

Jordan

Country programme document 2013-2017

The draft country programme document for Jordan (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.10) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its 2012 annual session (5-8 June 2012).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2012 second regular session of the Executive Board on 14 September 2012.

<i>Basic data</i> [†] (2010 unless otherwise stated)	
Child population (millions, under 18 years)	2.7
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	22
Underweight (% , moderate and severe, 2009)	2 ^a
(% , urban/rural, poorest/richest)	2/2, 3/0
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, adjusted, 2008)	59 ^b
Primary school attendance (% , net male/female, 2007)	99/99 ^c
Survival rate to last primary grade (% , male/female)	..
Use of improved drinking water sources (% , 2008)	96
Use of improved sanitation facilities (% , 2008)	98
Adult HIV prevalence (% , 15-49 years of age, male/female)	..
Child labour (% , 5-14 years of age, male/female)	..
Birth registration (% , under 5 years of age)	..
(% , male/female, urban/rural, poorest/richest)	..
GNI per capita (US\$)	4 350
One-year-olds immunized against DPT3 (%)	98
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	98

[†] More comprehensive country data on children and women can be found at www.childinfo.org/.

^a Underweight estimates are based on the WHO Child Growth Standards adopted in 2006.

^b 19 deaths per 100,000 live births is the estimate reported in the 2009 Maternal Mortality Study by the Higher Population Council of Jordan.

The Maternal Mortality Estimation Interagency Group (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank, together with independent technical experts) produces internationally comparable sets of maternal mortality data, adjusted for underreporting and misclassification of maternal deaths. For more information, see www.childinfo.org/maternal_mortality.html.

^c Survey data.

Summary of the situation of children and women

1. Jordan is a middle-income country, with a medium human development ranking of 95th among 187 countries on the Human Development Index in 2011. Among its population of 6.2 million, Jordan hosts around 2 million Palestinians and an estimated 450,000–500,000 Iraqis.¹ The country has recorded impressive economic and social indicators in the last decade. The 2010 Millennium Development Goals report confirms achievement of Millennium Development Goal 2 (universal primary education). Goal 5 (maternal health) and Goal 6 (HIV/AIDS) are on track and very likely to be achieved by 2015. Goal 1 (eradication of poverty), Goal 3 (gender equality and empowerment of women) and Goal 4 (child mortality) are achievable if additional measures are taken.²

2. However, following decades of relative economic and political stability, Jordan has recently witnessed rising levels of inflation, an increasing negative balance of

¹ *Iraqis in Jordan 2007 - Their Number and Characteristics*, Fafo, 2007.

² *Keeping the Promise and Achieving Aspirations: Second Millennium Development Goals Report – Jordan*, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation/United Nations, 2010.

trade and stagnating employment, with an overall unemployment rate of 13 per cent (22 per cent for women and 30 per cent for youth aged 15-24).³ The economy depends largely on foreign aid, remittances, services and tourism. The global economic slowdown and regional turmoil have depressed economic growth. The budget deficit remains high, at nearly 10 per cent, excluding grants. Although the Gini index has declined in recent years, reflecting some improvement in income distribution, 13 per cent of the population lives below the national absolute poverty line of \$4 per person per day,⁴ a result of high unemployment, low wages and inflation.

3. Over 17 per cent of children live below the poverty line, in contrast to about 10 per cent of working-age adults and 7 per cent of the elderly. Children make up 57 per cent of the poor.⁵ Poverty results from the lack of resources in rural areas and limited economic opportunities in the main cities. The highest rate of poverty is recorded in the governorate of Mafrqa, at 32 per cent, followed by Maan (24 per cent) and Tafileh (21 per cent), with each governorate including rural and urban areas. However, the majority of the 781,000 poor people are located in the more populated urban governorates of Amman, Irbid and Zarqa.⁶

4. Lack of disaggregated and district-level data continues to hamper the identification and mapping of disparities and families at risk within the governorates, consequently affecting efforts to address the inequities. A number of social protection programmes have been initiated, but concerns remain that they do not reach the most vulnerable groups. Further efforts are needed to improve targeting of interventions, coverage of school-based safety nets, expenditures on untargeted subsidies, such as on liquid petroleum gas and bread, and disparities by gender. There is little information about children with disabilities or the extent to which vulnerable groups can access mainstream education. Children with disabilities benefit from few programmes or resources and constitute one of the most neglected groups of vulnerable children.

