It was developed in a participatory approach. Respondents from Jordan noted that with the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased rate of refugees in Jordan, priorities have taken another direction, hence slowing down the implementation (IP-Jordan).

WEST
BANK &
GAZA

Similarly, in the [West Bank and Gaza, a policy on inclusive education](#) (2015) is available. This policy outlined the government commitments in promoting child-friendly and inclusive education to provide quality education for all including those with disabilities. It advocates for adopting a 'twin-track' approach and recognizes that both tracks are needed if inclusive education is to become a reality. 'Twin-track' means that the policy seeks to offer systemic changes to the educational environment whilst providing support based on individual needs. Respondents from the West Bank and Gaza revealed that it is partially implemented. Those same respondents also revealed that in the same year, a policy on inclusive education of children with visual impairment was developed, but only partially implemented (DPO, World Bank (WB)).

MOROCCO

Morocco's interest in quality education is reflected in its vision (2015–2030) entitled '[Schools for Equity, Quality and Advancement](#)'. It contains a section dedicated to persons with disabilities entitled 'Guaranteeing the Right to Education, Teaching and Training for Persons with Disabilities or Special Needs' (UNESCO, 2021). In Morocco, an [inclusive education plan](#) was adopted by the MoE in 2019 (Implementing Partner (IP)-MO). These plans aim to fully generalize inclusive education across all schools and levels over ten years.

LEBANON

Nevertheless, not all countries across the region have developed a strategic approach or action plans associated with inclusive education. For example, a respondent mentioned that there are plans to develop an inclusive education policy and strategic plan in Lebanon, but none were in place yet. The Lebanese MoE and HE has developed and adopted a five-year education sector plan that includes disability inclusive education. This was believed to comprise a key national document that is expected to guide the educational response in the next five years starting from 2022 (UN, Lebanon).

ALGERIA

On the other hand, in Algeria, there are no set of policies linked to inclusive education in place yet. It has recently been announced that children with autism and down syndrome in Algeria can be exempted from exams. Normally, in Algeria persons with disabilities can have the support of someone writing for them during exams (IP, Algeria).

YEMEN

Similar to Algeria, in Yemen, the Department of Inclusive Education in Hadramout was established. However, no policy at national level about the implementation has been established (IP, Yemen). The absence of a strategic approach or guiding policy to the implementation of inclusion suggests that inclusive education is applied on an ad hoc basis and that there is no systematic approach in place that aims to reach all learners.

'We didn't succeed in ending institutionalization of children in specialized centers. For example, a permit to open a specialized boarding school was just issued in Hebron.' (KII, West Bank & Gaza)

A common driver for all these inclusive education related policies and strategies is not only to promote inclusive education at the system, community, and school levels, but also to gradually shift the education of children with disabilities from special to general education settings or inclusive schools. Nevertheless, no country across the region has abolished special schools in their entirety, nor has one acted to reduce existing special schools. On the contrary, special schools still play a fundamental role in the education of children with disabilities of those enrolled in education in the region (Khochen-Bagshaw, 2020). For example, in the West Bank & Gaza, new special schools have been recently licensed.

Similarly, a respondent from Morocco noted an unclear shift in responsibility or the absence of a systematic approach to addressing the tension between specialized centers and inclusive centers in educating children with disabilities. As result of the implementation of disability inclusive education initiatives, the roles of NGOs and DPOs (who have been in charge of the education of students with disabilities for a long time) are being somewhat neglected by the Government. Basically, with the implementation of inclusive education, NGOs no longer receive the funding to care for the education of students with disabilities.

INCLUSIVE INTERVENTIONS

In addition to developing inclusive education laws and policies, respondents revealed the implementation of several disability inclusive education related interventions in the MENA region. These include capacity building efforts, early detection of hearing disabilities, the provision of assistive devices, awareness raising campaigns, the management of a pilot inclusive education schools initiative, curriculum adaptation, and the development of teachers' manuals. Disability inclusive education related initiatives were revealed by respondents to take place in all surveyed countries. This demonstrated the growing interest in adopting an inclusive agenda in the region whether at the level of concerned governments, international organizations, or IPs. What follows is a synopsis of several interventions that have been revealed by the study respondents and their perceptions on the extent they were successful or unsuccessful.

With regard to Early Grades Reading Assessment (EGRA) adaptations, the team obtained information from the ongoing USAID funded Early Grades Reading and Mathematics Project, which at the time of the interview, had yet to adapt EGRA in order to make it accessible to children with disabilities. Additionally, one report, [Moroccan Sign Language Assistive Technology for Reading Improvement of Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing](#) described the development and administration of an early grade reading and sign language assessment (EGRSLA) – an adapted version of the EGRA, but this was the unique example of adaptive EGRAs identified in the MENA region.

Examples of Inclusive Interventions.

JORDAN

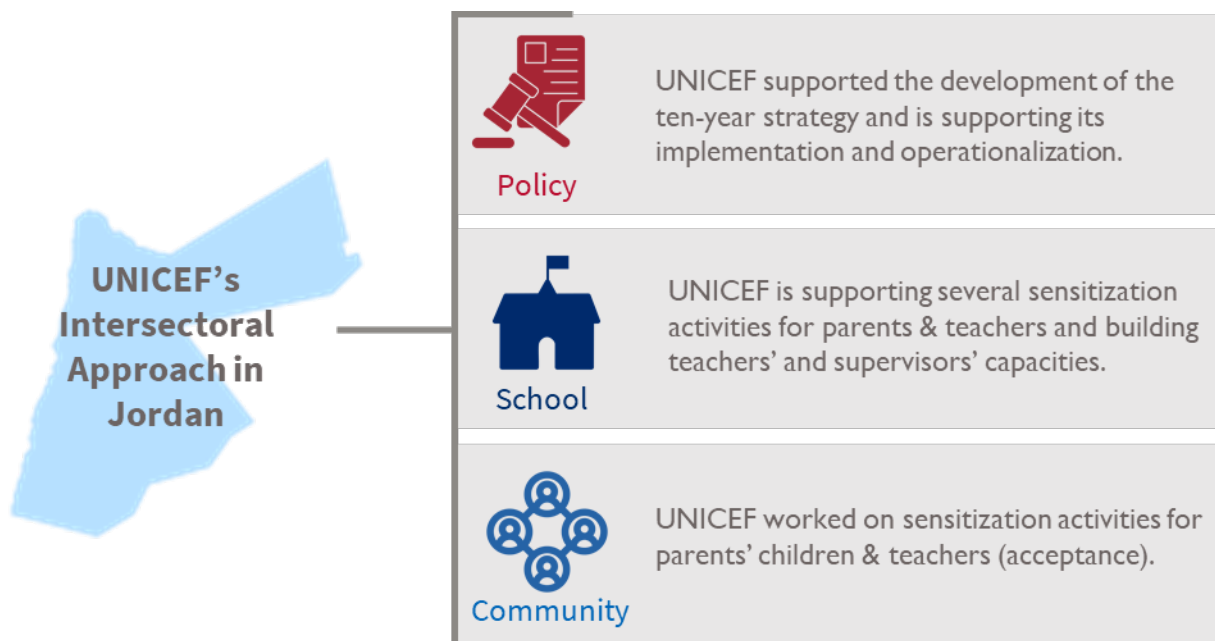
Jordan seems to have made some progress on disability inclusive education over the last few years. This was evident in the number of initiatives on disability inclusive education taking place in the country. Indeed, the commitment of the royal family of Jordan towards disability and inclusive education has encouraged the development of disability inclusive education related strategies, policies, and frameworks (UNESCO, 2021). For example, several initiatives conducted by the MoE or through the support that the ministry receives from a range of international organization's or through DPOs have been revealed through the KII respondents from Jordan. For example, as part of the '[GIZ PROMISE project](#)', 18 schools were selected to model pilot inclusive education (IP, Jordan). USAID-built schools have a 'Start Up' [program](#) that supports disability inclusive education in these schools.

'The idea of magnet schools will help increase the number of inclusive schools as it is easier to make some buildings accessible for certain types of disabilities.' (KII, Jordan)

Mercy Corps supported [seven inclusive education pilot schools](#) in the north of Jordan. The interventions were focused on, among other things, teacher training, community, and school awareness in addition to working with families. These initiatives contributed to having 30 inclusive education pilot schools across the country. They do not focus on a particular disability. However, the concept of magnet schools will be applied in the future. Magnet schools include all children but focus on a particular disability. There are already good models of this approach in Jordan. The school in Irbid has been considered to represent a good example. This is an inclusive school but focuses on visual impairment.

From the conducted interviews, it was clear that UN agencies took an intersectional approach to inclusive education in which they worked across the intersecting domains of inclusive policy, schools, and community. [UNICEF Jordan](#), for example, works in the following three intersecting domains:

Figure 6: UNICEF Intersectoral Interventions



In addition, [UNESCO's Jordan interventions](#) included:

System Strengthening: UNESCO with the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the MoE, and GIZ, focused on their interventions on system strengthening and capacity building.

Policy: Coordination of policy dialogue, supporting the implementation of the plan and supporting the Ministry to reflect more on inclusivity in the ESP.

School: Managing inclusive education schools and inclusive education classrooms.



MOROCCO

Similar to Jordan, Morocco's MoE, which is supported by a number of international agencies and donor organizations, has worked on multiple interventions, including a situational analysis on teachers' needs and experiences to promote best practices and learnings.

UNICEF and the MoE have implemented a national project aimed at developing an inclusive education national model to enhance disabled children's access and learning in BE. The outcomes of this initiative led to the development of a national education policy aimed at embedding a newly inclusive approach within general education settings in BE. Furthermore, a national curriculum framework has been developed in Morocco and expanded with the aim of strengthening teachers' capacities to apply specific pedagogical differentiation strategies within an inclusion framework.

[USAID](#) has also supported initiatives related to the deaf and blind in policy advocacy, developing a digital system for braille and sign language, and training. [UNICEF initiatives](#) included adapting the curriculum, making documents available for schools, developing kits for teachers and children, and developing guidance and tools on disability inclusive education. Currently, its interventions have focused on inclusion in preschool.



WEST BANK & GAZA

All respondents revealed that civil society organizations (CSO) in Morocco contribute significantly to interventions related to disability inclusive education. According to a key informant, there are currently 76,000 active non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Morocco, the majority of which are subsidized by the Government for minimal social support for disability inclusive interventions.

UN agencies have also supported the development of a manual on inclusive education training and capacity building for supervisors, counselors, and teachers (to be published soon). [The Youth Association for the Blind](#), a DPO that is also a member of the international council for the education of visually impaired persons, offers services for persons with vision impairments in the West Bank and Gaza. One of the association's interventions is used to produce digital and braille books that can be accessed by persons with vision impairments. This is being done in agreement with the MoE, whose own audio books are not accessible and are in the final process of production at the time of writing. The initial wave of production will generate nearly 100 accessible books.



LEBANON

NGOs were described as the drivers of inclusive education in Lebanon. For example, the Learning Center for the Deaf has a particular focus on the education of deaf children in Lebanon. This includes supporting deaf children and their parents, as well as implementing high school-related programs and educational activities for the deaf. These are complementary programs that do not exist elsewhere in Lebanon, hence the Learning Center for the Deaf seeks to fill a gap that exists in available services for this segment of the population. Similarly, the Youth Association for the Blind supports those with vision impairments to access quality education in general education settings. The association also supports schools in becoming inclusive, and supports matriculating students with visual impairment to receive educational resources in accessible formats.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

UNICEF Lebanon also supported the MoE and HE to implement the Inclusive Education Pilot Project (2018) in 30 schools that are inclusive for children with disabilities, including those with learning difficulties. These were public schools distributed across all different governorates.

The project involved conducting training workshops on inclusive education, multiple tier support strategies that the project applied, differentiated instruction, developing referral and screening procedures for special educators, special education needs coaches, subject coordinators, and paraprofessionals as well as school principals. As part of this project, awareness sessions were delivered to teachers and parents of learners in kindergarten in cycle one and cycle two to build their awareness of the concept of inclusion and its benefit for the learners, school, and their communities. The project also provided resources such as technical supplies, assistive devices, and referral procedures for children to receive the support they would need (UNICEF 2021)

The awareness of inclusion has emerged as a cross-cutting issue. As such, nearly all respondents revealed that they were working on awareness-related interventions; however, there is still the need to build awareness in disability inclusive education to tackle the negative attitudes and the existing stigma towards persons with disabilities.

INSIGHTS INTO DISABILITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

In addition to reporting on existing disability inclusive education initiatives, respondents also reported on the interventions that they considered to be most and least successful.

Successes. Successful interventions included participatory approaches to UDL training, awareness raising initiatives, strengthening coordination between different concerned parties related to disability inclusive education, gathering evidence to support MoEs, organizing overseas study trips, providing provisions of assistive devices, accessible books, and the development of action plans to support moving forward with disability inclusive education.

Challenges.

Nascent State of Implementation. As far as interventions that were less successful, it was revealed by more than half of the respondents that some interventions were still too nascent in implementation to reflect on whether they were successful or not.

'Before recruiting teachers, you need procedures, structures...' (KII, Jordan)

Limited Collaboration and Involvement. Several IP respondents revealed that initiatives requiring family involvement, collaboration at the ministry level, or the provision of transportation have proven to be particularly challenging. Success could also be affected by limited involvement of all concerned parties in planning for inclusion-related initiatives.

