Sustainable Development Goal 4

Jordan Voluntary National Review Report (2015–2019)

Summary Progress Sheets

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Context

Through its System Strengthening Partnership Programme with Jordan's Ministry of Education, UNESCO is working to strengthen evidence-based strategic policy-making, and coordination in support of the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality and Inclusive Education (SDG4).

This multi-year programme aims to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Education in planning and budgeting, monitoring and reporting, research and evaluation, data and information management, and development coordination and partnerships. In addition, technical support is being provided in data collection, analysis and utilization by reinforcing the Ministry's abilities to maintain, manage and utilize the Open Education Management Information System (OpenEMIS) platform.

Financed through a multi-partner trust fund with generous contributions from Canada and Italy, and in-kind support from Norway, the programme further bolsters the Ministry of Education's capacity to implement, monitor, evaluate and report on activities and results achieved against the Education Strategic Plan 2018–2022 and the National Strategy for Human Resource Development, while also contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG4 and the Education 2030 Agenda.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Education 2030 Agenda

The launch in 2020 of the "Decade of Action: Ten Years to Transform our World" by the United Nations Secretary General provides the opportunity to take stock of achievements towards the 2030 Agenda and to renew momentum for the realization of the SDGs, including Goal 4, and their respective targets.

At a regional level, Arab States and partners, including the Ministry of Education of Jordan, have gathered at three successive Arab Regional Meetings on Education 2030 (AR-MED) between 2015 and 2018,[1] with each meeting resulting in a roadmap outlining firm commitments to transform education systems by enabling countries and partners to generate national momentum towards SDG4, contextualize the Education 2030 Agenda, and promote multi-sectoral and -stakeholder partnerships in support of its achievement.

Against this background, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States launched a regional initiative in 2019 to report on progress and document, through Voluntary National Reviews, national efforts undertaken since 2015 on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Education, including its translation into national plans and strategies. In doing so, UNESCO liaised with all Arab States for the compilation of a synthesized regional report to capture experiences, practices, lessons learned, and recommendations for the coming decade, which will enable UNESCO to effectively support Member States through continued capacity development, and policy and technical guidance. This process further contributes to UNESCO's reporting on SDG4 to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York.

Jordan SDG4 National Review Process

As part of this broader regional initiative, Jordan, through the Jordanian National Commission for UNESCO, has undertaken measures to improve government coordination on SDG4, including with the establishment of a National Committee for the 2030 Education Agenda. The UNESCO Amman Office provided technical support and guidance to the Ministry of Education to assist in the preparation and drafting of the document. Following submission of the first draft in 2019, additional support was provided to update and refine the report while simultaneously strengthening the capacities of the relevant Ministry committees to effectively measure and analyze SDG4 related data and indicators[2]. The final SDG4 Voluntary National Review Report was submitted to UNESCO in December 2020.[3] Below is a summary of the key findings of this flagship document against individual SDG4 targets.

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1. Cairo, Egypt in December 2015; Dubai, United Arab Emirates in March 2017; and Dead Sea, Jordan in November 2018.
2. Official List of SDG 4 Indicators by targets Click Here.
3. To access the Arabic version of the SDG4 Voluntary National Review Report Click here.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
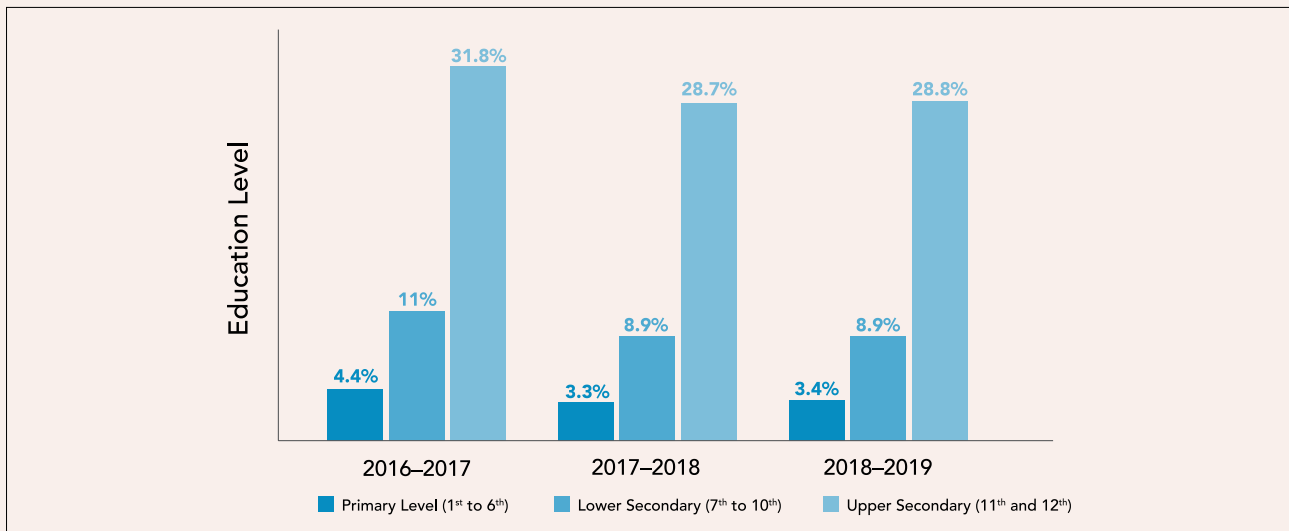
Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Key Findings[4]:

