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Strong foundations: early childhood care and education

Comparative, regional analysis of ECCE in four Arab countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Sudan).

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Abstract

This report provides an overview of the status of ECCE in Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Syria. It examines the contextual factors influencing ECCE, highlighting current policies, challenges, and strategies for improvement and expansion. The report underscores the paucity and limitations of available data. Findings show that ECCE services have improved but regional disparity and dominance of the private sector prevail. None of the four countries but Jordan has a full-fledged national strategy and policy on ECCE. Challenges identified include lack of qualified teachers, societal misconceptions about the unique features of early childhood, and lack of research-based studies. Innovative projects show that NGOs have been instrumental in addressing the needs of marginalized children.

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Glossary

ACCD	Arab Council for Childhood and Development
AGFUND	Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations
AKDN	Agha Khan Development Network
ALECSO	Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization
ARC	Arab Resource Collective
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CtC	Child-to-Child Programme
EAI	Education Action International
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education-see also definition
ECD	Early Childhood and Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education as defined by NAEYC, learning experiences for all children from birth through age 8.
EFA	Education for All
ERfKE	The Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KRSF	Karim Rida Said Foundation
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH/MOPH	Ministry of Health/Ministry of Public Health
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs- Lebanon
MOSAL	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor-Syria
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development- Jordan
MOSWD	Ministry of Social Welfare and Development- Sudan
NAEYC	Founded in 1926, The National Association for the Education of Young Children is the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children
NCCW	The National Council for Child Welfare in Sudan
NCRD	National Center for Research and Development in Lebanon
NGO	Non-Governmental organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency

Definition of Terms

Term	Operational Definition
Age group 0-3	Children aged 0, 1, 2 in completed years
Age group 3-6	Children aged 3, 4, 5 in completed years
Day care centers	Centers that provide care and education to children from birth to under 3- sometimes referred to as child-care or nurseries
Duration.	Number of grades (years) in a given level of education.
Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).	Programmes that, in addition to providing children with care, offer a structured and purposeful set of learning activities either in a formal institution (preprimary or ISCED 0) or as part of a non-formal child development programme. ECCE programmes are normally designed for children aged three years or above and include organized learning activities that constitute on average the equivalent of at least two hours per day and 100 days a year (term used by UNESCO).
Early Childhood Teachers	Teachers who work in day-care centers or preschools/kindergarten
Female Economic activity rate	The share of the female population ages 15 and above who supply, or are available to supply labour for the production of goods and services (term used by UNESCO).
Gross Domestic Product-GDP GDP per capita (PPP US$) PPP (purchasing power parity).	The sum of value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated capital assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Value added is the net output of an industry after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs (term used by UNESCO).
PPP (purchasing power parity)	A rate of exchange that accounts for price differences across countries, allowing international comparisons of real output and incomes. At the PPP US$ rate (as used in the Human Development Report 2005), PPP US$1 has the same purchasing power in the domestic economy as $1 has in the United States (term used by UNESCO).
New entrants to primary education with ECCE experience.	The number of new entrants to primary education who have attended some form of organized early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes expressed as a percentage of the total number of new entrants to primary education (term used by UNESCO).
Total Fertility Rate	The number of children that would be born to each woman if she were to live to the end of her child-bearing years and bear children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates.
Pre-primary	Programmes at the initial stage of organized instruction, primarily designed to introduce very young children, usually from age 3, to a school-type environment, and provide a bridge between the home and a school. (term used by UNESCO)
Preschool/ Kindergarten	Usually programmes for children who completed age 3 and are not 6 yet.
Pupil/teacher ratio.	Average number of pupils per teacher at the level of education specified in a given school year, based on headcounts for both pupils and teachers (term used by UNESCO).
Semi-Private	A term used in Lebanon for privately run schools that are subsidized partly by the government. In these semi-private schools, students from low income families and who do not live near a public school can enroll and the government pays about half the tuition.

Background on ECCE

The field of early childhood dates back to almost 150 years since the days of Plato and Aristotle. In subsequent centuries, Europe became a rich source of early childhood advocates who stressed on the importance of a child's first seven years of life. The importance of educating poor children did not gain attention until the early 19th century when Robert Owen provided poor children with opportunities for education and societal improvements and Pestalozzi advocated teaching the whole child as well as poor children. As a result, conceptions of childhood changed from that of a miniature adult to that of a child with rights, the right to learn through play.[1] New ways of teaching children emerged focusing on child development, appropriate curriculum and learning.[2].

In the 1960s, civil rights and women's rights movements impacted the nature of early childhood programmes and highlighted the importance of educating disadvantaged children. A host of factors such as industrialization, increased number of women with young children entering the labor force, families with two working parents, and the demise of traditional systems of child care and extended family support systems led to a growing demand for quality early childhood programmes.

Recent Trends in ECCE

Since the 1980s, early childhood education (ECE) has been defined as the education of young children from birth to age 8[3]. This wide age range has shown a growing debate and a lack of consensus as to what type of programme is most appropriate. Typically, ECE programmes contain several age related areas ranging from infancy, preschool, kindergarten, and primary grades. Such programmes not only vary by age but by characteristics of the child in each stage, by purpose, and by institutional sponsorship; they are offered in a variety of settings under diverse modes and wide practices.