Teacher Turnover. UN respondents revealed that the success of capacity building interventions could also be affected by the turnover of teachers via retirement, promotion, or new employment, which ultimately

may impact the intervention and can make the capacity building initiative less successful. Similarly, initiatives that had a particular focus on recruiting and building capacities of teachers in inclusive education as opposed to establishing a whole school environment that is inclusive have shown not to be effective.

Funding. Issues related to funding to address the support needs of each child as well as to ensure the sustainability of the implemented initiatives, have been revealed as problematic by nearly all respondents.

Intervention Replicability. Additionally, not being able to generalize some of the interventions beyond the targeted schools may hinder their long-term success.

Availability and Quality of Resources. In Morocco, an [‘Improving Deaf Children’s Reading Through Technology’](#) initiative was considered not to be as successful as it should have been due to the poor quality of produced materials. It nevertheless managed to create awareness about challenges faced by deaf among parents, community members, and institutions. In Lebanon, there have been challenges with an [initiative](#) for sign language interpreter training to provide the deaf with appropriate Lebanese Sign Language interpretation in education as well as in different aspects of life, as there are at least six different dialects of sign language in Lebanon. In response to this, the Interpretation Service Program has tried to cultivate a ‘natural unification development’ of Lebanese Sign Language to deliver their services for deaf people across the country. Consequently, deaf children in Lebanon face challenges to obtain quality education due to the continued lack of sign language interpretation and teachers qualified to teach inclusively in schools, as well as generally poor knowledge of their accessibility needs. This challenge has been exacerbated by a constant battle for funding.

‘It’s more difficult to identify children with mental disability, or more severe disability, because families tend not to send them to school.’ (KII, Yemen)

Inequality in Disability Interventions. DPO’s interventions had a particular focus on the type of disabilities for which their organizations cater. In the context of this research, these were hearing, visual, and physical disabilities. It seemed that non-visible disabilities tend not to be identified and or addressed in different countries of the region. The focus on visible disabilities was also apparent in existing initiatives for hearing disabilities, visual, and physical disabilities. None of the interventions mentioned targeting those with mental health issues or learning disabilities. Those with multiple disabilities were not revealed by any of the respondents to be among the population included in their interventions.

‘We focus on those with mild to moderate disabilities. Schools are not equipped to support children with severe disabilities.’ (KII, Jordan)

Disability inclusive education interventions may have a particular focus on those with lower levels of disabilities, as opposed to including, as well, those with more complex disabilities. Respondents from UN agencies and donor agencies revealed that their interventions did not focus on a specific type of disability, but rather on all children. It was revealed that the gradual approach initially catered to those with mild disabilities before moving to those with more severe disabilities.

COORDINATION FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Nine IP respondents described coordination on a national level as ‘poor’ or ‘nonexistent’. For example, in Lebanon, IP respondents revealed that there is no coordination at the national level for disability inclusive education. In the West Bank and Gaza, coordination amongst partners facilitated by the MoE was deemed to be lacking. Similarly, IP respondents from Morocco believed that there is no real coordination, dialogue, or discussion on disability inclusive education.



MOROCCO

In Morocco, there are structures at the national, subnational, local, and regional levels. Additionally, there is a committee under the Ministry of Social Affairs addressing disability across sectors. However, there is no coherent framework across all structures and sectors with clear definitions of inclusion' (UN, Morocco). Nonetheless, respondents from Morocco, Jordan and Egypt believed that the existence of national strategies on inclusive education have the potential to strengthen progress and coordination among different concerned parties in disability inclusive education. Coordination was recognized in the ten-year inclusive education strategy of Jordan and in the inclusive education plans of Morocco. Respondents from UN agencies also revealed coordination mainly where an inclusive education strategy is in place and making progress.

'The coordination on the strategy in Jordan started early and is going well. When the strategy was being designed, all relevant actors were invited to contribute, making it a successful participatory approach.' (KII, Jordan)

WEST BANK & GAZA

The MoE in the West Bank and Gaza has established thematic working groups - one of them on inclusive education. Reflecting on its effectiveness, respondents from the West Bank revealed that it has not been very effective because the MoE lacks a system to collect data and information on each partner's activities is doing (UN, West Bank & Gaza).

Several donor organizations are currently supporting governments to move forward with their inclusive education strategies through the provision of technical and financial support, and through the support to implementing partners and initiatives. While this has the potential to move forward with inclusion, this also speaks to the level of coordination that is required on the part of all those involved, including working groups within existing education coordination structures.

RQI CONCLUSION

Disability Laws in the MENA region, while in existence, may not be aligned with the CRPD requirements nor apply a social model of disability supplemented by a human right approach, especially those that were signed by their respective governments before signing the CRPD. In fact, the gap between policy and implementation is one theme that has been revealed by the majority of respondents. Revisiting the contents of these laws to bring them in line with the social model of disability and adopt a human right approach to disability inclusive education is necessary.

Efforts to develop national strategies and policies associated with inclusive education is relatively new in the region. Some countries have developed their strategies such as Jordan, West Bank and Gaza, and Morocco, whilst others are working towards developing a strategic approach to disability inclusive education such as Lebanon.

Interest in developing inclusive education systems, communities, and schools is growing in the region. Many organizations whether national or international are prioritizing and advocating for disability inclusive education. Existing initiatives include capacity building interventions, awareness raising campaigns, early detection, provision of assistive devices, management of a pilot inclusive education schools initiative, curriculum adaptation, and development of teachers' manuals. Disability inclusive education initiatives in BE are still relatively recent, so information about their effectiveness is still relatively scarce. Nevertheless, issues related to coordination on a country level were revealed by participants to be needed in order to avoid an uncoordinated approach to disability inclusive education.

Building awareness was one of the domains that was revealed by nearly all respondents to be required in the region, given the existing stigma and negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Building awareness about those with multiple and invisible disabilities has been shown to be particularly pressing in the region. For any initiative in disability inclusive education to be successful and ultimately to raise the profile of disability inclusive education, it must consider the inclusion of concerned individuals themselves in all different stages of its development.



RQIA: DISABILITY DATA

What data is captured on different disability services and populations? What lessons can be drawn from examining both the data and accommodations provided to students with different disabilities?

RQIA FINDINGS

Data collection on different types of disabilities in the MENA region has been a longstanding concern. There have been multiple data sources that have made contributions to the disability services. Documents, such as the 2014 overview of [Disability in the Arab Region](#), 2018 [Disability in the Arab Region](#) , and [Regional Guidebook to Improve Disability Data Collection and Analysis in the Arab Countries](#), have made significant contributions to the disability services and populations in the MENA region. Additionally, data from the [Arab Washington Group's Extended Short Set on Functioning questions](#) and [The Group's Module on Child Functioning](#) were crucial in providing unified definitions for persons with disabilities as well. Table 3 below shows data sources and their contributions to disability services.

Table 7: Data on Populations

DATA SOURCE	YEAR	CONTRIBUTION TO DISABILITY SERVICES
<u>Disability in the Arab Region</u>	2014	It is considered to be the first publication to bring statistical data on the situation of persons with disabilities in the MENA region. It highlighted that while disability statistics in MENA region exists, they are not reliable (ESWCA 2014 and ESCWA 2018 a).
<u>Regional Guidebook to Improve Disability Data Collection and Analysis in the Arab Countries</u>	2018	Promoting the use of the International Classification of Functioning Model of Disability as a unified definition of disability in order to have comparable information among countries in the MENA region (WHO, 2001).
<u>Disability in the Arab Region</u>	2018	Highlights that MENA countries have made some progress in collecting and disseminating data disaggregated by disability status in key socioeconomic areas such as education and employment (ESCWA 2018 a).
<u>Arab Washington Group Extended Short Set on Functioning Questions and The Group's Module on Child Functioning</u>	2018	Helps to provide comparable information over time among MENA regions and the world through using a standardized definition for persons with disabilities (ESCWA 2018 b).



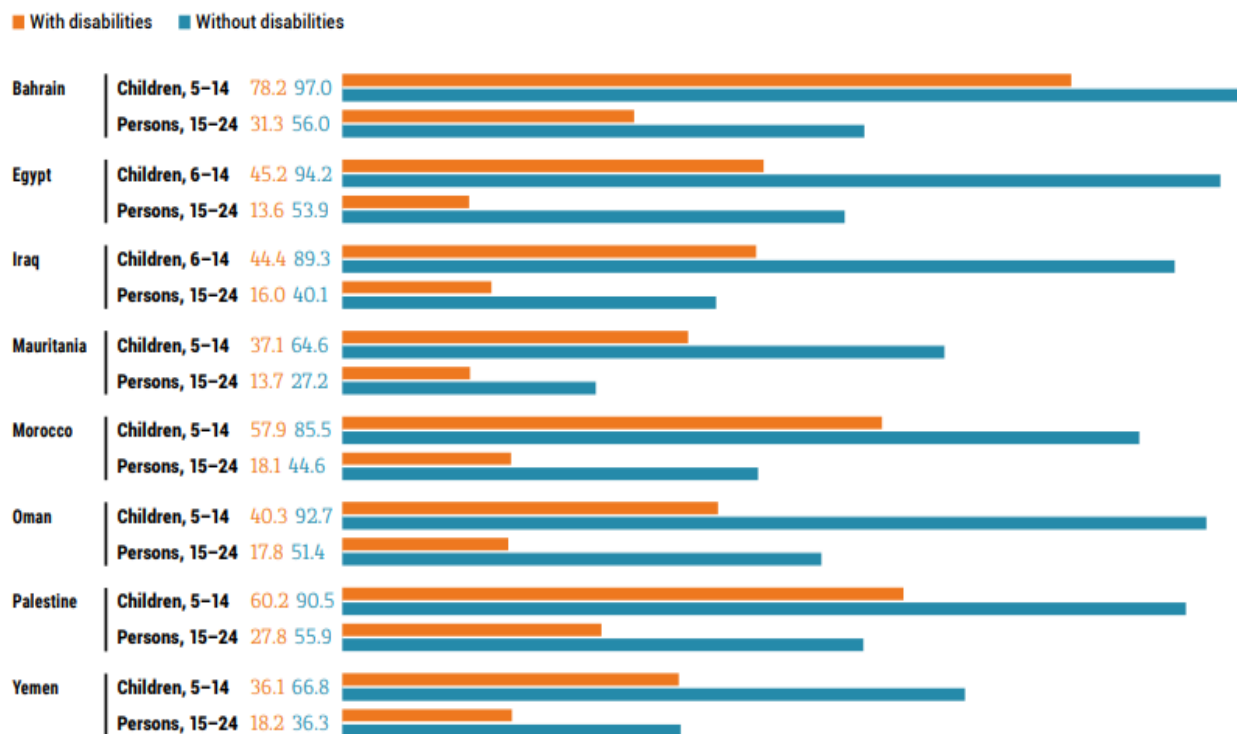
DISABILITY IN THE ARAB REGION

2018

Building upon the 2014 report, the 2018 [Disability in the Arab Region](#) report highlights that MENA countries in this study have made some progress in collecting and disseminating data disaggregated by disability status, not only for basic demographic characteristics but also in key socioeconomic areas such as education and employment (ESCWA 2018 a).

School Attendance. For example, the attendance at school of persons with disabilities remains strikingly lower than that of persons without disabilities. More importantly, while in all groups there is a significant drop in attendance in education from ages 5-24 years, persons with disabilities are particularly underrepresented among students aged 15-24, indicating a higher dropout rate and lower levels of higher educational attainment (ibid 2018). For example, in Egypt the attendance rate for persons with disabilities is 45.2 percent for the age group 5-14 and 13.6 per cent for the 15-24 age group. This illustrates that attendance in the younger age span is 3.3 times higher than that of the older age group. Meanwhile, the attendance rate among persons without disabilities is 94.2 per cent for the age group 5-14 and 53.9 per cent for 15-24 age group. Thus, the attendance in the younger age span is 1.7 times higher than that of the older age group. (Figure 7).

Figure 7: School Attendance from “Disability in the Arab Region 2018”



SOURCE: Calculated from Arab Disability Statistics in Number 2017, based on data compiled and verified from National Statistics Offices (NSOs) from the following censuses and surveys: Bahrain Census 2010, Egypt Labor Force Survey (LFS) 2016, Iraq Poverty and Maternal Mortality Survey (PMMS) 2013, Mauritania Census 2013, Morocco Census 2014, Oman Census 2010, Palestine Census 2007, Yemen Household Budget Survey (HBS) 2014.

Gender and Location. Gender and location, in addition to disability, also have a significant impact. Almost without exception, girls and women with disabilities in rural areas were reported to have the lowest rates of school attendance, educational attainment and literacy (ibid 2018). Furthermore, disability stigma was reported to particularly affect girls and young women, resulting in underreporting to be more common among this group (ibid 2018).

Washington Group Short Set Questions. The ESCWA was provided with data from 14 countries in MENA. Of the countries relevant to this study, the following three countries used the Washington Group Short Set questions (WGSS) as intended: Jordan (National Census 2015), Morocco (National Census 2014), and Yemen (National Household Survey 2014). The following countries used a variant of the WGSS: Egypt (National Labor Force Survey, 2016) and Palestine (National Census 2017) (ibid 2018). While countries are adapting to the WGSS, overall, KIIs confirmed the need for better data to be gathered regarding children with disabilities within the MENA countries of this study’s education systems. Any data collected was centered around enrollment rates and not academic progress or achievement.