- Basic education (grade 1–10) is compulsory and free for all children over six years of age in Jordan. Second stage of kindergarten (KG2) and secondary education (grades 11 and 12) are free but not compulsory.
- The gross enrolment ratio for basic education has improved over the past 5 years, with 6th grade increasing from 94.4 per cent in 2016–2017 to 96 per cent in 2018–2019, and 10th grade from 84.6 per cent to 88.3 per cent over the same period.
- Results of international learning assessments[5] demonstrate an increase in the percentage of students in primary and secondary education achieving the minimum learning outcomes or above in reading and mathematics between 2015–2019. For example, the proportion of students in 2nd and 3rd grades who achieved the minimum or above in the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment improved from 13 per cent in 2014–2015 to 24.1 per cent in 2018–2019.
- In 2016–2017, the completion rate was 97.6 per cent for students in 6th grade, 86.8 per cent for 10th grade, and 47.8 per cent for 12th grade.
- While the overall number of out-of-school children in basic education has reduced, the proportional decline remains modest as demonstrated in the table below.
- In 2018–2019, 0.88 per cent of students at primary level, and two per cent of students at secondary level were considered overage in their classroom, primarily resulting from grade repetition.

Figure 1: Percentage of out-of-school students by education level by year

Figure 1: Percentage of out-of-school students by education level by year. Bar chart showing Education Level by year. 2016–2017: Primary Level (1st to 6th) 4.4%, Lower Secondary (7th to 10th) 11%, Upper Secondary (11th and 12th) 31.8%. 2017–2018: Primary Level 3.3%, Lower Secondary 8.9%, Upper Secondary 28.7%. 2018–2019: Primary Level 3.4%, Lower Secondary 8.9%, Upper Secondary 28.8%.

Target 4.2: Ensure that all girls and boys have access to good quality development and care in early childhood and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education by 2030.

Key Findings:

- Early childhood education in Jordan comprises three levels: nursery, first stage of kindergarten (KG1), and second stage of kindergarten (KG2). The Ministry of Social Development and the private sector are responsible for nursery level and KG1, while the Ministry of Education delivers KG2, which it has worked on accrediting as a free stage of education.

- The National Strategy for Human Resource Development outlines several targets to achieve by 2025 to help provide early childhood services and programmes through innovative approaches that bring about positive changes in the early childhood education and development system.

- The first domain of the Ministry's Education Strategic Plan 2018–2022 is also dedicated to early childhood education and development and includes a significant focus on access and quality.

- In 2017–2018, the percentage of children aged 3–4 years who were developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being was 70.7 per cent (66.1 per cent male and 75.9 per cent female). The Ministry of Education has conducted numerous trainings for both teachers and parents on social health, nutrition, and protection in early childhood to improve this number.

- The percentage of children who participate in an organized learning programme one year before formal education increased from 60.4 per cent in 2016–2017 to 63.3 per cent in 2018–2019.

- The proportion of children under five years of age who experienced a positive and stimulating home learning environment was 98 per cent (97.7 per cent male and 98.4 per cent female) in 2017–2018.