Research findings on the short as well as long term outcomes [4] of ECE programmes have shown that children from low-income families who enrolled benefited a lot[5]. Significant short-term benefits were evident on children's Intelligence Quotient (IQ). As for long-term gains, children were more successful in areas of school achievement[6]. They were less likely to be retained and few of the children required special education services or placement. Some programmes have also been associated with positive outcomes in cognitive[7], social, and emotional development in children[8]. These findings prompted governments and educators to begin investing their respective resources in the development and enhancement of learning opportunities for young children.

The international drive for expanding ECE programmes began in 1989 with the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This became evident when in 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, delegates from 155 countries, as well as representatives from some 150 organizations adopted the World Declaration on Education for All. In article 5, it called for broadening the scope of basic education by recognizing that learning begins at birth. It also prioritized early childhood care and education (ECCE) as a foundation for later learning and development and called for early childhood care and initial education to be provided through a variety of arrangements involving families, communities or institutional programmes. This world conference helped the field of early childhood education find its way into policy-making agendas.

To advance the objective of EFA, a World Conference on Special Needs Education was held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994. Representatives from 92 governments and 25 international organizations called for inclusion to be part of early childhood care and education programmes

for children aged up to six years and that it ought to be developed and/or reoriented to promote physical, intellectual and social development and school readiness.

Later, the World Education Forum in Dakar 2000 which included 1,100 participants from 164 countries adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, reviewed the advances made in basic education in the 1990s, and strengthened the commitment to achieve quality basic education for all by 2015. In addition, it focused attention on the world's youngest children where they became a global agenda for EFA by 2000 through setting specific goals for them. The first specific goal of the *Goals of the Dakar Framework for Action* called for expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Much of the concept of early childhood has been dominated by Western values, beliefs and practices. It is, therefore, essential to consider the social context and the impact of different ideologies on education as well as the effect of political systems and structures on schooling systems when examining other countries. In addition, recent conceptual frameworks of child development and early childhood education have suggested that social class, gender, race, and culture are much-ignored factors in the thinking and debate about child development and learning[9].

Whether ruled by an autocratic, democratic, or monarchical state, each society has its own beliefs about teaching children and ensuring that the values of the culture are passed to the next generation of children, thereby, shaping the representations of childhood, values, child rearing practices, family relationships and interactions.[10] Therefore, examining the social, political, demographic, and cultural context of countries provides important guidelines for a better understanding of the features, challenges, and prospects of early childhood programmes.

Contextual Factors in Arab Countries
It is important to note at the outset that the literature review is suggestive rather then comprehensive and that the sources for this report on which certain sections were based include original Arab works and Arab newspaper archives. The translation of these was done by the author, except where indicated otherwise.

Although the field of early childhood has been around for the past 150 years, the interest of Arab countries in this field as is known today can be traced back to the second half of the 20th century. A host of contextual factors influenced ECE in Arab countries: namely, political, economic, social, and cultural. Some of these factors facilitated the development of ECCE programmes while others hampered it.

Political and Economic Factors
Major political events in the modern history of the Arab world such as the civil strife in Lebanon and Sudan, the military confrontations with Israel, the Palestinian Intifada, and the two Gulf Wars have had a negative impact on national development plans notably in the education sector. Substantial proportions of state budgets were allocated to defense and security matters rather than social and economic development thereby resulting in cuts in expenditure on education.

By contrast, the oil boom of the 1970 and1980s benefited oil-producing countries as well as non-oil producing countries. Gains to the latter came through remittances of migrant laborers, trade, capital flows, and bilateral aid that spurred rapid social and economic development. The economic growth as well as oil incomes facilitated the task of the Arab countries to expand their basic education. However, two major events slowed down this growth and started to

threaten social development gains particularly in the education sector: (a) the sharp drop in the price of oil in 1985 and (b) the military operations in the Gulf beginning with the Iran-Iraq war.

Socio-demographic Factors

The Arab region continues to have low child mortality rates and high fertility levels.[11] As a result, populations in Arab countries have a young age structure with children under 5 comprising a significant proportion ranging from 7% in the UAE to 18% in Somalia (2004)[12]. Large numbers of children, therefore, are in need of care in general, and education in particular.

Perhaps equally important in creating demand for ECE is the status of mothers with children. Among the women who comprise about 50% of the total population in the Arab countries, 44 million adult women are illiterate. A large number of women (8.5 million) in their prime childbearing years (15-24), are illiterate. Poverty continues to prevail in some countries where it affects 10% of the population in Jordan and Tunisia and reaches 40% in Yemen and 45% in Mauritania.[13]. These poor and illiterate women are neither able to provide proper care and education for their children, nor can they afford to seek paid ECE services.

On the other hand, women's access to higher education soared from 9 % in 1990 to 19% in 2002[14]. This access allowed women to delay marriage due to the longer length of education and to desire greater economic independence. Therefore, female labor participation is expected to increase. Although their labor participation is still low making it about 29% of the Arab region's labor force in 2000, economically active women need day care centers for their children given the decline in the extended family support and the relatively short duration of maternity leave in Arab countries (Table A1, Appendix).