‘Part of the system strengthening plan, supported by UNESCO, is to include children with disabilities into the EMIS’ (KIIs, Jordan)

Enrollment Rates. Here, it is important to highlight the problematic nature of using enrollment as an indicator of success, as this has been criticized for not focusing enough on learning and what happens in the classroom (Alexander, 2015). Data that focus only on enrollment rates promotes the idea of inclusion being a ‘placement’ rather than an experience with a sense of belonging. This highlights the importance of the IDA definition of inclusive education (IDA 2020). Enrollment rates for children with disabilities were reported in Jordan, Morocco, and the West Bank and Gaza; however, data collection processes were unclear in addition to not being regularly updated (KII, Morocco, Jordan, and West Bank and Gaza).

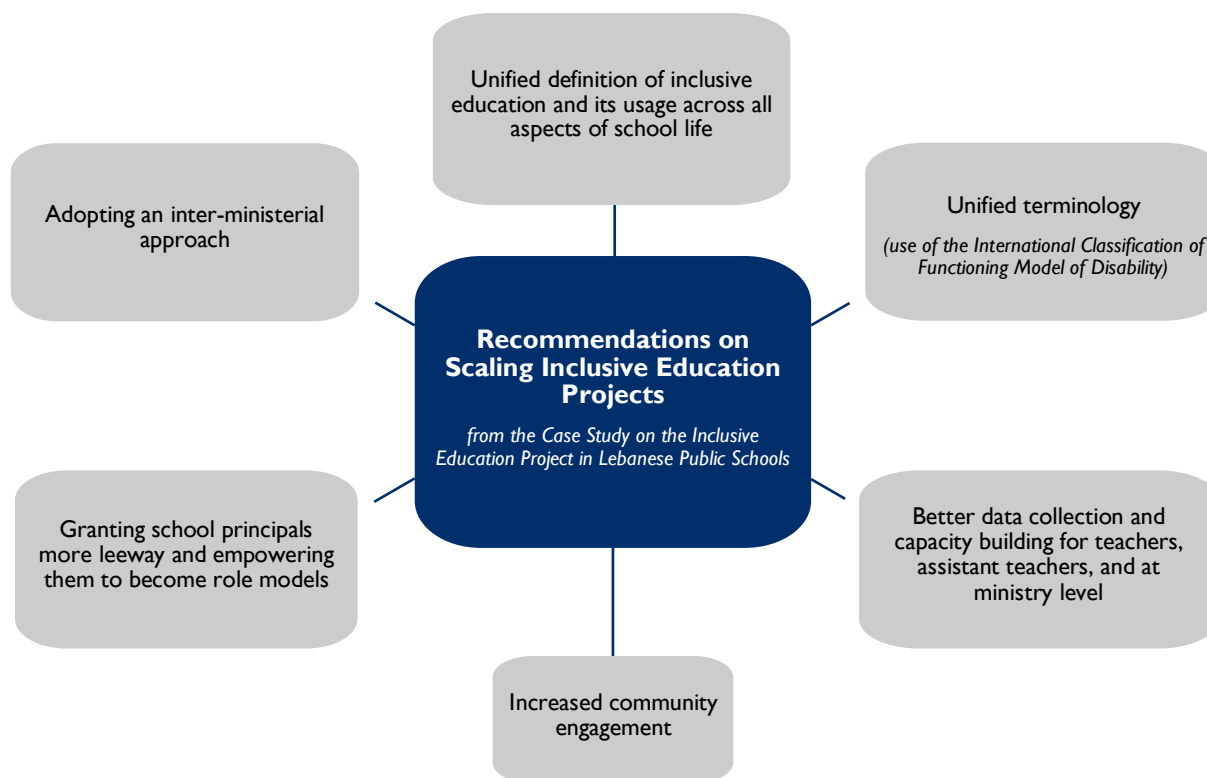
Jordan recognized the need to strengthen data collection on children with disabilities in its national ten-year inclusive education strategy and has set it as one of its key activities (IES 2020). The incorporation of inclusion indicators into education management information systems (EMIS) has been described as an emerging best practice (GEM 2020) that could support this strategy.

Data on Academic Performance. The only country to collect data on academic performances was Morocco. In 2018 UNICEF worked with the information system to include children with disabilities in the data collection process. Academic performance is gathered through a unique code for each child in school, both in formal education and non-formal education; however, there is no in-depth data analysis being conducted of the gathered data (KII, Morocco). This is very much a new emerging practice in the MENA region that would be further successful, data be utilized effectively. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of why data is collected and how it can be utilized to enhance inclusive education systems. Data on children (and persons) with disabilities is crucial in promoting evidence-based policymaking, programming decisions, and ensuring effective monitoring processes (GEM 2020 & ESCWA 2018 b).

Challenges. It is evident that there is a lack of reliable and comparable data being collected about person with disabilities in the region, in addition to data related to disability inclusive education. Limited data and evidence have been described as one of the major obstacles to implementing disability inclusive education and disability inclusive programming (GEM 2020, ESCWA 2018 b & HI 2021a HI 2021b). A lack of strong inclusive education coordination at national level, in addition to the implementation of inclusive education initiatives and accommodations still being in their infancy (Both were highlighted in RQ one), further add to this. Where coordination exists there is a need to strengthen it to have a clear and comprehensive mapping and understanding of what is being implemented. Furthermore, while inclusive education initiatives are implemented at policy, school, and community level there is limited published data of lessons learned and best practices in the MENA region.

The most recent relevant publication is the [Case Study on the Inclusive Education Pilot Project in Lebanese Public Schools](#) (2021). This project was led by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in collaboration with UNICEF. From the 30 inclusive education pilot public schools, six schools were selected as a representative sample. Data was collected through questionnaires, focus groups, and observations from different categories of school stakeholders directly related with the implementation of inclusive education (e.g., school principals, classroom teachers, special educators in addition to parents and learners). The report highlighted several project strengths, as well as several opportunities to learn from if the project is to be scaled. Figure 8 demonstrates some of the 22 recommendations in the report:

Figure 8: Recommendations on Scaling Inclusive Education Projects



Several recommendations such as adopting inter-ministerial approach, unified terminology, better data collection and capacity building for teachers, increase community engagement, unified definition of inclusive education, and granting school principals more leeway to become role models align with recommendations in this study, highlighting their importance in terms of lessons learned and furthermore moving disability inclusion forward.

In addition to Lebanon, Jordan is also currently working in the field of implementing inclusive education pilot schools within its public education system. [GIZ](#) and [Mercy Corps](#) are both working in collaboration with the MoE to implement these nationwide. In addition to the USAID [‘Start Up’](#) program in USAID built schools. All of these are in their early stages of implementation, in the coming years they will offer a good opportunity to reflect on inclusive education measures being implemented across the intersecting domains of policy, school and community, and provide valuable lessons learned that can feed into both national scale-up and regional best practice.






EDUCATION-RELATED DISABILITY SERVICES

Support and Rehabilitation Services. Support services and (re)habilitation services are set out under article [26 of the UN CRPD](#). Support services and resources made available to schools and teachers to provide inclusive and effective learning to children with disabilities (and all learners) was highlighted as one of the four minimum conditions required for disability inclusive education (IDA 2020). For children with disabilities to take advantage of educational opportunities, access to assistive devices/technologies and/or Information and Communication Technologies is essential. Assistive technology can make the

difference between participation and marginalization (GEM 2020). RQ1 touched upon related inclusive learning provisions like assistive technologies, accessible books and sign language, however these fell under disability inclusive interventions. From the KII interviews, it was clear (in the region) these were not yet fully systematic services that are embedded into the education systems but were rather interventions being implemented/being offered. Morocco is a good example of this, where there are different stakeholders working to provide educational services for children with disabilities. These stakeholders include the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MNEVT), DPOs, private associations and non-profit organizations. However, the MNEVT does not assume complete accountability for these educational services and supports. It is the non governmental agencies that have taken responsibility for this (USAID, 2016).

Table 8 below highlights the key disability inclusive learning services/accommodations presented on the [UNESCO Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews \(PEERS\)](#) for the 11 countries USAID MENA portfolio.

Table 8: PEERS for MENA Countries

Country	Disability Services or Learning Accommodations
 ALGERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braille textbooks for students with visual impairment in special schools and limited number of schools. • Development of an Algeria sign language dictionary. • Intervention to procure technical and educational equipment for children with hearing impairments.
 EGYPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation of the ministry to provide education programs and ‘supporting technology’ to suit different types of disability (Based on act 16, 2018 Law on the Rights of Person with Disabilities)
IRAQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricula adaptations according to impairments and disabilities. E.g. Learners with hearing impairments can receive part of the curriculum in sign language. • Assessment accommodations that include students with visual impairments receiving the support of a reader and scribe during exams.
 JORDAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations of ministries to develop inclusive curricula, teaching materials and assessments that include assistive technology (Based on National 10 Year Inclusive Education Strategy).
 LEBANON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Educational Research and Development has been working on curricula development.
 LIBYA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of curricula for blind students • Development of curricula and books for students with intellectual disabilities, such as autism and learning difficulties. • ‘Let’s Learn’, a distance-learning platform that provides an easy-to-access, interactive digital learning environment (May 2020).



MOROCCO

- Comprehensive educational tool kit (2019)
- Adapting content of certified exams, exam conditions and marking criteria
- Individual and pedagogical support for students
- App development to help children with hearing impairments improve reading skills
- Development of educational tools in sign language (USAID)



SYRIA

- Expectation of ministries to adopt curricula making it [accessible to all](#) in order to cater for students with hearing impairments, visual impairments and other disabilities.



TUNISIA

- Promotion of sign language
- Use of [modern technological tools](#) during the training and assessment of students who have difficulties with writing and mathematics.



WEST BANK & GAZA

- Expectations of the ministries to offer [Braille-language books](#) (all levels) developing [remedial learning plans](#) for children who have low academic achievement ([Based on Inclusive Education Plan](#))



YEMEN

- Expectation of the ministries to ensure the availability of teachers and personnel specialized in Braille and develop curricula for persons with visual ([Article 8, Law No 61](#)).

Whilst the above provides an insight into the different education related disability services in the region, it is important to highlight that, for the use of assistive devices to realize its full potential, technology needs to be used with appropriate pedagogy. In the [Global Education Monitoring, Inclusive Education Report](#) (2020) it was highlighted that differentiated learning supported by technology was infrequently used, mainly due to lack of relevant teacher education. Thus, when discussing education related disability services this should also be paired with complementary capacity building for teachers (in addition to the students themselves and family members).

Financial Support. When asked about disability services, KII respondents (nine countries from the table above) leaned towards financial services suggesting that disability services in schools are not yet common. In Algeria, it was mentioned that the Ministry of Social Development provides some financial support for a family of children with disabilities, but this is a meagre yearly sum (KII, Algeria). In Egypt, there is a 'Karama' program for students with disabilities funded by the Ministry of Solidarity (KII, Egypt) in addition to some medical assistance (KII, Egypt). In Lebanon, organizations like UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) are providing people with disabilities with some financial support, however this is not related to education (KII, Lebanon). Families of children with disabilities can apply for a disability card at the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs. This card was used to access specialized schools and other projects funded by the government, however, this stopped two years ago, so while a child can have a card there are no funds to receive any services.

Government Engagement. As mentioned above, the [IDA report](#) (2020) includes disability support services as a fundamental measure needed to build inclusive education systems. This measure highlights the need for government departments to work in coordination with the education system, to make available a range of disability support services for children, youth, and their parents. These services should

start at birth and continue throughout the life cycle. The aim of these services for younger children is to develop specific skills during early language development that include literacy in tactile and sign language. (IDA 2020). For example, while spectacles and magnification devices are necessary assistive technologies for children with low vision to access school, it can be argued that they are necessary in their daily life, in and outside of school. Such provisions would not fall under the responsibility of the MoE but another ministry or agency, highlighting the important role cross-ministerial collaboration plays in disability education services (IDA 2020).

Cross Ministerial Collaboration. With regards to cross ministerial collaboration between the education system and health or other support services, the KII's reported that there is very little coordination. The only country that reported working in this field was Jordan. Last year, it launched a national referral pathways system for children with disabilities and development delays. This pathway has been collaboratively developed by the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, MoE, Higher Council on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is being led by Humanity and Inclusion. Examples of the referral system given include the following: when a child is identified at the health or community center in Amman the national referral pathways system guides the process for assessing what support the child may need. In addition, when the child is three, the pathway guides the child to inclusive kindergarten if it is required (KII, Jordan).

RQIA CONCLUSION

There is a lack of reliable and comparable data on children (and persons) with disabilities across the MENA region. Unified definitions of disability and data collection methods are needed to gather better data and statistics to build a better understanding of disability inclusive education, as reflected in the *Regional Guidebook to Improve Disability Data Collection and Analysis in the Arab Countries (2018)*. Jordan, Morocco, and the West Bank and Gaza were the only locations that reported collecting disability inclusive education data. With the exception of Morocco, the data collected was only on enrollment and failed to include data on learning progression, retention, and academic attainment. This draws attention to serious concerns around the use of enrollment rates to measure success. Whilst in Morocco there is a system to collect data on academic performance, data is not sufficiently analyzed or unutilized. This clearly indicates that there is still much work to be done in this domain as data is essential for effective evidence-based policymaking, programming decisions and ensuring effective monitoring processes.