- The gross enrollment ratio of children in kindergarten who are willing to learn based on the Early Development Instrument tool decreased from 76 per cent in 2016–2017 to 73 per cent in 2017–2018.

- The combined enrolment ratio of KG1 and KG2 improved slightly from 35.1 per cent in 2016–2017 to 38.7 per cent in 2018–2019.

Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Key Findings:

- The percentage of youth and adults who participated in formal and non-formal education and training decreased from 26.2 per cent (24.5 per cent male and 28 per cent female) in 2016–2017 to 25 per cent (22.7 per cent male and 27.4 per cent female) in 2017–2018.

- While post-secondary education is not free in Jordan, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has worked to expand the admission base for tertiary education and to allocate places for students from poorer regions. In addition, funding opportunities have been identified for students in-need to prevent dropout. As a result, the gross enrollment ratio in higher education increased from 16.8 per cent (14.4 per cent male and 19.6 per cent female) in 2016–2017 to 22.9 per cent (19.8 per cent male and 26.5 per cent female) in 2017–2018.

- However, the youth participation rate in technical and vocational education programmes (ages 15 to 24 years) has decreased as follows:

Figure 2: youth participation rate in technical and vocational education programmes

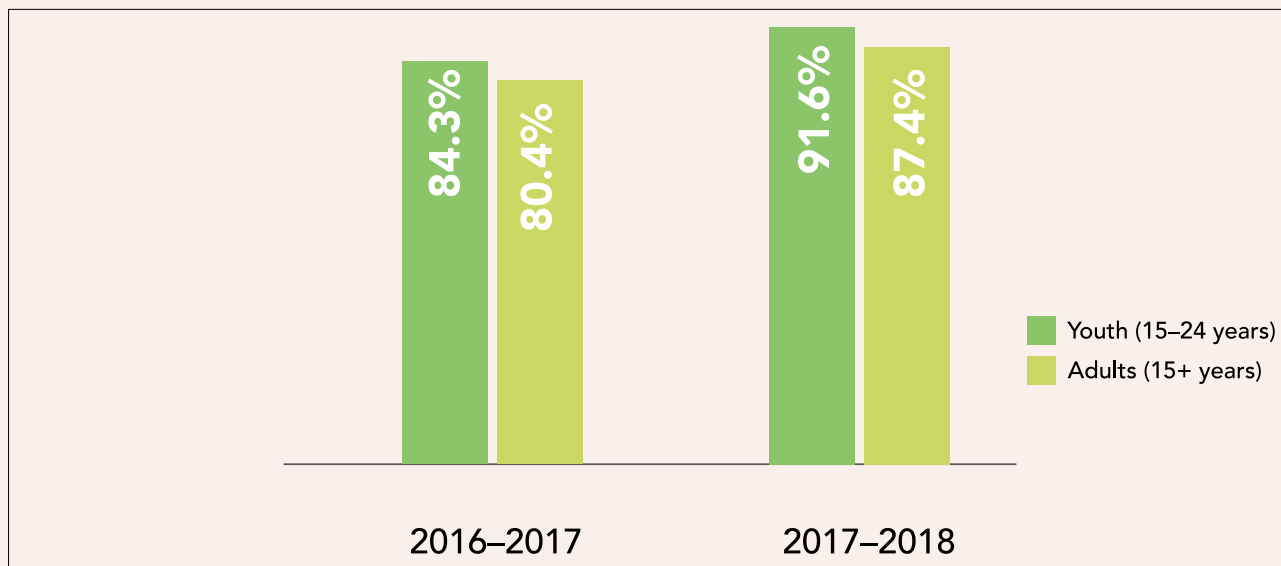| 2016–2017	2017–2018	Total
3.6% / 4.9%	2.2% / 4.3%	4.2% (2016–2017) / 3.2% (2017–2018)
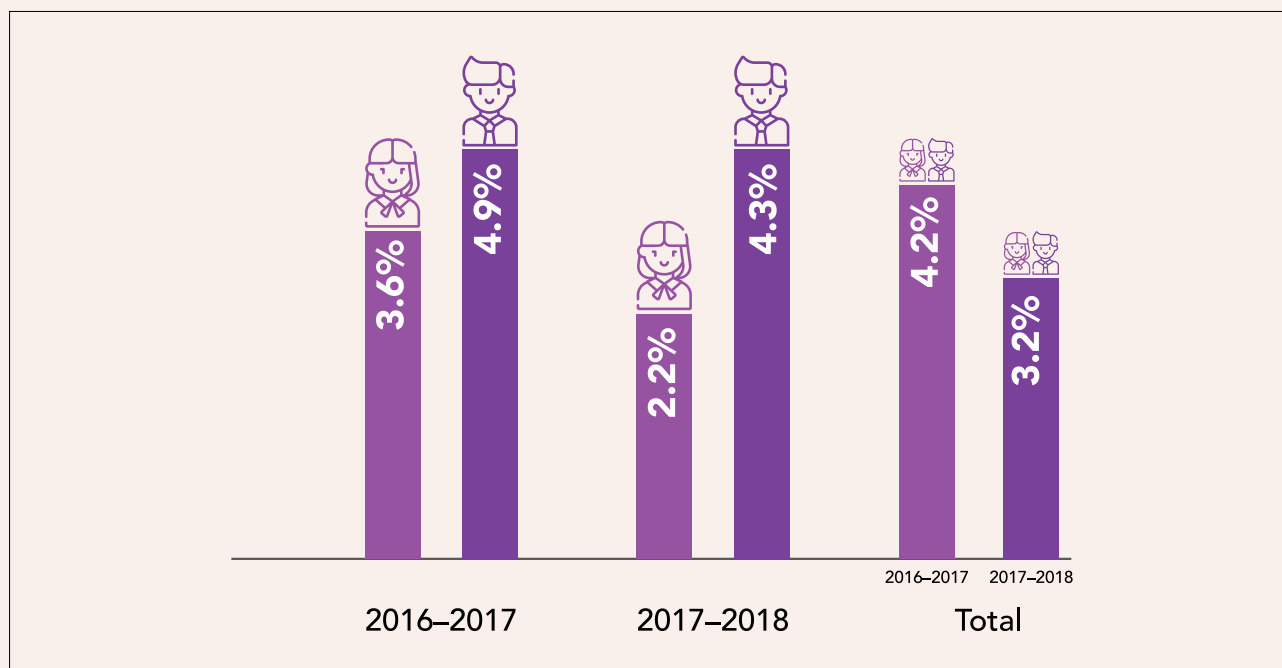
Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.