Cultural Factors

Arab countries comprise a heterogeneous society with diverse ethnic, social, and major and minor religious groupings. Islam predominates not only as a faith but also as a way of life that regulates all aspects of human life. Whereas Western cultures are more apt to foster individualism and personal freedom, Arab culture emphasizes conformity, submission, group consciousness, and interdependence. Gender roles are clearly defined where the patriarchal family is the backbone of society, and the father has authority and responsibility and it is the mother's duty to care for and nurture children. [15]

The cultural views about the role of family in rearing children have to do with the image of the child. The image of the Arab child is often that of a "good" child, one who is polite, obedient, disciplined, *should be seen but not heard*, and conforms to the values of the group. It is believed that the child is born without *agl*, or reason. It is a goal of parenting to instill and develop the reason that is deemed necessary for adult life in society.[16] Although many Arab countries ratified the CRC, there is a fear that CRC promotes independence which many in the Arab countries frown upon. They believe that children lack maturity and the capacity for independence and worry that this may disrupt family life.

Furthermore, the increase in urbanization, rise of political Islam, women's increased access to education and globalization have impinged on the Arab culture creating challenges to education. With increasing urbanization in many Arab countries, the extended family that used to provide emotional support, encouragement, and wisdom is more dispersed making it difficult for working mothers to rely on their help in child care and therefore, the role of the extended family is being replaced by institutions.

Another challenge has to do with the tension between the forces of tradition and forces of change. The forces of tradition want education to reproduce society and its norms. They fear

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that any change would question traditional sources of knowledge and wisdom, and argue that education of women enhances their role as mothers and educators. Additionally, the major responsibility of early childhood care and education in the Arab mind is considered a private matter not a public responsibility. By contrast, the forces of change look upon women's education as career training and aim to be innovative agents seeking to transform society through schools.

Rearing practices as well as the forces of tradition trickle down to Arab education systems where schools adopt the authoritarian style. School curricula in Arab countries continue to encourage submission, obedience, subordination and compliance, rather than critical thinking[17].

To sum up, these social, economic, political and demographic changes have influenced the field of ECCE services. Much of the unprecedented progress in education is related to the economic growth and social changes. More attention has been given to eradicating illiteracy and improving the lives of children and women. As women enter the job market in increasing numbers, the demand for early childhood programmes is expected to rise. There is a need to move from early childhood being a private matter to one being a social development investment with important public dividends.

Early Childhood in Arab Countries

Following the "International Year of the Child" in 1979 and the human rights movement, NGOs in Arab countries became the first social activists to advocate social development. They promoted the concepts of human rights, helping poor children at a time when Arab States were occupied with other political and economic issues (Table A2, Appendix).

In the 1990 World Summit for Children, a majority of Arab leaders gave their support to improving the status of Arab children, taking some positive steps to assume responsibility for ECE. This was evident in the establishment of special councils, local and regional conferences and committees dedicated to raising awareness on the importance of ECE. Furthermore, regional and local conferences over the past 10-15 years have resulted investments by governments, donor agencies, NGOs, and civil society to expand and improve early childhood programmes for children in the Arab region. Such actions began with the First Arab High Level Conference on Children which was held in Tunisia, 1992 which adopted a set of global goals for the year 2000 followed by more conferences, forums, and even placing early childhood on the agenda of the Summits of Arab World leaders. (Table A3, Appendix provides detailed description of the important turning events). These events led in some countries to amendment of certain child-related legislations and issuance of new ones relating to qualification of teachers, provisions for children with special needs, and new guidelines for licensing and provisions for ECCE programmes.

Given the emerging interest in the importance of ECE, two major studies were conducted by ALECSO the purpose of which was to examine the reality of ECE programmes in Arab countries. The earliest study on early childhood in the Arab countries was done in 1983 by ALECSO. This study highlighted the difficulty in obtaining data on early childhood education programmes. Findings pointed out to the limited access of Arab children 0-6 years to early childhood services, the widespread presence of these services in urban areas versus rural areas, absence of government involvement in providing these services except for few and the prevalence of the private sector and civil society in providing these services. Governments provided guidelines for operating a day care center or kindergartens but had no involvement in the curriculum or its operation. The study also found a lack of children's magazines and books for those below the age of 6.[18]

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The second recent study that was carried out showed that Arab countries have improved in terms of provision of early childhood services where enrolment increased from 9% in 1975 to 14 % in 1991. Most children aged 0-6 were enrolled in the private sector except in Kuwait where it was only17% and the rest were in public sector (est. 1994 UNESCO). The study also reported persistent problems in the quality of educational experiences provided in these services: large class size, shortage of qualified teachers and administrators as well as lack of appropriate facilities and buildings that are not suitable in terms of safety, heath, and education. The study also noted that the curriculum offered was too traditional and formal and not based on best practices[19].

Recent data from International organizations like UNESCO, UNICEF showed that there has been an improvement in pre-primary enrollment rates reaching 15% in the Arab countries. However, reports also indicated that there are variations. Lebanon, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates showed the highest rate of 70% while countries like Yemen and Djibouti showed the lowest which was less than 1%[20].

Not withstanding, reaching the most marginalized children, often the poorest and disadvantaged, continues to be one of the difficulties in achieving EFA. There are no sufficient or reliable estimates on either child poverty or child disability in most Arab countries. Data collection is often hampered by the fact that many families feel embarrassed or shy away from reporting a child's disability or may even be unaware that the child suffers from one. Another factor is that there is no unified consensus of what constitutes a disability.