5. Ensuring equitable access to quality health services is still a challenge. Around 30 per cent of health centres are capable of implementing Integrated Management of Childhood Illness. Neonatal mortality accounts for 68 per cent of the infant mortality rate, 23 per 1,000 live births. The under-five mortality rate is 28 per 1,000 live births, with slightly higher levels in rural areas.⁷ The causes of neonatal mortality need to be quickly addressed if the Millennium Development Goal target is to be met.

6. Jordan has achieved universal primary education, with the latest net enrolment ratio at 95 per cent for girls and 93 per cent for boys. In secondary schools, it stands at 83 per cent for girls and 80 per cent for boys,⁸ with regional disparities (below average in Irbid, Mafrqa, Jerash, Ma'an and Aqaba). Although the dropout rate recorded in the early grades is minimal, education statistics indicate that school

³ *Jordan in Figures*, Department of Statistics, 2011.

⁴ *Keeping the Promise and Achieving Aspirations: Second Millennium Development Goals Report – Jordan*, 2010.

⁵ L. Blank, "Concept Note on Priorities for the Social Protection Program", 2011.

⁶ *The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Poverty Update*, Department of Statistics/World Bank, 2009.

⁷ *Jordan Population and Family Health Survey*, Department of Statistics, 2009.

⁸ *State of the World's Children*, UNICEF, 2012.

dropout is on the rise, primarily due to economic factors, school overcrowding and poor correlation between what is taught in school and the skills needed for the labour market. Availability of pre-primary education is low, especially in poor and rural areas. The gross enrolment rate for kindergarten is 36 per cent – 16.8 per cent for level 1 (ages 4-5 years) and 56 per cent for level 2 (ages 5-6 years).⁹

7. Children under the age of 18 years make up 44 per cent of the population, while adolescents (10-19 years) make up 23 per cent.¹⁰ Political and socio-economic reform efforts, which accelerated in 2011 as a response to regional events, have pushed the country further to answer to the needs of young people and provide them with more opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Adolescents have few opportunities for civic engagement or free expression of their opinions, leaving them unprepared for effective participation during adulthood. This is particularly the case for girls, whose mobility outside the household is limited. The National Centre for Human Rights has pointed out that the mismatch between the demands of the labour market and vocational, general and higher education reduce the employment prospects of young people. Girls face additional constraints in making educational and vocational choices, limiting their work options.

8. Since submission of its third periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2006, the Jordanian Parliament has adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child and published it in the official gazettes.¹¹ Reservations to articles 14, 20 and 21 have been reviewed, with a view to adopting the parts that may agree with *Shari'a* law, the Islamic legal code, although limited progress has been made in that regard. Regardless, the Ministry of Social Development has agreed to the placement of orphaned and out-of-wedlock children with foster families. The minimum age of marriage for both sexes has been raised to 18 years, in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Although the Convention has legal status in Jordan, the country still holds reservations to four of its articles. In 2009, the Government withdrew its reservation to Article 15 (4), which grants freedom of movement.

9. The quota for women in Parliament has been raised to 10 per cent. In 2009, Jordan was placed 96th out of 109 countries on the Gender Empowerment Measure.¹² Jordanian women still suffer from gender-based discrimination and violence, including honour killings and sexual abuse.