In addition to a lack of data, there is also a lack of education-related disability services being offered at a systematic level in the MENA region. Disability services do not always fall under the domain of the MoE and require a multi-ministerial approach. However, as illustrated above there is a lack of collaboration between government departments and the education system to provide disability support, except for Jordan. Last year, a national referral pathways system for children with disabilities and development delays was launched in Jordan. This was a result of a multi-ministerial collaboration that supports and guides children with disabilities and their parents through the education system.

A lack of data collection in addition to inclusive education initiatives still being in their infancy made addressing the question about lessons learned a challenge. There is little published data on this in the region, however, the most recent relevant document about [inclusive pilot public schools in Lebanon](#) can be used as a good example. This provided 22 recommendations and highlighted several strengths to build on, as well as opportunities that can feed into national scale-up. Still in their early stages of implementation, inclusive education pilot schools in Jordan ([GIZ](#) and [Mercy Corps](#)) will also offer valuable lessons learned and best practice in the future.



RQ 2: ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Across the MENA region, what is the current state of national policies and interventions designed for education that is inclusive of students with disabilities at the higher education level?

RQ2 FINDINGS

The study addressed the question with a focus on existing policies and interventions at country level for those countries where desk review yielded relevant results. Furthermore, as access to and success in HE is a direct result of access and success to secondary education in addressing RQ2, the study considered, where possible and as a complementary dimension, access of students with disability to secondary education (referring to students 14 to 18 years old). This section will examine what emerged from the desk review and the KIs, taking into consideration the dimensions of policy, strategies, laws, and interventions, and their effectiveness at country level.

POLICIES, STRATEGIES, LAWS

As previously noted, apart from Morocco, policies address inclusive education holistically, meaning that they include disability as one of the dimensions of inclusive education. Furthermore, they address education in general (BE and HE) rather than being specific for HE. However, in some countries, such as Yemen and Tunisia, laws and policies that are focused on persons with disability refer specifically to HE access.



In Algeria, Law 02-09 of May 8, 2002, sets as target compulsory education and vocational training for children and adolescents with disabilities (PEER). Whereas in Tunisia, the *National Higher Education Equity Policy* lists students with disabilities as target category.



In Egypt, the *Law on the Rights of Persons with Disability* was passed in 2018. The new law provided a wide range of legal rights and protections for persons with disabilities. These protections included rights to non-discrimination in employment, health, political activity, rehabilitation and training, and legal protection. The law also included provisions for the rights of persons with disabilities in education at all levels (Shalabi, M 2020). American University of Cairo (AUC) developed a [Student Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#). The policy addressed protections such as process of admission, confidentiality, disabilities and accommodations, definitions and general principles, complaint procedures and appeals, etc.



IRAQ

The [Iraq National Inclusive Education Project](#), appendix seven (*Planning the Strategic National Project of Inclusive Education in Iraq*), is focused solely on inclusive education at the BE level. [The Iraqi Alliance of Disability Parallel Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability \(CRPD\)](#), 2018, cites Article 15 [I] of law 38, 2013, referring to “providing opportunities for public and private education as well as vocational and higher education for people with disabilities and the special needs for those capable of it.” In addition to that, Article 15 [II] and 15 [III] (duties of the MoE and HE) also states that the:

“Provision of primary and secondary education for people with disabilities and special needs according to their abilities, as well as special education programs, inclusive educational integration, and parallel education. Educational and learning curriculum should be developed to suit the readiness of people with disabilities and special needs. HE should be provided through allocating one seat in each field of graduate studies for people with disabilities and special needs.”



JORDAN

In Jordan, the recently launched [The Ten-Year Strategy for Inclusive Education](#) referred 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 MoE [article 24 of the CRPD](#). At the same time, while the strategy’s goal seven specifically referred to pre-school children and goal eight referred to out of school children, none of the other seven goals refer to HE. Reference to secondary education and all levels of education is indirectly made when mentioning it as a basis for the strategy:

“Article 24 affirms the right to education to ensure that person with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary or secondary education on the basis of their disability”; and when referring to the fourth goal of the SDG which “emphasizes quality education, education for persons with disabilities, eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for all vulnerable groups by 2030. These groups include persons with disabilities.”

Similarly, KII Jordan respondents referred to [Law 20, 2017](#). Desk review identified as relevant article 21 of the *Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 20, 2017* developing rules for admission.



MOROCCO

The Morocco 2019 *Implementation of the National Inclusive Education Program for Children with Disabilities* is focused on addressing inclusive education only at the BE level.



WEST BANK & GAZA

The 2015 [Palestine Inclusive Education Policy](#) commits to “ensure that efforts to advocate for and implement inclusive education cover the full range of education sectors, from early childhood to vocational, non-formal and adult education.” Goal eight of the policy reiterates the above.

 YEMEN

In Yemen, Amnesty International: [Excluded, Living with Disabilities in Yemen Armed Conflict](#), (2019) refers to Law 61, of 1999. According to the report, while the law does not refer to primary and secondary education for students with disabilities, it guarantees the right to education at tertiary and vocational training level, giving priority to students with disabilities. The same law guarantees reasonable accommodation at the tertiary level (but not at the primary and secondary level:

“Including the revision of the curriculum to make them accessible to persons with visual disabilities; employing teachers and experts who are qualified in sign language and/or braille; the provision of educational materials to facilitate effective education; and the training of teachers at the tertiary level to familiarize them with the rights of persons with disabilities.”

However, according to the report, the law perpetuates the “concept of segregated tertiary educational institutions to a certain extent, failing to align itself with global trends of inclusive education at all levels.”

INTERVENTIONS

Data from KII

In examining interventions, the study considered those countries where the desk review and KIIs yielded relevant results. As policies on access to and success in higher education are limited, so are interventions, albeit with some notable exceptions, as in Egypt, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza. Where possible the team considered as complementary dimension interventions at pre-higher education level. Interventions generally focus on provision of reasonable accommodations, advocacy, staff capacity building and awareness, and establishment of disability centers/inclusive education units.

 EGYPT

In Egypt, the ongoing [US-Egypt HE initiative, Local Scholarship for Public Universities](#) component, is dedicated to inclusive education. Through the program, students with disabilities pursue studies in disciplines previously inaccessible to students with disabilities. The program aims at establishing disability centers in each of the five partner universities ‘to serve and empower students with disability in all university faculties’ ([Activity Fact Sheet, US-Egypt Higher Education Initiative](#)). The primary function of the disability centers is broad for the whole university, and is policy and advocacy related—ensuring that the university provides equal access to HE for students with disabilities. Part of the disability centers’ work entails keeping a database of university students with disabilities (and those receiving accommodations) to ensure that they actually have equal access to HE; managing a system to ensure consistent accommodations for university students across faculties; and managing a student complaint, and resolution process. Advocacy work entails, as well, changing student and faculty perceptions of students with disabilities from a medical perspective. As part of the program, the University Disability Service Center Study Tour organizes study visits to U.S. university disability centers and their partners.

KII Egypt respondents identified as elements of success of the program the establishment of disability centers and the provision of assistive devices. One KII respondent, however, identified the low quality of education at the secondary level as an element that hinders success in higher education:

Similarly, a respondent from Lebanon mentioned that “another challenge is the quality of the education provided: there are 14 schools for the deaf in Lebanon. Only four of them reach the ninth grade, and when students graduate from the 9th grade, their reading and writing abilities are at the level of the fifth grade.”

“The Ministry of HE decided that students with disabilities who score at least 50% on the simplified exam can join universities. However, in reality, there is no preparation for students at school level. For example, students reach university without having learned how to write. They can join the engineering department, but they can’t write. Also, students with visual impairment don’t learn computer skills in high school although it is crucial. The majority attend special schools where they are taught only to read braille. There should be coordination between the ministries of basic education and higher education.”

JORDAN

In Jordan, the new [Disability Law \(No. 20\) \(2017\)](#) facilitates the enrollment of persons with disabilities in HE by reducing the tuition fees to 25 percent of the normal cost. (Institute of Development Studies, Disability Inclusive Development, Jordan Situation Analysis, version II, June 2020). A KII Jordan respondent referred to a ten percent cap. The same KII respondent referred to agreements of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with four universities, in addition to being part of a national committee working to integrate and mainstream access requirements for different disabilities (hearing, visual as well as some intellectual disabilities). The respondent explained that the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities supports students with disabilities by providing sign language, laptops, assistive devices, and by developing guidelines for HE on accessibility and assistance including accessibility, assistive technologies, teaching and using sign language, disability inclusive education and staff capacity building.

Through funding by the European Commission (EC), Erasmus+: Disability as Diversity: the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education, and in cooperation with the University of Jordan, the [Edu4ALL](#) project aims at empowering students with disabilities academically, socially, and psychologically. The project will establish an “Inclusive Education Unit” that follows the international standards with the objective of equality in education, activities, and services for students with disabilities.

A similar Erasmus+ initiative is implemented in Morocco and Egypt. The recently completed [PACES project](#) (Progression of Accessibility Centers in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in North Africa) was built on the previous SWING project (Sustainable Ways to Increase Higher Education Students’ Equal Access to Learning Environments) focused on supporting students with disabilities through university and creating a culture of equal opportunities for study and employment. The project entailed: transfer of good practice in equality and diversity in EU and North Africa; establishing new accessibility centers and setting up of new accessibility centers; developing a new training handbook to be used as framework by partners; setting up a network of employers and higher education institutions aimed at improving the academic experience to better suit market requirements; developing peer to peer support for student with disabilities.

WEST BANK & GAZA

A West Bank and Gaza cooperation effort between a school for deaf students and the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) in 2014 resulted in the enrollment of most of 160 deaf students to IUG (Disability Under Siege: Inclusive education in Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2021). The same [document](#) refers to Bir Zeit University (BZU) and the IUG as pioneers in providing students with physical, visual, and hearing disabilities with the opportunities to access and complete HE as a result of university staff adherence to the values of ethics of care. According to the document, as of 2019, there

were 46 students with disabilities enrolled at BZU, with physical and visual impairments. The students enrolled in IT, science, education, commerce, arts, and sharia and law. Both universities are, as well, very active in regard to advocacy and changing attitudes towards students with disabilities, through workshops and work with CSOs.

Data from Desk Review

WEST BANK & GAZA

The desk review was limited regarding interventions. A 2016 World Bank paper on [Disability in the Palestinian Territories](#) refers to unavailability of special education programs for all types of disabilities for secondary education, as general education settings mainly focus on accommodating students with mild and moderate physical disabilities, scarcely addressing mental and other disabilities. “Children with visual impairments in Gaza, for example, receive primary education (grades 1–6) in special schools run by NGOs, then continue their secondary education in the only specialized governmental school for persons with hearing impairments, and may move to a mainstream governmental school to continue the 12th grade”. (World Bank West Bank and Gaza: Disability in the Palestinian Territories, 2016). On the other hand, the desk review shows that students with mild to moderate hearing, visual, and physical impairments are more likely to be enrolled in HE.

EGYPT

The [USAID 2017 Needs Assessment of Persons with Disabilities in Egyptian Public Universities and Regional Technical Colleges](#) identifies barriers faced by students with disabilities during pre-HE in Egypt. As an example, barriers faced by students with visual disability include limited training in the use of braille and various assistive technologies that are needed for success in higher education. “It is very difficult for children with low vision to enroll in school, and many drop out well before finishing secondary education” (page 10). Success in higher education for students with hearing disability is hindered by limited access to quality education and accommodations such as Egyptian sign language. Similarly, students with physical disabilities face barriers related to transportation to school and physical and built environmental barriers at school, including classrooms on higher floors, no elevator and/or inaccessible toilets.

A further emerging theme linked to interventions, from both the desk review and KII, concerns the prevalence of students with visual, physical, and hearing disabilities enrolled in higher education. A respondent (KII, Egypt) quoted: “in Egyptian universities students with visual disabilities are more represented.” As a substantiation to the aforementioned, the [USAID 2017 ‘Needs Assessment of Persons with Disabilities in Egyptian Public Universities and Regional Technical Colleges’](#) examines barriers faced by students with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities at the HE level.

JORDAN

Similarly, the paper [What is Needed to Have Accessible Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in Jordan? \(2018\)](#) investigates accessibility of computer laboratories, libraries, and websites to students with physical, visual, and hearing disabilities in Jordanian universities and colleges. Although dated, the [Experiences of Students with Disabilities in a Public University in Jordan \(2014\)](#) looks at barriers faced by students at a southern university from a broader perspective which includes awareness at students and staff level (of law requirements, as an example), as well as support to students with disabilities. Interestingly, one of the findings is that students with

“hidden disabilities, (such as specific learning disability, emotional disturbance, communication disorders)” were not represented.