Status of ECCE Services in Four Arab Countries

Data on early childhood is scarce in a number of key areas such as participation, financial and human resources, educational context and early childhood learning and outcomes. This is partly due to the fact that early childhood services are dominated by the private sector and governments do not always have complete data on that sector. Another reason is that research is challenged by numerous limitations such as social and political opposition to revealing information and paucity of data on certain population groups.

Although early childhood education encompasses ages from birth to age 8, this discussion does not involve the children enrolled in the first two primary grade levels and does little to discuss the 0-3 because of non-availability of data. The age group 3-6 will be the most discussed age group due to the fact that the available data comes from known International organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO.

This section will examine ECCE services in four Arab countries; Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Syria. The services involve several aspects such as the supply of these services, the degree of access, the extent of financing and by whom, and the quality of these services.

Equitable access to ECE programmes can strengthen learning, reduce social inequalities, and support the educational and social needs of families. Most of these programmes are supplied by the private sector. The private sector comprises profit making businesses which are mostly provided in formal, institutional settings and non-profit community-based or NGOs or funded by international NGOs often in non-formal settings.

In order to better understand the factors facilitating or hindering the provision and access to ECCE services; it is useful to examine the factors that have impacted the development of early childhood programmes. For a period of history, each of these countries was under Western colonial rule that introduced Western education through its missionaries. For example, the earliest form of preschools began in the 19th century in countries like Lebanon, Sudan, and

Syria[21]. The missionaries established kindergartens in their schools which continued following post-independence governments. However, access to these missionaries was limited to elite groups; the other groups adopted a local formal education system, namely Koranic schools. These Koranic schools often operated in mosques, taught in Arabic and formed an essential part of the upbringing of a Muslim child. Children as young as 5 years recited the Koran and learned Arabic language and arithmetic. In Lebanon and in an attempt to ward off the possibility of dominance of Western ideals on Muslims, Muslims established their own schools, Al-Makkased Philanthropic Islamic Association, which was founded in 1878. It has preschools in all regions of Lebanon, in rural areas, and for children from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Early childhood education in these countries is influenced by a host of structural and contextual factors, notably, the degree of urbanization, female economic activity rate, percentage of children under 5, and preschool entry age (Tables A4-A6, Appendix). In Sudan and Syria, almost half the population lives in rural areas in contrast to Jordan and Lebanon where more than 80% live in urban areas. A rise in urban population is closely associated with a rise in dual income households due to employment of mothers with less access to childcare support from family members. Demand for ECCE services is also closely related to the size of the female labour force in the formal sector.

As for children, there is significant variations in the percentage of children under age 5 between Lebanon (9%) on the one hand and the other countries (13-15%) on the other hand. This is mainly due to the decrease in fertility rates where Lebanon has the lowest rate 2.3 and Sudan the highest at 4.4.

When it comes to preschool education, the entry level and duration differ from one country to another. Children spend three years in ECCE programmes in Lebanon and Syria before joining basic education while those in Jordan and Sudan start at age 4 and spend two years in ECCE.

Jordan and Lebanon up till the mid 1990s[22] had limited programmes for children 0-3. For children 0-6, access to ECE services was limited to 20% in Jordan and Lebanon and to a much lower percentage in Sudan showing (6 %) and Syria (10 %).

Access and Supply
Early childhood programmes encompass a broad age group which requires the involvement of many sectors in the government, notably those concerned with education, health and social assistance. These programmes come under different sponsorships in these countries where ministries have also established guidelines for registration, licensing, and accreditation (Table1).

The services provided by the social sector are geared towards working mothers' childcare needs. The principal function of these services is child minding or custodial care and is often called day-care centers or nurseries. Governments have expanded access to these centers by implementing a national policy requiring a paid maternity leave to cater for the needs of working mothers since one third of the women in these countries are economically active. Improving access to these services served two purposes. First, it showed the extent to which women are being empowered and second, it helped provide rationale for the need for policy and provision for early childhood programmes for children under three. This has helped working parents combine work with family responsibility and promote gender equity. Only Syria and Jordan have made such special provision for setting up day care centers in or near the mother's workplace (Table A10 & 12, Appendix).

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Table 1: Provisions for the Type of ECCE Programmes

Country	Type of Programme	Age of children served	Ministerial auspices	Role of each ministry
Jordan	Day care	0-4	MOSD, MOH	Sets the criteria for opening day care centers.
	Kindergarten	4-6	MOE	Has a special unit for early childhood education where it provides licensing, teacher training, and curriculum improvement, supervision of public and private kindergartens and provides kindergartens in rural areas but there are no curricula for day care centers.
Lebanon	Day care/nursery	0-3	MOSA Public day cares- MOPH Private day cares-	Sets the criteria for opening day care centers.
	Preschool/ kindergarten	3-6	MOE-Public serves ages 4-6 MOE -Private serves ages 3-6	Establishes curriculum Provides supervision for public schools
Sudan	No available data	0-4	MOSWD, MOH	No available data
	Kindergarten/ *khalwas*	4-6	MOE	Only provides licensing. Established KGs in its own schools in 1992 Has a unit for ECCE and has set up policies, planned curricula, and established an information base, teacher training, and awareness programmes. [23] There are supervisors who visit each kindergarten twice a month.
Syria	Day care	0-3	MOSAL, MOH	Sets the criteria for opening day care centers.
	Kindergartens	3-6	MOE	Licensing and registration