10. Violence against children is common. Around 70 per cent of girls and boys are exposed to verbal violence at home and school. One third of children are exposed to physical violence at home (girls, 25 per cent; boys, 42 per cent) and 57 per cent at school (girls, 46 per cent; boys, 67 per cent).¹³ The Government launched a national campaign to end all forms of violence in schools in late 2009. According to the Ministry of Social Development, there were 6,452 children in conflict with the law registered in courts in 2009; nearly all were boys and 64 per cent were school

⁹ *Kindergarten Policies Review Report*, Ministry of Education, 2010.

¹⁰ *State of the World's Children*, UNICEF, 2012.

¹¹ The Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by the King's signature in 1991, but there was no Parliament at that time.

¹² *Jordan Human Development Report 2011: Small Business and Human Development*, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation/UNDP, 2011.

¹³ *Violence against children study in Jordan*, UNICEF, 2007.

children.¹⁴ A draft juvenile justice law has been prepared and is pending Cabinet approval to be sent to Parliament. It recommends raising the legal age of criminal responsibility from 7 years to 12 years and diverting children away from the court system into community-based alternatives. Although 12 years is still too young, it is a step in the right direction.

Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2008-2012

Key results achieved

11. UNICEF provided significant support to finalization of the Second Early Childhood Development (ECD) Plan of Action, which subsequently was endorsed by the Cabinet. To date, 12 per cent of households in Jordan, with a focus on pockets of poverty, have been reached through the UNICEF-supported Better Parenting Programme, which encourages the adoption of better child care practices. Findings of a completed ECD learning readiness study will form the baseline for a national ECD monitoring system. A study on scaling up the ECD programme initiative was also conducted, in collaboration with the Wolfensohn Center for Development. Its findings contributed to a national dialogue on how to mainstream the Better Parenting Programme into regular activities of the Government and partners.

12. Good progress has been made in combating violence against children. One year after the implementation of a national campaign to end violence at schools, a December 2010 survey by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education found that physical violence had decreased by 11 per cent and verbal violence by 7 per cent in public schools and schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The anti-violence campaign used a communication for behavioural change approach.¹⁵ The Ministry of Health adopted a national health strategy that supports efforts to combat violence against children and established a new child abuse diagnosis and referral process in the health system. The strategy was piloted by establishing family protection committees in 10 hospitals and 6 comprehensive health centres in the three major cities of Jordan (Amman, Zarqa and Irbid), covering more than 70 per cent of the population. This equipped medical staff with the knowledge and skills to examine and refer suspected violence cases to relevant government agencies. Numerous United Nations agencies joined forces to support the development of a national computerized violence tracking system to monitor the flow of cases and identify loopholes and gaps in services. The agencies involved include the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and the World Health Organization. The system will ensure that victims receive necessary follow-up and services.

13. As part of the country's reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, adolescents prepared their own report to the Committee about realization of their

¹⁴ *Achievements of the Directorate of Social Defence*, Ministry of Social Development, 2009.

¹⁵ *Ma'An Campaign – Together for a safe school environment*, Ministry of Education/UNICEF, 2010/2011.

rights. This activity also fulfilled their right to participate in developing policies that affect their lives. The young people themselves led the consultations leading up to preparation of the report. Their findings will be discussed with policymakers in relevant ministries. The report will be used as a reference document in preparing the National Plan of Action for Children (2014-2019).

14. UNICEF has managed to meet the essential education and psychosocial needs of Iraqi children in Jordan through emergency assistance. The Government of Jordan estimated that about 27,000 Iraqi children were enrolled in public schools during the 2010-2011 school year. UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of Education to ensure access to quality education for these children, including through provision of psychosocial services at schools. At the community level, Iraqi children and their caregivers received relevant education and psychosocial services, including remedial and informal classes and counselling sessions.