Key Findings:

- The percentage of youth aged 15–24 years who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills improved from 73.3 per cent in 2016–2017 to 74.4 per cent 2017–2018.
- The high percentage of young people and adults with information and communications technology skills is attributed to government policies and programmes, including the Education Strategic Plan, that provide learning opportunities for adults and youth to gain technical skills for entry to the labour market.
- Between 2016–2017 and 2017–2018, there was an increase in the percentage of youth and adults who have completed at least a minimum level of education (general/vocational/technical). This progress is largely attributable to the efforts of the Ministry of Education to prepare qualified cadres for all vocational streams in alignment with labour market requirements, as well as accrediting certificates for the industrial, agricultural, hospitality and tourism, and home economics sectors.

84.3%
80.4%
91.6%
87.4%

2016–2017   2017–2018

Youth (15–24 years)
Adults (15+ years)

Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

Key Findings:

- Jordan had made very good progress in eliminating gender disparities in education. The gender parity index stands at 0.98 (2018–2019), indicating near full equality of participation between female and male students.
- The gender parity index for teachers is 2.35, indicating a significantly higher proportion of female to male teachers.
- Females students increasingly outperform their male peers in secondary level final exams (see table below).

Figure 4: Percentage of students passing the secondary level exam by Gender by year

53.1%   45.8%   50.3%   60.5%   46.9%   54.7%   66.9%   48.6%   58.3%

2016–2017   2017–2018   2018–2019
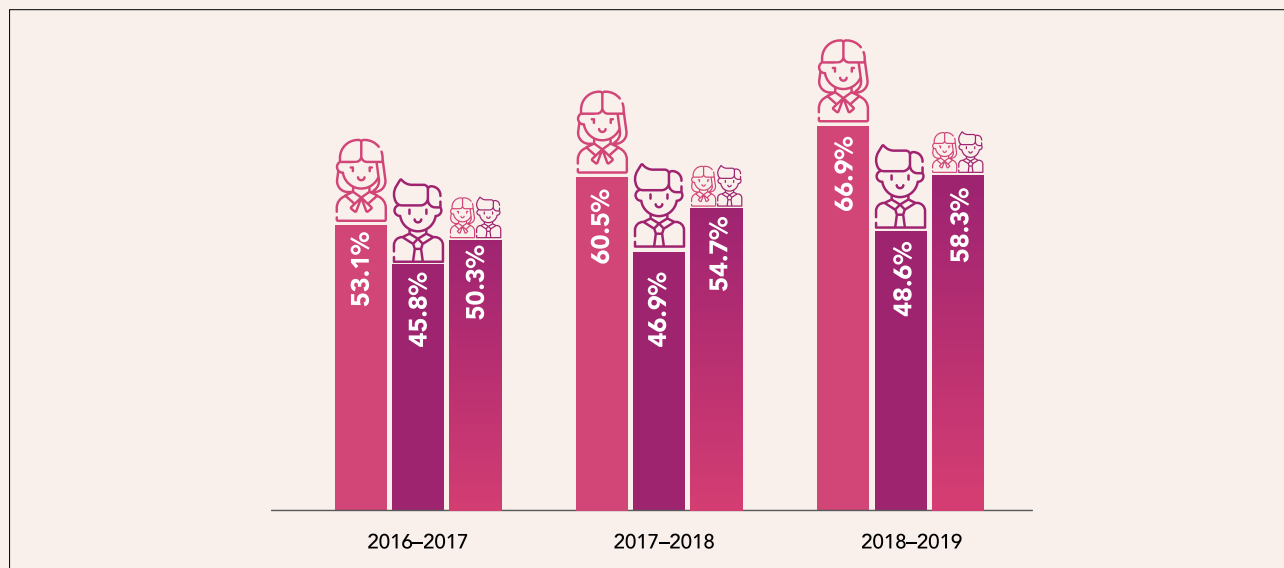
- In 2017–2018, the average number of students for each teacher was 15.4 (25.6 for male and 11 for female).
- While Arabic is the official language of education in Jordan, the Ministry of Education has licensed some schools to teach in other languages than Arabic for students whose mother tongue is not Arabic. The percentage of primary students whose mother tongue is the language of instruction was 99.5 per cent in 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019.
- Total government spending on primary and secondary education in 2019 reached 964,280,000 Jordanian dinars, accounting for 3.2 per cent of total GDP.

Target 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

Key Findings:
- The youth literacy rate increased from 97.1 per cent in 2016–2017 to 98.2 per cent in 2017–2018.
- Despite the efforts of the Ministry of Education and its partners, the total illiteracy rate for adults increased from 6.1 per cent to 6.5 per cent over the same period. This is attributed to the large number of Syrian refugees not enrolled in Ministry programmes.
- Adults with the necessary numeracy skills slightly decreased from 89.9 per cent (92.4 per cent males and 87.3 per cent females) in 2016–2017 to 89.8 per cent (91.8 per cent males and 87.6 per cent females) in 2017–2018.

Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Key Findings:
- The Voluntary National Review Report provides examples of activities carried out to improve global citizenship education and education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights. This includes programmes implemented to enhance the values of humanity and leadership capabilities.
- Human rights concepts have been incorporated in academic curricula and books, and workshops have been held to incorporate gender concepts into textbooks on social studies, Islamic education, Arabic language, and vocational education.
- The Ministry of Education has worked with the Ministry of Environment to implement various environmental programmes, including 65 awareness sessions targeting 600 students to increase their knowledge on the environment and earth sciences.

Target 4.A: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Key Findings:

- As of 2018–2019, all schools have electricity, drinking water, and separate toilets for males and females.
- The Internet is available in 92 per cent of schools while computers are available in 73 per cent of schools (2018–2019).
- Since 2016, the percentage of schools with access ramps for persons with disabilities remains at 50 per cent despite the increase in the total number of schools across the country. The number of schools with health facilities for persons with disabilities increased from 100 in 2016–2017 to 150 in 2017–2018. However, this number remained the same in 2018–2019.
- The development of several policies, mechanisms, and procedures, including Student Discipline Instructions No. 5 of 2017 and the activation of students' complaints hotline, contributed to a decrease in the annual proportion of students experiencing violence, corporal punishment, harassment, discrimination, and sexual assault from three in 2016 to two per cent in 2019.