Jordan

Childcare services for young children under age 4 continue to be limited. MOSA estimated that in the year 2000 there were 700 day care centers distributed among public (53%), (38%) community –based, and (9%) private. Despite the increase in the number of day care centers, these centers provide for only 1.57% of that age group where most of these day care centers are situated in major urban cities. About 28 percent of Jordanian children currently benefit from kindergarten services, but these services are provided mainly through the private or voluntary sector and the children who attend them are usually from middle and upper income families. These programmes are concentrated mainly in urban areas where they comprise 72 % of the total number of programmes[24]. By the year 2005/06, the supply of ECCE services has increased. The figures in Table2 show that the government has provided more public day care centers and there is a notable improvement in the number of public preschools from 101 in 2001/02 to 311 in 2005/06. Furthermore, in 2000, the MOE extended kindergartens to remote areas. [25]

Table 2: Current Status of ECCE Programmes in Jordan (2005-2006)[26]

	Government	Private	Local NGOs and community-based	Funded by International Organizations
Day care centers (0-3 age group)	438	291	56	
Preschools (3-6)	311	1300	190	50
% of children between ages 0-6 who are receiving ECCE programmes	31%	28%	34%	39%

Lebanon

Although the government in 1946 set the age for school entry at three for nursery and age five for beginning elementary, the government stopped here and did not include these classes in its own public school system until the 1970's.[27] Efforts to expand early childhood services were hampered by the eruption of civil war (1975-1990). In the early 70s and 80s, some ECCE programmes were run by NGOs such as the Kanafani Foundation, Save the Children, UK, and Maarouf Saad Foundation and others. These organizations worked with Palestinian refugees and children from low socio-economic backgrounds and in rural areas to provide kindergarten services.

A recent report by the MOH and UNICEF (1998) indicated that there are 245 day care centers for children under the age of 4. About 64% are in Beirut and Mount Lebanon of which 53% are private and only 9% are governmental. As for KGs, 58.9 % of children in Lebanon are enrolled in the private sector (2001-2002) while 24.9% are in the public sector. The largest percentage of children who are enrolled in the private sector is in Beirut city where it reaches 79.8% and is lowest 42% in north Lebanon. The picture is different when it comes to the public sector where it is 43.3% in north Lebanon and 8.2% in Beirut suburbs[28]. In north Lebanon where poverty is highest, public schools are the only service for those children.

Table 3 shows that since 1996/7, the government has provided more ECCE services, leading to an increased share. The deteriorating economy has forced some parents to remove their children from private schools and place them in government schools. In spite of government's attempts to boost enrollment in its own public ECCE, the private sector continues to show the highest percentage. It is worth noting that the semi-private institutions that normally receive some governmental support decreased and this could be partly due to the fact that the government has built more schools especially in rural areas.

Table 3- Percentage of Children aged 3-6 Enrolled in Various Education Sectors in Lebanon[29]

Year	Government	Semi -Private	Private
1996/7	19.4	16.64	63.91
2000/1	25.68	16.2	58.1
2001/2	24.92	16.13	58.93
2002/3	23.9	16.3	59.7
2003/04	23.7	15.8	60.4
2004/5	22.73	15.37	61.88

Sudan

The first Sudanese kindergarten was established in the 1930s by Sheik Babiker Badri who was an advocate for women's education. He had established Sudan's first private school for girls in

1907. The ECCE programmes are provided by two types of institutions, Kindergartens and Koranic schools or *Khalwas*. The non-religious kindergartens remain overwhelmingly an urban phenomenon but they do not pay sufficient attention to the health, nutrition, social and cognitive aspects of child development. The *Khalwa*'s primary role is clearly religious and they are often in rural areas, and these outnumber other kindergartens. *Khalwas* provide preschool education to two thirds of the children between the ages of 4-6.[30].

There is a clear regional disparity in terms of access and supply between Islamic North and the Christian South in Sudan. Of the 5,400 primary schools in 1980, less than 14% were located in the South of Sudan which had between 20-33% of the total country's population. The renewal of civil war in the mid 1983 led to the destruction of many schools. In 1983, and with the help of UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Welfare established a training center for ECE teachers which provided a six-month training course in child development, art, music, and production of teaching materials.

Currently, in Khartoum, there are 2000 KGs out of which only 206 are public. The most recent data for the years 2002-2003 shows that the government provides for 9833 ECCE centers in all of Sudan. Of these 3298 are *Khalwas* and 6523 are KGs.[31]

Syria

Up until the early 90s, ECCE programmes were provided by various governmental and non-governmental institutions of which few belonged to the government sector, while others were either private, run by the Teachers' Syndicate, General Union of Workers (GUW) or the Women's Federation [32] . In government institutions, tuition is symbolic and the pupils are mainly the children of employees.

While in 1990, only 5% of the children between the ages of 3 and 5 were enrolled in 793 kindergartens, ten years later 7.75% of that age group was enrolled. Furthermore, data from the Syrian MOE shows an increase in the number of kindergartens from1096 in 1997 to 1475 in 2004. The following table illustrates the distribution of kindergartens across institutions.