In [The Parallel Report for Government's Report on The Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability, 2018](#), the Iraqi Alliance of Disability considers peculiarities of the education system which, as an example, provides students with visual impairment curriculum printed in braille at BE level but relies on just listening at secondary education inclusive schools. Similarly, mathematics in secondary education is simplified to such a great extent that blind students during exams are exempt from “mathematics, chemical equations, mathematical questions in physics and drawings of biology” (page 33). English exams, as well, represent a challenge:

“Because the person assigned to writing answers should not be an English teacher, and the exam requires spelling and writing of words by the authorized person. Therefore, blind students get the lowest marks [on English exams], and they were forced to print the English language curriculum at their own expense in Egypt so that they can spell words to the authorized person.” (page 33).

As for students with learning and intellectual impairments, they are systematically excluded from mainstream secondary and higher education under the false pretext of their incapability or inability to learn (page 33).

In summary, interventions on disability inclusive education at the HE level are limited and tend to address students with visual, hearing and physical disabilities. While HE level efforts are made to provide reasonable accommodations for students with visual, hearing and physical impairments, students continue to face barriers at different levels. Further, students with disabilities reach HE with lower education standards than their peers without disabilities, as interventions and provisions at pre-higher education are generally scarce. Lastly, as data about attendance to HE of students with non-visible disabilities is lacking, it's not clear why students with non-apparent disabilities are not represented.

EFFECTIVENESS

The study considered effectiveness based on key informants' responses. Specifically, information about the IUG disability inclusive experience was unavailable. Both [Erasmus+ Edu4ALL](#) and the [US Egypt HE initiative](#) are ongoing and documentation about their effectiveness is yet to be made available. Therefore, the team referred mainly to key informant responses from Egypt. The team included considerations on attitudes and coordination as an integral part of effectiveness.

Assistive Devices. Respondents referred to the provision of assistive devices, and training on their use, to students as particularly successful. Networking with all faculties “to promote the acceptance of students with disabilities and support the faculties in including them” (KII, Egypt) was mentioned as particularly successful, together with staff study visits to the US. ‘The fact that they were able to experience what was possible, led to a mental shift, and it is that mental shift that allowed things to happen back in Egypt. Going to the U.S. set the stage for what they did after this’ (KII, Egypt). A further example of a successful initiative is the following, as explained by a respondent:

“The inclusivity and integration of persons with disabilities within the university has been carried out well. We have a buddy system that works well. Persons with disabilities (both visible and non-visible) are enrolled at the university. Awareness, creating inclusive environments in addition to peer awareness and training on disability inclusive education all play a crucial role. These ensure that the journey of a person with disabilities is beneficial and enjoyable” (KII, Egypt).

Challenges. A respondent mentioned challenging initiatives aimed at reaching out to students with physical impairments “because they are scattered” (KII, Egypt) and students who are completely deaf, due to the absence of sign language provisions. When asked about the main challenges to the implementation of disability inclusive education initiatives, respondents referred to: the size of the country, which entails major human and financial resources; low awareness about students with disabilities in governorates far from the capital, together with terminology and language in regard to persons with disabilities.

Attitudes. Positive attitudes are an essential aspect of effectiveness. Respondents described attitudes at governmental level as generally positive, although there was a lack of knowledge and resources: “Everyone wants to be supportive, but they still need to learn to know how” (KII, Egypt). Respondents agreed that attitudes at community/society level are rapidly improving as a result of awareness initiatives through media.

“Disability inclusive education can only happen if all involved from donor, government, ministries and implementing partners all work together in synergy.” - KII, Egypt

National and Local Coordination. With regard to coordination, both at national and local levels; while a respondent referred to “serious steps being taken” (KII, Egypt), another respondent described it as superficial: ‘people like to talk about coordination, but do not like to be coordinated” (KII, Egypt). When asked about improving disability inclusive education initiatives, respondents referred to: awareness, collaborative work at all levels, capacity building.

Progress in Policy Implementation. A KII Egypt respondent summarized the implementation of policies as follows: “Progress is being made. For example, two years ago a student with disabilities could not enroll in the facilities of medicine or engineering but now they can. Policies are on the right track, but they are not being implemented 100%. The law is in effect, but it takes time to get the universities ready in terms of accessibility, curriculum, and staff training on disability inclusive education (KII, Egypt).” Another respondent from Egypt explained that there are gaps in terms of implementation and translation of frameworks into practices; and as a result, students with visual impairments cannot access, for instance, math or science courses and have to choose art.

RQ2 CONCLUSIONS

As policies and laws referred to in this section are the same referred to for RQ1, most of the conclusions related to laws and policies addressed in RQ1 apply to RQ2. Following are additional observations that will help answer RQ2.

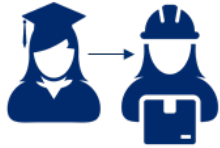
Inclusive education policies address disability as a dimension of inclusive education; they also address education in general, as opposed to being specific for HE. Some laws make specific reference to provisions at higher education level, for example, AUC Cairo developed its own policy.

The low quality of pre-higher education affects students’ access and success to HE; and students with disabilities that access HE often lack the expected academic skills.

Students with visual, hearing, and physical impairments are mostly represented in HE. Moreover, students with disabilities enrolled in HE encounter barriers at different levels, including physical, technological, and attitudinal.

Interventions at the HE level are generally limited. Elements of success of ongoing initiatives include provision of devices, and training on their use, to students with disabilities; networking; staff study visits abroad; and initiatives aimed at raising awareness.

Challenging elements include limited human and financial resources and low awareness in governorates away from the capital; however, as little is known about the effectiveness of such ongoing initiatives, the team could not draw relevant conclusions. Elements needed to improve disability inclusive education initiatives include awareness, collaborative work, and capacity building at all levels.



RQ3: WORKFORCE TRANSITIONS

What policies and interventions have been implemented to facilitate students with disabilities' transition from higher education (and training?) to the workforce, and what is known about their effectiveness?

RQ3 FINDINGS

With limited results at both desk review and KII, the team addressed the question indirectly by looking at policies and interventions focused on employment and training. This section considers if/how policies and laws addressed transitions to workforce, present initiatives in some countries aimed at transitioning students with disabilities to the workforce and at the effectiveness of interventions.

POLICIES, STRATEGIES, LAWS

While literature is available about employment-related policies and laws for persons with disabilities, specific reference at legal and/or strategy level about students with disabilities transition from HE or training to the workforce is generally absent. Following are examples of labor laws and their implementation, or lack of thereof, from countries where the desk review provided relevant information.

ALGERIA

In Algeria, through Executive Decree No. 06-145 of 26, of 2006, a National Council for Persons with Disabilities was set up. It includes a "joint technical committee bringing together all stakeholders concerned with employment." ([CRPD Committee, report submitted by Algeria, 2015](#), page 36). Citing various sources, [K4D disability in North Africa \(2018\)](#) reports that in order to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities, legislation provides employers with grants and the provision of equipment and reasonable adaptation of the work environment. However, there is no government data on the employment of persons with disabilities. According to the law, one percent of jobs should be allocated to people with disabilities, or face a fine. However, so far, only a few businesses have abided by the law and the law is generally not enforced.

EGYPT

In Egypt, the [USAID Needs Assessment of Persons with Disabilities in Egyptian Public Universities and Regional Technical Colleges](#) dedicates a section to Employment of Persons with Disabilities. The study concludes that, while data on employment of graduates with disabilities are non-existent, employers tend to place persons with disabilities in "fictitious, low wage positions, rather than facilitating entry into quality, genuine employment opportunities" in order to satisfy the five percent quota system (page 39). Additionally, [K4D Disability in North Africa \(2018\)](#) has reported that the employment rate of persons with disabilities is half of the employment rate of the non-disabled population. The five percent quota of jobs for persons with disabilities established by law is not enforced. As this report is being prepared, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) is conducting the first national survey of persons with disabilities (Daily News Egypt).



IRAQ

In Iraq, the [UN Human Rights: Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iraq, 2016](#), mentioned law 38 (2013) on the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs. The law states that “ministries, all institutions not related to a ministry and public sector companies shall allocate no less than five percent of their jobs [... to] persons with disabilities and special needs” (page 14). However, this has not been the case as the same report cites persons with disabilities saying that employers do not offer jobs to persons with disabilities “since they believe they are not productive” (page 14).



JORDAN

In Jordan, Law n. 31 of 2007 on the Rights of Disabled Persons sets quotas to ensure that persons with disabilities are part of the workforce. Additionally, the [Law No. 20, of 2017](#) prohibits the exclusion of a persons from work, training, or the opportunity of progression in their careers based on, or due to, their disability. In addition, as work constitutes an essential right for persons with disabilities, job listings cannot require that the applicant be free from any disability. The same law established a partnership between the [HCD](#) and other governmental entities to coordinate and cooperate towards the implementation of the law. In particular, “The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training Corporation, in coordination with the Higher Council for People with Disabilities, are mandated to incorporate measures that guarantee assimilation of persons with disabilities into the policies, strategies, plans and programs related to work, vocational and technical education in order to facilitate equal opportunities, as well as preparing vocational training curriculum in braille”. ([Institute for Development Studies: Disability Inclusive Development, Jordan Situation Analysis](#), version II, 2020, page 12-13). Despite the above, citing various sources, [K4D: The current situation of persons with disability in Jordan \(2018\)](#) reports that in Jordan 2014 data suggest that employment of persons with disabilities was 16%.



LEBANON

In Lebanon, citing various sources [K4D Disability in Lebanon, 2018](#), reported that in Lebanon, 80 percent of persons with disabilities are not employed, or have never been employed. Additionally, Law 220/2000 for persons with disabilities sets an employment quota but is not enforced. According to the report, there are no initiatives at the state level to make workplaces inclusive and suited to welcome persons with disabilities as employees. There are no rehabilitation programs available to enable persons with disabilities to perform the jobs required in the labor market.



MOROCCO

In Morocco, according to the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development 2014 [National Survey on Handicap](#), 51.3 percent of persons with disabilities are of working age, but only one out of three is employed. Citing various sources, [K4D Disability in North Africa, 2018](#), reported that a set quota of seven percent employment for persons with disabilities in public service is far from being achieved. In order to encourage employment of persons with disabilities, legislation is in place, providing financial incentives to employers, in addition to tax breaks or reduction to social security taxes.



TUNISIA

In Tunisia, [K4D Disability in North Africa, 2018](#) reported from various sources that while by law two percent of jobs (for employers with more than 100 employees) in the public and private sectors should be reserved for persons with disabilities, the law is not enforced. Only 13.3% of persons with disabilities are engaged in regular

economic activity. This is three times lower than persons without disabilities. In order to encourage job placement of persons with disabilities, tax incentives are offered to companies.

INTERVENTIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS

EGYPT

In Egypt, a KII respondent explained that, through the [US-Egypt Higher Education Initiative](#), within the Disability Service Centers, careers support is provided to students enrolled in the Egyptian Public Universities partnering with the project. While the AUC started early with the initiative, other public universities started at a slower pace, due to financial and infrastructure challenges. While challenges still exist regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, there are some initiatives in Egypt some that showed encouraging outcomes as outlined in the ILO: [Disability in the Workplace: Company Practices from Egypt \(2017\)](#). In addition to portraying good practices in the employment of persons with disabilities, the booklet is relevant because it stresses collaboration between government, CSOs (as training and career support providers) and companies. As outlined in the booklet:

“Companies above fifty employees are under obligation by law to hire persons with disabilities as five percent of their workforce. Many of the companies featured here have taken this as a positive opportunity to get more productive workers. Nevertheless, many companies still find it challenging to fulfil. Especially at the beginning of these processes, investment of time and resources may be required. However, companies eventually find that the return on this investment is an effective and committed workforce.” (page 12)

KII respondents noted the positive outcomes and their effectiveness, especially in the area of career centers at universities. A respondent explained that written material and workshops are accessible in braille and sign language, while another respondent mentioned that many companies already apply the quota of five percent stated in the law and some even provide persons with disabilities the opportunity for learning and growth and better job opportunities.

JORDAN

In Jordan, in 2013 the HCD, with USAID and FHI 360, developed the [Thirty Questions Guide: Achieving Equal Opportunities in the Workplace for Persons with Disabilities](#). The document aimed at providing both employers in the public and private sector and persons with disabilities the basis to address the various stages of work based on CRPD. The initiative is an example of efforts at establishing tangible cooperation between stakeholders towards the achievement of a workplace free from physical obstacles and behavioral barriers for persons with disabilities. A KII Jordan respondent explained that, to set a positive example of inclusive employment, the HCD employs persons with disabilities at different levels.

LEBANON

In Lebanon, the [Economic and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities project](#), was implemented in partnership between the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union, Christian Aid UK, and the Young Men’s Christian Association. The project focused on sustainable livelihoods and social and economic inclusion of youth with disabilities via community-based training and job coaching. A component of the project entailed, as well, advocacy and awareness raising amongst stakeholders, in addition to monitoring law enforcement of 220/2000:8 Rights and Access for Persons with



Disabilities. This project created multiple job opportunities for youth with disabilities and provided youth employment. During phase two of the project, 500 youth with disabilities participated in training initiatives and 20 percent were employed. During phase three, 450 job opportunities were offered and 310 youth were employed. In addition to engaging in job training and placement, the project successfully implemented awareness raising initiatives at line ministries level

In Morocco, HI implemented a [project on socio-economic Integration of People with Disabilities](#). The project aims at providing support to persons with disabilities to gain access to the various financing mechanisms for income generating activities. The project entails capacity building, socio-economic support, and the establishment of centers of assistance. A KII Morocco respondent explained that, through cooperation with CSO, the project works with parents of and students with disabilities on informed decision-making in regard to education at vocational training or HE. Additionally, another KII respondent noted that the inclusion of students with disabilities in public vocational training centers.