15. A child-friendly budget initiative was undertaken to enhance monitoring and reporting of progress on child rights. A solid collaboration with the Ministry of Finance/General Budget Department and the National Council for Family Affairs was established. One benefit of this relationship is that, as of 2012, the annual General Budget Law will allocate budgets directly benefitting children to selected ministries (Education, Health, Labour and Social Development). Of particular importance was the child budget analysis conducted in 2009, meant to serve as a baseline for future monitoring and advocacy for child rights. As a result, the ministries' strategic objectives, programmes and performance indicators have been reviewed and amended, with an emphasis on children's programmes.

Lessons learned

16. The national campaign to combat violence against children in schools led by the Government and supported by UNICEF revealed a general acceptance of violence among Jordanians. This must be tackled through training and information sharing. The use of physical violence as a method of discipline is widely accepted and is practised by 58 per cent of parents.¹⁶ An impact assessment of the campaign showed that the behavioural change approach was more effective when supported by other programme elements, such as providing teachers with classroom management skills to promote positive behaviour and encouraging a common perception of violence as something to be avoided.¹⁷ Political commitment was also found to be critically important to address the sensitive issue of violence.

17. The participation of partners proved pivotal in the successful undertaking of the child budget analysis. This research project analysed governmental commitment to specific budget allocations for children. All aspects of this analysis, from conceptualization through implementation, involved strong local partnerships and participation. This not only facilitated access to reliable and current data but also ensured regular updating of the data, joint development of policy briefs and implementation of recommendations. The close partnership created a strong sense of ownership among all stakeholders, including the National Council for Family Affairs and the Ministry of Finance/General Budget Department, as well as other

¹⁶ *Violence against children study in Jordan*, UNICEF, 2007.

¹⁷ *Assessment of the Ma'An Campaign*, Ministry of Education/UNICEF, 2011.

key ministries. This collaboration accelerated the progress of the initiative and contributed to its sustainability.

The country programme 2013-2017

Summary budget table

<i>Programme</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Young child survival and development	500	1 000	1 500
Child protection	1 000	3 000	4 000
Adolescent development and participation	600	3 000	3 600
Social policy and evidence for equity	1 000	1 000	2 000
Cross-sectoral	650	0	650
Total	3 750	8 000	11 750

Preparation process

18. Preparation of the new country programme was closely aligned with the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) documents. These were jointly developed with the Government under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the coordinating agency for United Nations programmes. UNICEF was a member of the UNDAF steering committee and a chair of the UNDAF youth working group and social protection group, and it participated in the systemic reform group. In addition to the dialogue with the Government in the context of the UNDAF process, UNICEF held a midterm review in 2010, chaired by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and a one-day Strategic Moment of Reflection with regional advisers in 2011. UNICEF conducted sectoral meetings with line ministries and civil society. It also held a consultation meeting with a group of adolescents and youth, including school dropouts and children with disabilities, who had worked on the adolescents' report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The objective was to ensure that the country programme reflected their perspective. The adolescents reviewed the CPD through a rights-based lens and provided suggestions for interventions based on their priorities.

19. The Common Country Assessment contributed to the design of the country programme, particularly by validating existing disparities and drawing attention to vulnerable families and children, as well as to inequities. The 2009 Demographic and Health Survey, a 2010 situation analysis of children and other studies mentioned above also contributed to the design. A special focus was given to identifying emerging or overlooked development and equity issues, such as school dropout, and their impact on children.

Programme components, results and strategies

20. The overall goal is to contribute to national efforts to create an enabling and equitable environment for children to realize their rights and their full potential. Special attention will be given to (a) reducing disparities and removing barriers and

bottlenecks causing inequity, thus accelerating achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring their sustainability; (b) improving the quality, coverage and sustainability of social policies, systems and budgets; and (c) developing innovative programmes with local and national partners and advocating for their integration into partners' programmes. As in the past, humanitarian assistance will be provided to respond to the needs of vulnerable children when they arise.