Table 4- Distribution of Kindergartens According to Institutions in Syria (2004) [33]

	Government	Private (community)	Women's Federation	Teachers' Syndicate
Number of kindergartens (children ages 3-5)	97	824	224	330

Data from these countries on pre-primary gross enrollment show that Lebanon has the highest rate (75%) in 2002/03. Since 1998 to 2003, both Lebanon and Sudan have made significant improvement in pre-primary enrollment while Jordan and Syria underwent limited improvement in these rates. In the case of Lebanon, it is important to note that the increase in terms of enrollment is a result of the new curriculum implementation which had included kindergarten in its public education system and made it free (Table A7 & 11, Appendix). Furthermore, recent data showed that many children who are entering first grade in these countries have attended kindergarten, with Lebanon showing the highest percentage and Syria the lowest (Table A8, Appendix).

As for the disadvantaged and vulnerable children, there is no available data from these four countries as to the number of poor or disabled children who are benefiting from these services. In Lebanon, according to the National Inclusion Project "majority of children with disabilities are in special care institutions, and private schools have a policy of automatically eliminating students with disabilities". Only a handful of schools in Lebanon nationwide cater to pupils with special needs. "About 20 schools allow entry to children with disabilities, but it's up to the parents and the children to adapt to the curriculum. An estimated 10 percent of the population has disabilities, according to a 1990 UNDP survey[34].

Finance

Most of the ECCE services in these countries, which are found in urban areas and major cities are profit making businesses, and children of higher income and better educated parents are the most likely to have the advantage of participating in ECCE services.

Expenditures on this sector are related to institutional and individual decisions that have social, political and economic goals. One way to ascertain the level of importance a government places on ECCE services is to look at how much a particular country is spending on ECCE and the role they play in planning, funding, and providing for ECCE services. Data on expenditures on this particular area of early childhood is almost non-existent in the four countries under discussion. Available data refer broadly to education with no allocation for the pre-primary stage. Jordan allocated 19 % of its government expenditures on education while Syria, Sudan, and Lebanon spent 9%, 8%, and 7 % respectively[35]. More specifically, the Jordanian government spent about $7058 in the year 2004 on its day care centers. It also contributed $42,325 a year to ECCE services. The government also gets additional funding for its programmes from UNICEF and USAID[36].

The cost for the ECCE services is often paid for by parents' income. Recent figures show that in Jordan parents pay between $21 in public centers to $212 per month for nurseries in private one[37]. In Lebanon, public day care centers charge about $20 per month but in private day care centers, the rate ranges from $200 to $450 per month in Beirut area. In Lebanese public preschools, parents pay about $70 annually whereas in private schools, the cost ranges from $1000 to $8000 annually.

Therefore, the link between family income and ability to pay for a preschool education raises questions as to the extent to which children from low-income families are truly receiving equal opportunity to early education in these countries. It is worth noting that low-income children are especially vulnerable to the ill effects of poor quality early care and education and would gain the most from high quality programmes.

Quality of Programmes

Quantitative data may show the progress countries made in terms of supply and access to ECCE services but they do not provide enough information about the quality of those ECCE programmes. In recent years, researchers have expressed concern that there has been a trend toward increased emphasis on formal instruction in academic skills in ECCE programmes, an emphasis based on misconceptions about early learning. [38] These growing concerns were over the push for a first grade curriculum to kindergarten which has at times resulted in higher-grade retention rates and observable stress behaviors in children. To counter the 'push down' pencil and paper curriculum that was being increasingly utilized at the preschool section as a method of 'school readiness', early childhood educators and NAEYC in the late 1980s advocated developmentally appropriate practices in quality early childhood programmes. These practices are age appropriate, individually appropriate, and socially and culturally appropriate. Research studies of early childhood programmes serving children from low-income families found that effective programmes share certain aspects: small class size, teachers support and training, curriculum and communication between home and school[39].

Conception of what constitutes quality in early childhood programmes is somewhat relative and is often based on the values, beliefs, and knowledge of those who are attempting to define quality. Researchers have used a variety of instruments to assess the quality of programmes such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale[40] , a recognized global instrument that has been used in the United States and several European countries[41]. When examining the quality of early childhood programmes, there is a need to look at several quality indicators[42]. Aside from staff qualifications, quality and quantity of materials and equipments, adult/child ratio, there is also a need to look at the effect of a particular curriculum model on children, and how the programme has served the community and the larger society.

In addressing the quality of programmes in Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Syria, the following indicators are used: pupil/teacher ratio, staff qualifications, facilities and buildings, and curriculum.

1- *The Pupil/Teacher ratio* -Two different statistics are used to describe the relationship between the number of students and the number of professional staff members in an educational setting: class size and the pupil-teacher ratio. The pupil-teacher ratio is different than the average class size where it is the number of students in classes divided by the number of classes. Usually, the average class size is larger than pupil-teacher ratio. Three of the four countries have a large pupil/teacher ratio (Table A9, Appendix). However, caution must be exercised when interpreting the ratio since it is not representative of every programme. For example, in Jordan the child/adult ratio is 18 in public preschools and 23 in private[43]. The MOE in Jordan limits class size to 25 children per one kindergarten class and there are no criteria on number of children in day care centers since the number varies according to the area of the classroom. [44]

In Lebanon, the ratios in public schools also differ from those in private schools. For example, in the year 1997/98, the median pupil/teacher ratio (i.e., 50% of schools have ratios above this value and 50% below it) is lowest in public schools 10.4 pupils per teacher as compared to 22.9 in semi private schools and 14.7 in private schools. This difference remains the same for the academic year 2000/01 whereby semi private schools continue to have the highest median pupil/teacher ratio (22.3) and public schools the lowest median ratio (10.7), while private schools occupied a middle position (13.2).[45] While the reported ratio is 22, field visit reports by ARC report that there are overcrowded classrooms with a class size of 45 children to one teacher.