RQ3 CONCLUSIONS

In the countries considered, labor laws set quotas for the employment of persons with disabilities; however, they do not reference facilitating the transition of persons with disabilities to the workforce.

Laws are generally not implemented or enforced, despite incentives to companies aimed at increasing the recruitment of persons with disabilities. However, examples from some countries (Jordan, Algeria) of cooperation amongst governmental bodies could serve as a basis to further strengthen the transition of persons with disabilities to the workforce. Transition to the workforce is hampered, as well, by negative stereotypes.

Conversely, at intervention level some documented initiatives in Egypt constitute a significant example of successful employment of persons with disabilities in jobs appropriate to their qualifications.



RQ4: UNDERSERVED STUDENTS

What policies and/or interventions have been implemented for students with disabilities in underserved or marginalized communities such as those affected by chronic conflict, hard-to-reach locations, or negative cultural practices around disability? What is known about these interventions' effectiveness?

RQ4 FINDINGS

Based on our desk review and key informant interviews, in the countries covered by this study, students with disabilities in underserved and marginalized communities such as those affected by chronic conflict, hard-to-reach locations, or negative cultural practices around disability are not systematically referred to in the implemented disability inclusive education policies or strategies. The study team found that policies and strategies lack thorough implementation and collaboration plans, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, data collection and utilization tools, which undermines their efficient and effective implementation, particularly in marginalized and underserved communities. Additionally, the team also found that negative behaviors and attitudes are generally resulting from a lack of awareness about disability inclusive education. In addition, students with disabilities in underserved and marginalized communities in rural and remote areas are often overlooked by disability inclusive education interventions that generally tend to target easier to reach students, without relying on data nor strategic collaboration.

POLICIES

In Morocco, the [inclusive education strategy of 2019](#) specifically mentions “to make the school inclusive of all categories of school-age children without exclusion, marginalization or discrimination, regardless of their circumstances and disabilities” (Ministry of National Education Professional Training Higher Education and Scientific Research).

In addition, the [Palestine Inclusive Education Policy](#) specifically states that in 1997, the MoE and HE “adopted inclusive education as a philosophy that cares for all students, particularly those who are marginalized without discriminating on the basis of gender, difficulty or disability” (Palestine MoE and HE).

In most of the countries covered by this study where disability inclusive education policies have been implemented, they are not systematically monitored, evaluated, and followed upon. They lack both data collection and utilization system. Additionally, persons with disabilities did not meaningfully participate in their design (Klls, Regional, Lebanon, and Jordan).

From our Klls, we learned that there is generally a lack of awareness around disability inclusive education among parents, children, teachers, and the community at large, including government officials, which perpetuates negative attitudes.

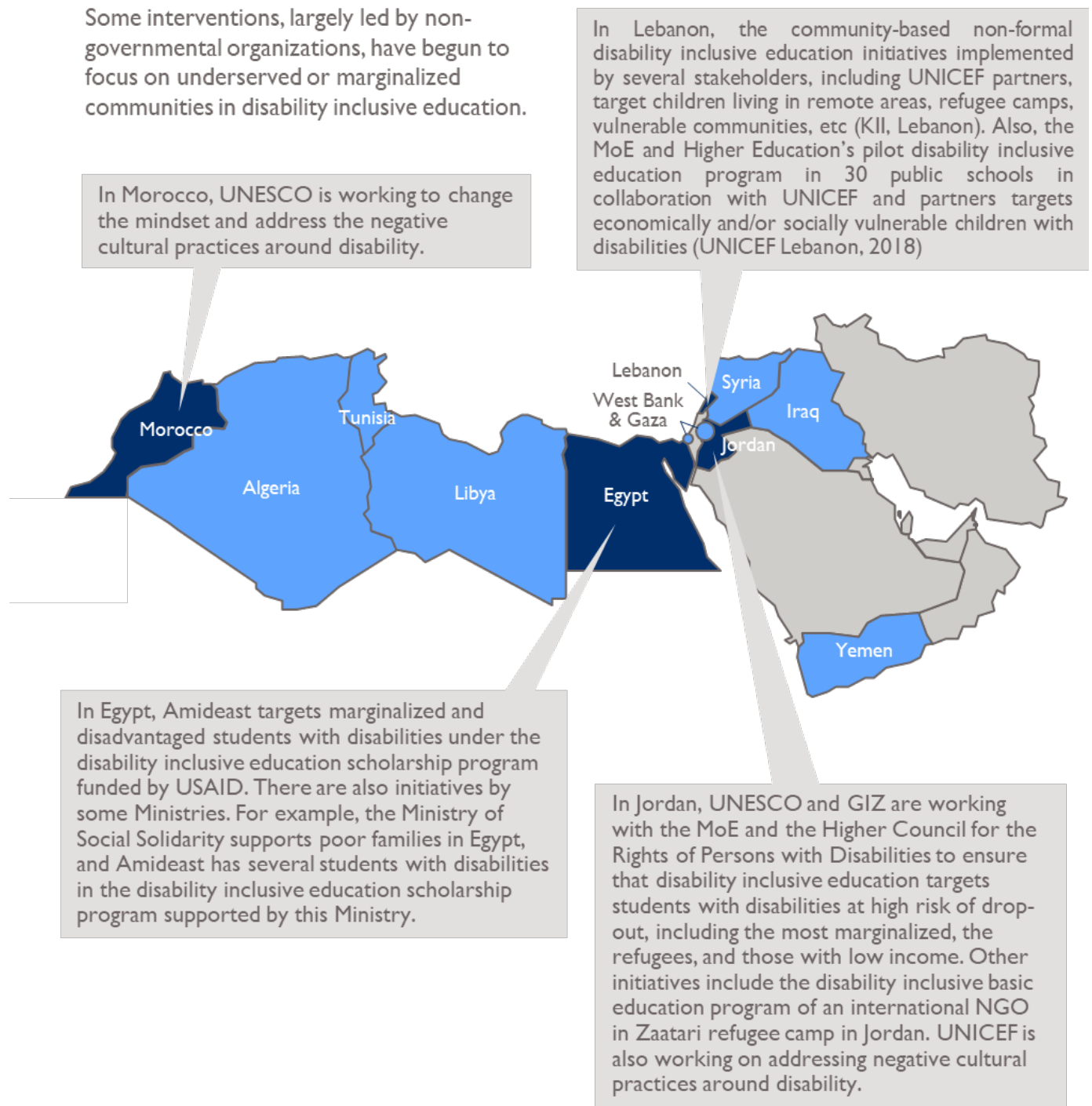
INTERVENTIONS

Targeting Approaches. In the countries of the study, disability inclusive education interventions tend to focus on easier to reach contexts. However, there are some disability inclusive education interventions mostly non-governmentally led, that are focused on underserved or marginalized communities such as those affected by chronic conflict, hard-to-reach locations, or negative cultural practices around disability.

Generally, those interventions target refugees and poor communities, but without relying on precise evidence-based targeting approaches.

Challenges and Limitations. In addition, based on the numerous KIIs conducted, we have identified a general lack of coordination among the different actors at local and national level, leading to sporadic interventions rather than change at scale (KII, Jordan). The interviews also allowed us to identify a lack of systematic data collection, analysis, and utilization, leading to a gap in evidence-based decision-making and program design, monitoring, and evaluation. Even when official data is collected, it is generally challenging for organizations to access them (KIIs, Lebanon, Jordan, and West Bank and Gaza). The following figure presents examples of such interventions:

Figure 9: Example of Underserved and Marginalized Interventions



RQ4 CONCLUSIONS

In the majority of the countries covered by this study, the disability inclusive education policies and strategies that have been implemented refer to all children broadly, lack an evidence base, implementation plans, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Therefore, they include students with disabilities in underserved and marginalized communities such as those affected by chronic conflict, hard-to-reach locations, or negative cultural practices around disability, without making a specific reference to them.

Also, there is generally a lack of awareness around disability inclusion education, which generates negative behaviors and attitudes.

In addition, the majority of the disability inclusive education interventions in the countries covered by this study, target easier to reach children, and are non-governmental. Even if some sporadic interventions target marginalized and underserved communities, the general lack of data collection, analysis and utilization prevents an accurate analysis of their potential effectiveness.

LESSONS LEARNED & IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER DISABILITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The study team identified some lessons learned and implications for further disability inclusive education programming below clustered within overarching themes, that deserve further investigation in considering programming of disability inclusive education. At the same time, the study team identified some examples that could serve as the basis for better addressing the education of students with disabilities. Links of examples of relevant initiatives are provided throughout the report and in Annex I.



REACHING ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Table 9: Lessons and implications for Children and Youth with Disabilities

Lessons Learned	Implications for Disability Inclusive Education Programming
<p>Inclusive education policies address disability as one of the dimensions of inclusive education and while the narrative of inclusive education policies addresses education at large, the disability dimension of inclusive education policies focuses mostly on basic education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide short to medium term initiatives that at either the country or regional level are aimed at reviewing policies and aligning them with the CRPD in order to address disability inclusive education at different levels and categories. The result would be policies and action plans that are more specific in terms of addressing disability inclusive education at the different education levels and for marginalized students, including students with disabilities’ status (such as, refugee, IDP, etc.), and students with disabilities living in underserved and marginalized communities.
<p>Students with non-visible disabilities or multiple disabilities were generally not yet considered by disability inclusive education initiatives and there is a need for greater awareness of support needed by those with multiple disabilities and non-visible disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support could be provided to medium- to long-term country specific initiatives that focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detection of multiple and invisible disabilities. While multiple disabilities are normally detected through health services, non-visible disabilities (such as learning and behavior disabilities) are often observed first by teachers when the child enrolls in school. Initiatives in this regard could focus on training of basic health services staff, and kindergarten and primary school teachers; and awareness initiatives for parents and peers. ○ Provision of accommodations at school and family level: accommodations could include technological resources, as well as peers’ initiatives (as an example, the “buddy system” in Egypt universities through the Higher Education Initiative) and support to parents. Such initiatives could be implemented at all education levels.

<p>Students with disabilities who live in marginalized and underserved communities are one of the vulnerability categories that are part of the overall IE approach but are otherwise not specifically accommodated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support could be provided to medium-term initiatives at country level aimed at improving access of students with disabilities to accommodations and to referral services through partnership with local NGOs. ▪ Support could be provided globally to medium-term initiatives that promote and enforce an overall disability responsive approach, at the level of both development and humanitarian assistance.
<p>Disability inclusive education initiatives at government level are generally implemented in the absence of reliable and accurate data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support short- to medium-term initiatives at country and regional level to create an inventory of currently available data to establish national baselines (UNESCO 2018). ▪ Support short-term initiatives at country level aimed at using the sets of questions developed (or regionally adapted) by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and UNICEF (ESCWA 2018a & ESCWA 2018b) in all surveys and census. This would ensure that data are comparable across countries and between years, and that a common language is used for data collection. In particular, supporting Egypt and West Bank and Gaza to transition from using a variant of the WGSS, to the WGSS as it is intended, would strengthen regional data. This would result in five countries using the WGSS as intended, contributing to a stronger disability data base in the MENA region. ▪ Support medium- to long-term initiatives at country level aimed at updating EMISs to include data on students with disability that consider enrollment, retention, academic performance and disaggregation by sex, type of disability, location, and type of education setting (such as inclusive school, regular/mainstream school, special school). This would be particularly relevant in Jordan, Morocco, and Lebanon, as they are currently implementing pilot disability inclusive education initiatives. ▪ Support short-term initiatives, within USAID and/or globally, aimed at integrating gender-responsive disability analysis in programs baselines and endlines, to better understand practices, social norms, and attitudes related to girls and boys with disabilities.



COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Table 10: Lessons and Implication for Coordination and Collaboration

Lessons Learned	Implications for Disability Inclusive Education Programming
<p>There is a need to strengthen collaboration within line ministries, at inter-ministerial level and with INGOS and NGOs to support disability inclusive education initiatives and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support could be provided to medium-term initiatives at country level that explore and pilot the role of NGOs within regular school settings. ▪ Country specific, short term initiatives could be supported that engage DPOS as: Leaders in the implementation of awareness initiatives within the school and between school and community; actors in the process of provision of accommodations at school level to students with disabilities. Contributors to the development and implementation of teachers training and support. ▪ Country specific, short-term initiatives could be supported at the line ministries level to create or strengthen coordination mechanisms that specifically look at lessons learned from previous
<p>Within HE, there is a lack of cooperation amongst stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support could be provided to medium-term initiatives at country level aimed at bridging the gap between education entities in regard to students with disability transition from secondary education to HE and to workforce.



RAISING AWARENESS & VISIBILITY

Table 11: Lessons and Implications for Raising Awareness & Visibility

Lessons Learned	Implications for Disability Inclusive Education Programming
<p>There is a need to increase awareness about disability inclusive education at all levels, despite generally improved attitudes towards persons with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support could be provided to short- and medium-term initiatives at country level in countries with ongoing disability inclusive education initiatives. Initiatives could focus on public awareness campaigns about the importance of disability inclusive education. ▪ Support could be provided to short- and medium-term initiatives at country level to improve awareness of disability inclusive education at the line ministries management level and school level (including management, teachers, administrative and auxiliary staff, and parents).
<p>There is a need to increase the involvement and visibility of persons with disabilities within the public and private sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support could be provided to short- and medium-term initiatives aimed at increasing the involvement and visibility of persons with disability within the public and private sector.