21. UNICEF will generate and use knowledge and evidence-based data for advocacy, convening partners for informed dialogues on legal and policy options. Inequities will be mapped, analysed and addressed using multifaceted community-based approaches, with an emphasis on changes in attitude and behaviour. Technical assistance will be provided through the UNICEF international network of experts to enhance the child and equity focus of national social policies and social protection. Partnerships with the media and other communication efforts will support programme advocacy and convey key messages on the challenges facing children in Jordan.

22. **Young child survival and development.** This programme component concentrates on child mortality, particularly neonatal mortality, as well as child health services and early childhood development. It will support national institutions to provide equitable and improved health and neonatal services and quality early childhood care, with a focus on disadvantaged groups.

23. The programme will invest in ensuring that children have the best start to life by providing technical support for development of policies and implementation of a national action plan to reduce neonatal mortality. It will concentrate on improving health services, prenatal care and care during delivery, and family and community practices. It will also advocate the introduction of new vaccines for children and inform policymakers about health equity gaps.

24. The programme will work to strengthen policies, strategies and action plans on early childhood development. The objective is to improve services, especially for at-risk young children and their families. Technical support will be provided to advocate for inclusive high-quality pre-primary programmes for disadvantaged children. Support will be given to the establishment of a national monitoring system for key early childhood development indicators.

25. **Child protection.** This component will work to change social norms and behaviours that hinder protection of children and to improve weaknesses in accountability, policies and legislation. It will support national institutions to incorporate elements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international conventions into their legal and operational frameworks and services, including those that combat gender-based violence, violence against children (both in and out of school), and juvenile justice initiatives.

26. The programme will work to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders at all levels to prevent violence against children and women and to manage cases of violence against them. Efforts will also be supported to develop community-based approaches for the protection and rehabilitation of abused children and children in conflict with the law and to ensure that public schools are safe places for children. A communication for behaviour change campaign will work to overturn social norms that accept violence against children in schools. The protection component will

promote a child-friendly legal system through support for development of national child rights legislation and its reporting requirements; build capacity of key duty-bearers in the legal and justice systems; and strengthen child protection information and monitoring systems. UNICEF will take the lead in coordinating among stakeholders to ensure the protection of children in humanitarian and regular settings.

27. **Adolescent development and participation.** This programme component will address the lack of data on the situation of adolescents; the limited civic engagement and leadership opportunities available for them to express their opinions and participate effectively in their schools and communities; and the unequal opportunities for adolescent girls. The programme will contribute to creating an enabling policy environment and developing the capacity of national community-based organizations as well as youth groups and schools to offer civic engagement programmes for adolescents. Priority will be given to the most disadvantaged adolescents, especially girls, when designing programme interventions.

28. The programme will contribute to improving the learning environment in schools and to preparing adolescents for life, work and responsible citizenship. The adolescent-friendly school framework will be institutionalized in the school system, with a focus on inclusion, protection and mobilizing community support. Through debate forums, students will be helped to develop the skills to express their opinions in decision-making processes. These forums will also be used to advocate for reducing violence against children at home, at school and in the community and for respecting the environment. Children who have dropped out of school will be supported to enrol in the formal or non-formal education system.

29. The programme will support the provision of opportunities for active civic engagement and leadership for adolescents with governmental and non-governmental organizations and youth groups. These activities empower adolescents to develop skills that help them to make a smooth transition from school to work. Marginalized adolescent girls in selected pockets of poverty will be provided with leadership and civic engagement opportunities. The programme will also support adolescents to participate in influencing decisions and policies at municipal and national levels. The emphasis will be on building the capacity of national organizations and using social media to encourage adolescent participation and development. Communication for behaviour change will be used to change the often-negative attitudes and practices towards adolescents' development that discourage them from actively participating in school, at home and in their communities.

30. **Social policy and evidence for equity.** This component will address ineffective targeting of protection systems and services for the most vulnerable children. It will also tackle weaknesses in policies and budgets that result in exclusion of children and families. In addition, it will work to overcome the lack of data, especially disaggregated data, needed to make appropriate policy decisions. The programme component will support national institutions to analyse data and generate evidence-based research needed to implement child- and gender-sensitive social protection programmes in Jordan, including child-friendly budgeting.