2- *Staff Qualifications*- Teachers who have a high level of education are more likely to implement appropriate practices. Research findings showed that teachers with college degrees are more likely than those with only a high school degree to encourage children, make suggestions to them and promote children's verbal skills[46]. Despite the fact that research has shown that teacher's qualifications[47] make a difference in the type of delivery of curriculum and activities in ECCE programmes, yet there is a lack of qualified personnel in the Arab countries. The low pay, social status of teachers and the way society looks at their roles as 'child minders' and not 'child educators poses great problems and has tremendous impact on the high turnover and retention of teachers of young children.

Up to 1995, only 10% of the early childhood teachers in Jordan and Lebanon had a university degree.[48] Recent data on the total number of qualified teachers in Lebanon shows that teacher qualifications remain an issue. For example, in 2004/5, only 44% of Lebanese teachers who teach all grade levels have a university degree while 45% have a Baccalaureate and less[49]. The national data does not provide a breakdown of teachers by the grade level they teach. In a study conducted by this author on 21 schools in 2002, 45% of teachers of young children 4-6 in private schools did not have a university degree. [50] The author of this study also found that teachers who have a college degree, have taken specialized courses related to the field of early childhood, are aged between 30-39, and earn above $530 were more likely to use appropriate practices when teaching young children.[51]
In another study conducted on a sample of public and private school teachers, findings showed that only 10% of all the surveyed early childhood teachers possess a university degree and 44% have a high school degree[52].
In Jordan, the government reported that 44% of the teachers working with young children in day care centers hold a university degree or diploma while 32.3% have a high school degree and 23% have less than that. Even though the Education law states that a preschool teacher must be a holder of a university degree and that the minimum academic qualifications for

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basic education teachers were raised from the community college diploma to the university degree in 1998, there still exist a large number of teachers who do not have a college degree. Less than half of the teachers have received some form of formal training. [53] As for Jordanian teachers' salaries, they range between $113 and $282 per month[54].

3- *Facilities and buildings*-Early childhood programmes require a specialized type of space to promote children's health, safety, and development. Many of the facilities and buildings in these four countries are frequently inadequate and lack the necessary requirements for setting up a learning and stimulating environment. Most of the preschool programmes in these countries are located in rented buildings and lack proper facilities including appropriate outdoor play areas which limit the potential of the child to learning and development. For example, the UNICEF 1998 report on Lebanon points to the lack of adequate supervision both health and education in day care centers. Furthermore, the preschools in the public sector still suffer from poor physical environment and limited use of educational materials[55].

4- *Curriculum* – These countries provide a curriculum for teaching preschool children that is often traditional Although no studies have been done on the effect of such a traditional model, it is apparent that the curriculum does not take a holistic approach to teaching young children. In Syria, the MOE provides a formal teaching curriculum, but it offers little direction or opportunity for active learning. Workbooks and blackboards are the primary learning tools. Parents put more pressure on teachers by demanding formal teaching. The learning environments are crowded with inadequate children's furniture, few toys, and unused outdoor equipment. Walls display adult drawn pictures and murals, and no picture books in the library. The curriculum continues to stress rote learning rather than analytical skills development and is not child-centered[56]. In a nationwide study of kindergartens in Jordan, findings showed that curricula focuses on language and number skills with no clear curriculum model followed and only 56 % of kindergartens abide by official licensing conditions and standards.[57] In Lebanon, curriculum tends to stress mastery of literacy and numeracy skills at the expense of a child-centered, play –oriented approach.[58]

In summing up this section on the current status of early childhood in these four countries, it is evident that some progress has been made in terms of access and supply of ECCE services. However, access of children with special needs to such services is very limited and inclusion is not yet part of the public sector. It is apparent that given the continued dominance of the private sector, middle to high income families continue to benefit more from such services than low income families or those who live in rural areas. The nature of ECCE financing can create barriers to expansion and increasing access. Leaving the early education and care of young children largely dependent on the resources of parents appears to produce substantial inequalities in children's experience. Governments in these countries need to continue expanding their own ECCE services and work in partnership with local NGOs and private businesses to make these services accessible to vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Policy makers would benefit greatly by examining instruments that have been universal and culturally adaptable when assessing the quality of ECCE programmes. It has been said that the physical environment is the child's third teacher after parents and teachers. Thus, ensuring proper facilities and buildings that are ready for children can greatly contribute to children's development in various areas. Quality of ECCE programmes is greatly enhanced by qualified teachers, child-centered curriculum and appropriate group sizes.

Recent Policies and Strategies for Improving and Expanding ECCE

A policy refers to a plan of action that a country adopts to guide governments as to the processes that will be put in place. A policy is accompanied by a set of procedures of how this

policy will be accomplished. A strategy is a long-term approach, which in this case could refer to ECCE in general or to particular themes or issues and dimensions of ECCE. To achieve objectives of strategies, policies are implemented.

In creating national policies for early childhood, governments collect information from the field of early childhood on what kind of policies are most effective in supporting young children and their families. The policy becomes a shared responsibility between NGOs and governmental organizations. The NGOs can bring their knowledge, skills, and experience to the creation and implementation of policies for early childhood.