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES/ TEACHER TRAINING

Table 12: Lessons and Implications for Pedagogical Practices/Teacher Training

Lessons Learned	Implications for Disability Inclusive Education Programming
<p>Coordinated action plans for the implementation of teachers' capacity building initiatives on disability inclusive education are generally lacking; there is a need to review disability inclusive education teachers' training considering a bottom-up approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Support could be provided to country specific, medium-term initiatives aimed at standardizing in-service teacher training on disability inclusive education.▪ In-service teachers' training should consider a continuing education format that includes teachers support and supervision.▪ Support could be provided to long-term country specific initiatives that include disability inclusive education training as part of HE pre-service teacher training, through a UDL approach.

ANNEX I: SUMMARY OF LEGAL FRAMEWORKS, INTERVENTIONS, AND DISABILITY TYPES

Table 13: Summary Table on Disability Inclusive Education

RQ	Country	Disability Laws/UNCRPD	Relevant Policies	Interventions/ Key Documents	Disability Types
RQ1	Jordan	Law 20 of 2017 CRPD Signed 2007 CRPD Ratified 2008	10 Year Inclusive Education Strategy Education Strategy Plan 2021	GIZ PROMISE Inclusive Education Pilot School Project USAID Start Up Program Mercy Corps Inclusive Education Pilot School Project UNICEF Jordan (Intersectional approach).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existing laws have a particular focus on those with visible disabilities making those with non-visible disabilities less represented in existing disability laws. 2. DPO's interventions focused on disabilities that their organizations catered to, and had a particular focus on the type of disabilities for which that their organizations cater. In the context of this research, these were hearing, visual and physical disabilities. It seems that invisible disabilities tend not to be identified and or addressed in different countries of the region. 3. Indeed, disability inclusive education- related interventions may have a particular focus on those with lower levels of

					<p>disabilities as opposed to also including those with more complex disabilities.</p> <p>4. Respondents from UN agencies and donor agencies revealed that their interventions did not focus on a specific type of disability, but rather on all children. The gradual approach was also revealed to be applied, meaning, starting to cater for those with mild disabilities before moving to those with more severe disabilities.</p> <p>5. The focus on visible disabilities was also apparent in existing initiatives such as hearing disabilities, visual, and physical disabilities. None of the interventions mentioned targeting those with mental health issues or learning disabilities. Cognitive related difficulties, such as, those with multiple disabilities were not revealed by any of the respondents to be among the population included in their interventions.</p>
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	Lebanon	Law 220 of 2000 CRPD Signed 2007 CRPD Ratified n/a	5 Year Education Sector Plan (2022)	Learning Centre for the Deaf UNICEF and MoE Inclusive Education Project	
	Egypt	Law of 2018 CRPD Signed 2007 CRPD Ratified 2008	Not mentioned in section	No mentioned in section	
	WB&G	Law of 2014 CRPD Signed N/A CRPD Ratified 2014 (Accession)	Inclusive Education Strategy 2015	Youth Association for the Blind (DPO)	
	Morocco	No mentioned in section CRPD Signed 2007 CRPD Ratified 2009	Inclusive Education Policy of 2019 Schools for Equity, Quality and Advancement (2015–2030)	UNICEF and MoE Inclusive Education National Project USAID Initiatives Deaf Children Hearing Through Technology ‘Improving Deaf Children’s Reading Through Technology’	
	Libya	No 5 of 1987 CRPD Signed 2008	No mentioned in section	No mentioned in section	

		CRPD Ratified 2018			
	Yemen	No 61 of 1991 CRPD Signed 2007 CRPD Ratified 2009	No mentioned in section	No mentioned in section	
	Algeria	Law of 2002 CRPD Signed 2007 CRPD Ratified 2009	No mentioned in section	No mentioned in section	
RQ1a	MENA			2014 overview of Disability in the Arab Region (UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA))	
	MENA			2018 overview of Disability in the Arab Region (UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA))	
	MENA		Regional Guidebook to Improve Disability Data Collection and Analysis in the Arab Countries (ESCWA 2018)		

	Lebanon			UNICEF and MoE Inclusive Education Project (Lesson Drawn)	
	Jordan			GIZ PROMISE Inclusive Education Pilot School Project USAID Start Up Program Mercy Corps Inclusive Education Pilot School Project (Lesson Drawn in the future)	
RQ2	Jordan	Desk review identified as relevant article 21 of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 20, 2017 developing rules for admission	.	Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities supports students with disabilities by providing sign language, laptops, assistive devices, and by developing guidelines for HE on accessibility and assistance including accessibility, assistive technologies, teaching and using sign language, disability inclusive education and staff capacity building. University of Jordan, the Edu4ALL project aims at empowering students with	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A respondent from Egypt explained that there are gaps in terms of implementation and translation of frameworks into practice. As a result, students with visual impairments cannot access, for instance, math or science courses and have to choose art. 2. The Ministry of HE decided that students with disabilities who score at least 50% on the simplified exam can join universities. However, in reality, there is no preparation for students at school level. For example, students reach university

				<p>disabilities academically, socially, and psychologically. The project will establish an “Inclusive Education Unit” that follows the international standards with the objective of equality in education, activities, and services for students with disabilities</p>	<p>without having learned how to write. They can join the engineering department, but they can’t write. Also, students with visual impairment don’t learn computer skills in high school although it is crucial. The majority attend special schools where they are taught only to read braille. There should be coordination between the ministries of basic education and higher education.”</p>
	Iraq	<p>Article 15 [II] of law 38, 2013, referring to “providing opportunities for public and private education as well as vocational and higher education for people with disabilities and the special needs for those capable of it.”. Article 15 [II] and 15 [III] (duties of the MoE and HE) refer to the (Reference The Iraqi Alliance of Disability Parallel Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons</p>			<p>3. KII (Jordan) KII respondent referred to agreements of the HCD with four universities, in addition to being part of a national committee working to integrate and mainstream access requirements for different disabilities. (hearing, visual as well as some intellectual disabilities).</p> <p>4. “Another challenge is the quality of the education provided: there are 14 schools for the deaf in Lebanon. Only four of them reach the ninth grade, and</p>

		with Disability (CRPD)			when students graduate from the 9th grade, their reading and writing abilities are at the level of the fifth grade.” (Lebanon).
	Yemen	Law 61, of 1999. According to the report , while the law does not refer to primary and secondary education for students with disability, it guarantees the right to education at tertiary and vocational training level, giving priority to students with disability.			5. A 2016 World Bank paper on Disability in the Palestinian Territories refers to unavailability of special education programs for all types of disabilities for secondary education, as mainstream schools mainly focus on accommodating students with mild and moderate physical disabilities, scarcely addressing mental and other disabilities.
	Egypt	Law on the Rights of Persons with Disability (2018)		In Egypt, the ongoing US-Egypt HE initiative , Local Scholarship for Public Universities. American University of Cairo (AUC) developed a Student Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. Erasmus+ initiative PACES project (Progression of	6. Interventions on disability inclusive education at the HE level are limited and tend to address students with visual, hearing and physical disabilities. (Summery). 7. USAID 2017 Needs Assessment of Persons with Disabilities in Egyptian Public Universities & Regional Technical Colleges identifies barriers faced by

				Accessibility Centers in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in North Africa)	students with disability during pre-HE in Egypt.
	Algeria	Law 02-09 of 2002 sets as target compulsory education and vocational training for children and adolescents with disability.			<p>8. As an example, barriers faced by students with visual disability include limited training in the use of braille and various assistive technologies that are needed for success in higher education.</p> <p>9. Success in higher education for students with hearing disability is hindered by limited access to quality education and accommodations such as Egyptian sign language.</p>
	Palestine WB&G			<p>A West Bank and Gaza WBG cooperation effort between a school for deaf students and the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) in 2014 resulted in the enrollment of most of 160 deaf students to IUG.</p> <p>In 2019, there were 46 students with disabilities enrolled at BZU, with <i>physical and visual impairments</i>. The students enrolled in IT, science, education, commerce, arts, and sharia and law. Both universities are, as well, very active in regard to advocacy and changing</p>	<p>10. Similarly, students with physical disabilities face barriers related to transportation to school and physical and built environmental barriers at school, including classrooms on higher floors, no elevator and/or inaccessible toilets.</p> <p>11. Note: Above three examples of barriers that different types of disabilities face in Egypt's HE.</p>

				attitudes towards students with disabilities, through workshops and work with civil society organizations (CSO). Both the above were taken from a report thus no interventions link.	<p>12. A further emerging theme linked to interventions, from both the desk review and KII, concerns the prevalence of students with visual, physical, and hearing disabilities enrolled in higher education. A respondent (Egypt) quoted: “in Egyptian universities students with visual disabilities are more represented.”</p> <p>13. Desk review in West Bank & Gaza shows that students with mild to moderate hearing, visual, and physical impairments are more likely to be enrolled in HE.</p>
	Tunisia		National Higher Education Equity Policy lists students with disability as target category.		
	Morocco			Erasmus+ initiative PACES project (Progression of Accessibility Centers in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in North Africa)	
RQ3	Jordan	Law n. 31 of 2007 on the Rights of Disabled Persons sets quotas to ensure that persons with disability are part of the workforce.		“The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training Corporation, in coordination with the Higher Council for People with Disabilities, are mandated to incorporate measures that guarantee assimilation of persons with disabilities into the	

		<p>Law No. 20, of 2017 prohibits the exclusion of a person from work, training, or the opportunity of progression in their careers based on, or due to, their disability</p>		<p>policies, strategies, plans and programs related to work, vocational and technical education in order to facilitate equal opportunities, as well as preparing vocational training curriculum in braille”</p> <p>However, Knowledge 4 Development (K4D): The current situation of persons with disability in Jordan (2018) reports that in Jordan 2014 data suggest that employment of persons with disabilities was 16.%. </p> <p>In Jordan, in 2013 the HCD, with USAID and FHI 360, developed the Thirty Questions Guide: Achieving Equal Opportunities in the Workplace for Persons with Disabilities</p>	
	Algeria	<p>In Algeria, through Executive Decree No. 06-145 of 26, of 2006, a National Council for Persons with Disabilities was set up; it includes a</p>			

		<p>“joint technical committee bringing together all stakeholders concerned with employment.”</p> <p>However, there is no government data on the employment of persons with disabilities. According to the law, one percent of jobs should be allocated to people with disabilities, or face a fine, only few businesses have abided by the law and the law is generally not enforced.</p>			
	Egypt	<p>The five percent quota of jobs for people with disabilities established by law is not enforced. As this report is being prepared, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) is</p>		<p>U.S.-Egypt Higher Education Initiative, within the Disability Service Centers, careers support is provided to students enrolled in the Egyptian Public Universities partnering with the project.</p>	

		conducting the first national survey of people with disabilities (Daily News Egypt).			
	Iraq	Law 38 (2013) on the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs; the law states that “ministries, all institutions not related to a ministry and public sector companies shall allocate no less than five percent of their jobs [... to] persons with disabilities and special needs.” (page 14). The same report cites persons with disabilities saying that employers do not offer jobs to persons with disabilities “since they believe they are not productive” (page 14).			