31. The knowledge management sub-component will support capacity building in monitoring and evaluation at the national level and the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems in various institutions. Special emphasis will be given to

improving knowledge on the most disadvantaged children through studies and surveys on issues such as poverty at the subnational level as well as social protection, early childhood development and out-of-school children. A study on children with disabilities will be used to identify areas for cross-cutting interventions.

32. A child-sensitive social policy sub-component will support capacity building of national institutions to develop, monitor and evaluate social protection policies and programmes that assess the economic and social impact of investing in children. It will also build capacities for child budget analysis and tracking and support the establishment of budget lines for children.

33. UNICEF will contribute to the systematic measurement of progress towards achievement of results through implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, as well as a systematic analysis of bottlenecks and barriers in initiatives focused on child survival, education and child protection.

34. The cross-sectoral component will cover operational costs such as rent and travel as well as cross-sectoral human resources expenses for security and support staff.

Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF

35. The country programme contributes to three of the four 2013-2017 UNDAF priorities: (a) enhancing systemic reforms; (b) ensuring social equity; (c) investing in young people; and (d) preserving the environment. The UNDAF and the country programme are aligned to the 2006-2015 National Agenda, with its chief objective to improve the quality of life through creation of income-generating opportunities, improvement of living standards and the guarantee of social welfare. The country programme is also aligned with the 2011-2013 Executive Development Programme, with sectoral priorities and with emergency preparedness and prevention plans. While the UNDAF planning cycle will be aligned with the national cycle in 2015, national priorities will be followed up as they evolve.

Relationship to international priorities

36. The country programme aims to support achievement of the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals by concentrating on equity issues. In line with the context of a middle-income country, it emphasizes implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan focus areas 1 (child survival and development), 4 (child protection) and 5 (partnerships for children's rights), while addressing remaining disparities in the other focus areas. An emergency preparedness and response plan has been developed to ensure implementation of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. It is likely that humanitarian response to vulnerable children will be an essential activity under the country programme.

Major partnerships

37. The country programme will be implemented in collaboration with the Government of Jordan as well as with UNDAF partners and bilateral and multilateral partners. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation is the coordinating ministry for international organizations. Implementing ministries will

be the Ministries of Health, Education, Interior, Labour, Social Development, Finance, Public Sector Development, Justice, Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of *Awqaf* and Islamic Affairs.¹⁸ Other important implementing partners include the National Council for Family Affairs, National Centre for Human Rights, Jordanian National Commission for Women, Public Security Department, Department of Statistics and Zakat Fund. UNICEF also works with a number of international and local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations. UNICEF will work on joint planning and in joint programmes in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the International Labour Organization; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; the World Bank; and the World Health Organization.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

38. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation will coordinate the country programme, with implementation and management carried out by line ministries. A five-year country programme action plan and two-year rolling workplans will be developed for each programme component. Performance will be measured and monitored through annual reviews, a midterm review in 2015 and specific programme performance assessments, all coordinated with the UNDAF monitoring process. Evaluations with a strategic focus will be prioritized. Efforts will be made to enhance national evaluation capacities, including through support to the national evaluation network. The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be used as a tool to strengthen monitoring and evaluation activities and coordinate major studies. The progress of children and women will be monitored through collection and analysis of data, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged groups, through planned national surveys and studies as well as regular statistics from government and non-government sources. Special attention will be given to ensuring availability of disaggregated data for more detailed analysis and understanding of progress in achieving equity, including in gender areas. The situation analysis of women and children will be updated, with a view to providing inputs to the Millennium Development Goals reporting in 2015 and beyond.

¹⁸ *Awqaf* is the Arabic term for the donation of money or property for philanthropic purposes, managed by this ministry.