Target 4.C[6]: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

Key Findings:

- The ratio of students to each trained teacher has improved for pre-primary and primary education. However, despite Ministry efforts, the percentage for lower and upper secondary slightly decreased (see table below).

Figure 5: ratio of students to each trained teacher

| 2016–2017 | 2017–2018 | 2018–2019 |
| Pre-primary education | Primary education | Lower secondary education | Upper secondary education |
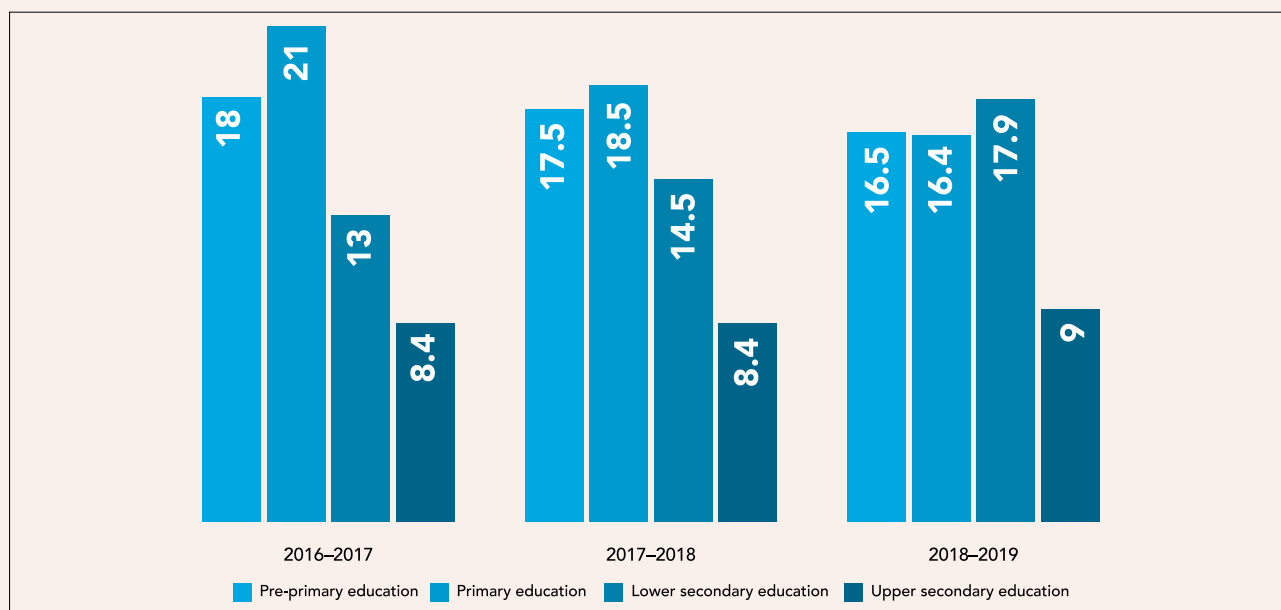
6. Target 4.B is not applicable for Jordan

- The average teacher salary is equal to employees in similar jobs with the same academic requirements.
- Between 2016–2017 and 2017–2018, the teacher attrition rate decreased from 8.3 to 8 per cent.
- The Ministry of Education offers a social welfare package to teachers, including full university scholarships for their children, health insurance, and a professional allowance which has helped mitigate the number of teachers leaving the profession across education levels.
- All teachers are required to have at least a bachelor's degree to obtain a teaching permit in Jordan. In addition, all new teachers must attend two trainings, specifically, a qualification training programme for new teachers and a professional diploma for pre-service teachers. Both trainings focus on the theoretical and fundamental aspects of general and specialized pedagogy and the skills necessary for all teachers to provide a professional teaching experience in their classes in accordance with education best practices. The trainings primarily target public school teachers, resulting in all new public school teachers and 70 per cent of private school teachers having attained the minimum formal teacher training requirements between 2016–2017 and 2018–2019.
- Significant progress was made in the proportion of teachers who received in-service training between 2016–2017 and 2017–2018, with an increase from 52.4 per cent to 80.4 per cent respectively. This increase resulted from the Ministry providing in-service trainings for all enrolled teachers in parallel with the annual new teachers trainings in 2017–2018. The percentage of in-service teachers trained declined to 46.1 per cent in 2018–2019 as all teachers had already received the required trainings.

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