	Lebanon	Law 220/2000 for persons with disabilities sets employment quota but is not enforced.		<p>K4D Disability in Lebanon, 2018, report, there are no initiatives at state level to make workplaces inclusive and suited to welcome persons with disabilities as employees.; nor There are no rehabilitation programs available to enable persons with disabilities to perform the jobs required in the labor market.</p> <p>In Lebanon, the Economic and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities project, was implemented in partnership between the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union, Christian Aid UK, and the Young Men’s Christian Association.</p>
	Morocco	K4D Disability in North Africa, 2018 , reports that a set quota of seven percent employment for people with disabilities in public service is far from being achieved.		<p>HI implements a project on socio-economic Integration of People with Disabilities. The project aims at providing support to persons with disability to gain access to the various financing mechanisms for income generating activities.</p>

RQ4	Morocco		Inclusive Education Strategy (2019)		
	WB&G		The Palestine Inclusive Education Strategy		
	Egypt			Amideast targets marginalized and disadvantaged students with disabilities under the disability inclusive education scholarship program funded by USAID	
	Jordan			UNESCO and GIZ are working with the MoE and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure that disability inclusive education targets students with disabilities at high risk of drop-out, including the most marginalized, the refugees, and those with low income. International NGO in Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan , targeting teachers (training) and children.	
	Lebanon				In Lebanon, the community-based non-formal disability inclusive education initiatives

				<p>implemented by several stakeholders, including UNICEF partners, target children living in remote areas, refugee camps, vulnerable communities.</p> <p>The MoE and Higher Education’s pilot disability inclusive education program in 30 public schools in collaboration with UNICEF and partners targets economically and/or socially vulnerable children with disabilities (UNICEF Lebanon, 2018).</p>
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Table 14: Disability Inclusive Education Interventions

Country	Intervention BE (RQ1)	Intervention HE (RQ2)	Transition to Work force (RQ3)	Underserved Students (RQ4)
Egypt		<p>In Egypt, the ongoing US-Egypt HE initiative, Local Scholarship for Public Universities.</p> <p>American University of Cairo (AUC) developed a Student Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.</p> <p>Erasmus+ initiative</p> <p>PACES project (Progression of Accessibility Centers in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in North Africa)</p>	<p>U.S.-Egypt Higher Education Initiative within the Disability Service Centers, careers support is provided to students enrolled in the Egyptian Public Universities partnering with the project.</p>	<p>Amideast targets marginalized and disadvantaged students with disabilities under the disability inclusive education scholarship program funded by USAID.</p>
Jordan	<p>GIZ PROMISE Inclusive Education Pilot School Project</p> <p>USAID Start Up Program</p> <p>Mercy Corps Inclusive Education Pilot School Project</p>	<p>Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities supports students with disabilities by providing sign language, laptops, assistive devices, and by developing guidelines for HE on accessibility and assistance including accessibility, assistive technologies, teaching and using sign language, disability inclusive education and staff capacity building.</p>	<p>“The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training Corporation, in coordination with the Higher Council for People with Disabilities, are mandated to incorporate measures that guarantee assimilation of persons with disabilities into the policies, strategies, plans and programs related to work, vocational and technical education in order to facilitate equal opportunities, as well</p>	<p>UNESCO and GIZ are working with the MoE and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure that disability inclusive education targets students with disabilities at high risk of drop-out, including the most marginalized, the refugees, and those with low income. (Note this is the same as this GIZ PROMISE Inclusive Education Pilot School Project)</p>

	<p>UNICEF Jordan (Intersectional approach).</p>	<p>University of Jordan, the Edu4ALL project aims at empowering students with disabilities academically, socially, and psychologically.</p>	<p>as preparing vocational training curriculum in braille” (KII reported) In Jordan, in 2013 the HCD, with USAID and FHI 360, developed the Thirty Questions Guide: Achieving Equal Opportunities in the Workplace for Persons with Disabilities</p>	<p>International NGO in Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, targeting teachers (training) and children.</p>
Lebanon	<p>Learning Centre for the Deaf</p> <p>UNICEF and MoE Inclusive Education Project</p>		<p>In Lebanon, the Economic and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities project, was implemented in partnership between the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union, Christian Aid UK, and the Young Men’s Christian Association.</p>	<p>In Lebanon, the community-based non-formal disability inclusive education initiatives implemented by several stakeholders, including UNICEF partners, target children living in remote areas, refugee camps, vulnerable communities.</p>
Morocco	<p>UNICEF and MoE Inclusive Education National Project</p> <p>USAID Initiatives Deaf Children Hearing Through Technology ‘Improving Deaf Children’s Reading Through Technology’</p>	<p>Erasmus+ initiative</p> <p>PACES project (Progression of Accessibility Centers in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities in North Africa)</p>	<p>HI implements a project on socio-economic Integration of People with Disabilities.</p>	

West Bank and Gaza	Youth Association for the Blind (DPO)	<p>A West Bank and Gaza WBG cooperation effort between a school for deaf students and the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) in 2014 resulted in the enrollment of most of 160 deaf students to IUG.</p> <p>In 2019, there were 46 students with disabilities enrolled at BZU, with <i>physical and visual impairments</i>. The students enrolled in IT, science, education, commerce, arts, and sharia and law. Both universities are, as well, very active in regard to advocacy and changing attitudes towards students with disabilities, through workshops and work with civil society organizations (CSO).</p> <p>Both the above were taken from a report thus no interventions link.</p>		
Yemen				

ANNEX II: STUDY METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted over three phases. During phase one, the inception report was reviewed, finalized, and approved. Phase two entailed an in-depth analysis of available literature, the completion of planned key informant interviews (KIIs), and the finalization of this study report. Phase three is expected to include further collaboration with USAID and other organizations involved in disability education in the region. Collaboration may include deeper case studies and/or designing and executing a training for USAID staff based on the final report in collaboration with complementary studies, or other forms of engagement with UNICEF. Additionally, the third phase is expected to include the development and delivery of materials in workshop format and/or a deeper case study building on UNICEF's case study work in the region. However, this phase is not expanded on in this report since a final decision about the format of the third phase has yet to be determined.

Data collection consisted of in-depth literature review on legislation, policies, and interventions on Disability Inclusive Education across the target countries. Based on the literature review findings, the team conducted a limited number of KIIs to gain a more robust understanding of the current environment in which interventions are being implemented and gaps between policies and practices.

DATA COLLECTION

DESK REVIEW

For each country, the team created a list of available literature relative to the components identified: policies, service delivery/interventions, and disability types. The review focused on the analysis of documentation available in the [UNESCO Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews \(PEER\) platform](#) and on documentation garnered by team members at country and regional levels. The literature review focused on accessing publicly available documents. These included the following: Ministry of Education (MOE) and/or other line ministries' policies, legislation, regulations, frameworks, resolutions, ratification of conventions (Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), CRPD), reports, assessments, evaluations, analyses prepared either at MOE level, other line ministries or governmental entities or by organizations (United Nations, LNGOs, INGOs) and associations (of persons with disabilities and parents of children and youth with disabilities). Additionally, peer-reviewed and other publications were reviewed to support a comprehensive scan of relevant literature.

Secondary Data. Where possible, the literature review on disability type included secondary data sets, such as, statistics published by [UNESCO in Global Education Monitoring \(GEM\)](#) reports, UNICEF reporting, or other data on students with disability, available data on prevalence of disabilities in BE settings from research studies, evaluations, assessments.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

KIIs aimed at contextualizing findings from the literature review and garnering respondents' knowledge and details at country level that was not available from the literature review. Interviews, based on the study questions, explored the following:

- *Implementation:* implementation of disability inclusive education policies at BE, HE, and workforce level; perceived successes/gaps.

- *Interventions*: early detection, school accessibility, support, and accommodations for students/teachers with disability were examined at the school level.
- *Referral System*: early detection, coordination between school and social/health services. Perceived successes/gaps.
- *Workplace Level*: accessibility, support, and accommodations for young workers with disabilities. Perceived gaps.
- *Disability Types*: prevalence of disability types in school settings at BE and HE level and at workplace level (perceived).
- *Other Factors*: conflict, local customs, and financial resources were examined at the country level. Awareness about inclusive education at policy makers and community level.

The KII protocol included key elements such as respondent’s confidentiality, consent, and ability to end the interview at any time. Additionally, respondents were interviewed in the language they felt more comfortable with, with a choice between English and Arabic. Respondents were contacted by a team member to schedule the interview at a suitable date and time and interview questions were developed based on the research questions. As KIIs were conducted remotely, the KII tool was developed taking into consideration the respondent’s attention and fatigue levels. In order to encourage and facilitate respondents’ participation, the KII tool consisted of structured interview questions (multiple choice questions), and semi-structured/open questions. In order to facilitate respondents’ answers, in two instances the team shared the interview questions with respondents prior to the KII. Overall, each KII was conducted over approximately a one-hour timeframe.

KII SAMPLE

KIIs sampling was purposeful and included institutional and community representatives. Respondents at the institutional level included MOE representatives; donors, UN Agencies, INGOs, LINGOs engaged in Disability Inclusive Education programming. Respondents at the community level included DPOs representatives. KII sampling included an initial group of prospective respondents whose contacts were kindly provided by UNICEF, USAID, and team members. From that initial group of respondents, the team used a snowballing approach to identify prospective KII respondents. While overall very successful, the snowballing approach presented, as well, some limitations, discussed in the limitations section.

The KII sample size and respondents’ category in each country was determined by the literature review mapping, as well as on USAID recommendations on countries and respondents’ selection.

Throughout the study, data collection planning considered USAID disability inclusive education programming, as well as research restrictions in the countries included in the study. As an example, based on the above, KIIs were not conducted in Syria, Iraq, and Tunisia. KIIs with MOE representatives were also limited. During phase two, the team conducted a total of 26 KIIs. Figure 10 illustrates the KII conducted, disaggregated by country and type of respondents.

Figure 10: KII Sample Countries

This study focused on the 11 countries in USAID’s MENA portfolio. The study team conducted interviews in seven countries as well as with regional representatives



DATA ANALYSIS

DESK REVIEW

The literature review findings on policies and legislation for each country was categorized internally by the team, using an adapted version of the UNICEF ‘Assessing a Country’s Situation with regard to Specific Legislation/Policies to Implement Disability-Inclusive Education’ (Annex I) and “Assessing a country’s situation with regards to Service Delivery to implement Disability Inclusive Education and transition to workforce” matrix (Annex II), in addition to a cumulative country score matrix. The figure above resulted in an overview of each country, enabling a targeted literature review and KIIs to fill gaps and elaborate on interesting cases.

KII ANALYSIS

Given the relatively limited number of KIIs, primary data from KIIs notes were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using a simple tally sheet. The tally sheet specified the interview questions and answers; answers included a country and respondent categorization, as per KII labeling. KII coding was created based on each answer; emerging themes and key quotes were cataloged during the analysis process. KIIs added depth to the desk review but were neither representative nor covered all countries across the MENA region.

LIMITATIONS

The study team encountered the following limitations and biases in undertaking this research study:

Availability of Information. Available literature often provided an incomplete overview of the country, resulting in time-consuming efforts geared towards information gathering.

Regional Data. Aggregated data available from studies conducted at ‘regional’ level were often impossible to utilize, given that very different countries were part of those studies.

Representation. The snowballing method did provide the study with contacts of relevant KII respondents that included the following: MoE employees, donors, implementing partners and DPOs. At the same time, it posed limitations in terms of getting an equal representation of participants from each of the categories described above. For example, the snowball method led to a large number of inclusive education implementing partners (IP) being interviewed.

Stakeholder Coordination. The snowballing method resulted in waves of KII contacts, especially in terms of timing. The above required considerable efforts in order to coordinate the respondents’ availability to the interview with the team’s availability. It ultimately resulted in a slightly extended KII timeframe.

Gender Analysis. While disability inclusive education is the principal lens for this study, additional demographics, including sex, indigenous populations, geography, refugee status, were examined and disaggregated, where possible, throughout all components of the study to provide an intersectional perspective on disability inclusive education. However, there was very little gender disaggregated data about students with disabilities or apart from general statements about gender being an important aspect of inclusive education.

ANNEX III: STUDY FRAMEWORK

The framework considers the four main areas of the study: (1) BE, (2) HE, (3) marginalized/hard to reach communities, and (4) transition to workforce. These areas were analyzed at the Service Delivery and Enabling Environment level. Furthermore, the Service Delivery study area was explored from the point of view of supply, quality, and demand, because that level of investigation will determine whether inclusion for students/workers with disability can take place within the education and transition to workforce contexts. The Enabling Environment was examined in relation to laws and policies, data and evidence, leadership and management and finance because these aspects constitute the foundation of any action aimed at establishing, developing, or improving disability inclusive initiatives. Table 15 below provides an overview of the analytic framework:

Table 15: Study Framework

STUDY FRAMEWORK				
SERVICE DELIVERY				
Basic Education	Higher Education	Marginalized/ Inaccessible Communities	Transition to Workforce	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers: initial and in-service training; pedagogical support; classroom support. ▪ Infrastructure: classrooms/playgrounds/open areas; toilets/washing facilities; transport to and from school. ▪ Learning Materials: Braille and Audiobooks; sign language resources; easy read/write versions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills development opportunities ▪ Job placement services ▪ Safe access to workplace ▪ Adapted tools/equipment 	Supply
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curriculum: relevance; flexibility and adaptability; exams accommodations. ▪ Student assessment: screening; referral; continuous learning assessment. ▪ Learning support: assistive products; individual learning plans; individual support; students counseling. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual learning plans ▪ Individual support ▪ Study/work counseling 	Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attitudes: teachers and administrators; parents and communities; peers/ students. ▪ Costs: direct and hidden costs; additional support costs; opportunity costs ▪ Benefits: opportunities for progression; social inclusion and citizenship; economic empowerment. 				Demand
<p>At Service Delivery level all four study areas share common elements related to the demand; the level of analysis will look at Attitudes, Costs and Benefits.</p> <p>The BE, HE and marginalized/hard to reach communities study areas share common elements related to supply. The level of analysis will include elements related to Teachers (training and support), Infrastructure (Access and transport) and Learning Materials (availability).</p>				

Similarly, BE, HE, marginalized/hard to reach communities share common elements related to quality. The level of analysis will include elements related to Curriculum, Student assessment and Learning support.

The transition to the workforce study area at supply level will be analyzed from the perspective of skills development opportunities, job placement services and adapted tools/equipment. At the quality level the analysis will look at Individual learning plans, Individual support and study/work counseling.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

<p>Laws and Policies: Constitutional provisions; international conventions; rules and regulations; national strategies.</p>	<p>Data and Evidence: definition of disability; Education Management Information System (EMIS) and other databases; HH surveys; research studies; M&E/inspections.</p>	<p>Leadership and Management: management capacity at central and local l/school level; procedures and compliance; cross-sectoral coordination; partnerships, including DPOs.</p>	<p>Finance: allocation to mainstream system; allocation to targeted support; resources from other sectors.</p>	
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At the **Enabling Environment level**, the analysis for all four study areas will consider the aspects of Laws and Policies, Data and Evidence, Leadership and Management and Finance.

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