Each of the four countries has established a higher council or national task force for childhood and family. These councils design and monitor national plans and coordinate among the governmental and non-governmental systems/agencies that have specialties relevant to childhood. In addition, emphasis by these councils is placed on developing legislation concerning children – ensuring realization of their full rights, and enacting a law or code for children. The countries are at different stages in development of national policies.

Jordan is amongst the first countries in the region to have developed a comprehensive early childhood development (ECD) strategy and plan of action[59]. It began in 2001 with the formation of the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA). This was followed in 2004 by the adoption of the National Plan of Action for Children (NPA). The ECD strategy focuses on legislation related to children, curricula and programmes, caring for children in nurseries, preschool and basic education in the first three years. It also addresses children with special needs. Included in the strategy are health care for women during pregnancy, health care services, and child culture as well as the role of family and local community. The strategy also stressed on the role of media in early childhood development and human resources and social defence. Jordan has in its objective developing research centers and universities and making them partners. It is also supported by the fact that only recently some universities established what is known as *deanship of research* to start collecting data on various issues in its society (Table A12-Appendix).
What follows are examples of some of the strategies that Jordan's NPA has addressed (Table 5).

Table 5: Selected Strategies and Policy Areas in Jordan

Policy	Strategy
Conducting National Studies	• Develop databases about childhood in general • Encourage research and studies on early childhood issues conducted by universities, research centers, and concerned agencies, including periodic surveys to evaluate the situation of early childhood.
Expanding Access and Providing for Children with Special Needs	• Increase participation by the year 2005 to reach at least 35% of the children. • Provide incentives for the private sector in general, and the voluntary sector in particular, to establish and manage early childhood institutions • Provide low cost programmes to all socio-economic backgrounds • Provide nurseries for the children of working mothers. • Develop school building codes to accommodate students with special needs.

	• Make kindergarten compulsory and free
Addressing Quality	• Develop the quantitative and qualitative aspects of field supervision by the authorities responsible for nurseries, kindergartens and early basic education. • Ensure quality programmes through defining the desired early childhood standards and outcomes that Jordanian children are expected to achieve at different stages of their development • Outline a national regulatory framework for all early childhood institutions in the country, and developing and evaluating pre-school and nursery curricula. • Developed a national kindergarten curriculum
Ensuring Qualified Staffing	• Provide in-service training to the people involved in planning, supervision and management of early childhood. • Develop the programmes of higher education institutions concerning early childhood by concentrating on the relevant planning and supervision dimensions. • Enhance the quality of teaching through developing a national system for capacity building and certification for all professionals working in the field of early childhood. • Develop the capabilities of kindergarten staff with regard to early detection and intervention for children with special needs, including the gifted, the disabled and slow learners.

As for the Lebanon, Sudan, and Syria, they are in the process of developing a national policy. Table 6 shows the measures taken in preparation for the drafting of a national policy. Towards that end, they have formed councils, committees, enacted laws and held conferences (table 6)

Table 6- Councils/Committees, Meetings and Laws on ECCE by Country and Year

Country	Year	Councils/Committees, Meetings and Laws
Lebanon	1994	Formation of Higher Council for Childhood (HCC)
Sudan	1991	The National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW)
	2003	Child Law[60]
Syria	2002	First National Conference on early childhood development.
	2003	Childhood Conference in Aleppo
	2004	Presidential decree- formation of the Syrian Committee on Family Affairs (SCFA)
	2005	SCFA and AKDN consultants drafting the National Strategy for early childhood

In Lebanon, the purpose of the Higher Council for Childhood was to monitor the implementation and provisions of Lebanon's commitments to international standards. Among the Council's objectives was to suggest a childhood general policy and organize training sessions for personnel working on childhood issues. However, in light of the events that took place in 2005 with the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the Council has not yet

provided a draft. The Council conducted a legal comparative study of the legislation related to CRC, resulting in a series of proposals for legislative reform.

In Sudan, attention to early childhood began in 1990 followed by the National Plan of Action for the Survival, Development, and Protection of children which was established in 1992. The National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW) was established in September 1991 as a government body responsible for monitoring and promoting children's rights in Sudan. The NCCW operates under the MOSD. It is more concerned with strategic planning, policy development and reports on the status of children in Sudan[61]. One of the goals is to expand access to 35% by the year 2007 and to 100% by the year 2015.[62]

Syria has recently addressed early childhood and placed it on its education policy. It has formed a national team of ministries, world organizations, and civil society in order to form a strategic plan for early childhood. It has also launched an Education Strategy for 2000-2020. Among its priorities is expanding access to kindergartens from 10% to 40% by the year 2015 and expand preschool models from 2% to 10% by the year 2015[63]. Other priorities include introducing two foreign languages instead of one in the primary schools, supporting the local production of educational materials, and building the national capacity to produce those materials[64].

En route to developing full-fledged policies on early childhood, Lebanon, Sudan, and Syria have implemented a set of procedures such as conducting national studies to assess the need and demand for ECCE services (Table 7), expanding access for ECCE services and providing for children with special needs (Table 8), addressing quality issues (Table 9), and ensuring qualified staffing (Table 10). In addition, they worked on procedures for providing for curriculum development as well as setting standards or benchmarks for quality ECCE.

Table 7- National Studies by Country

Country	Measures
Lebanon	• Conducted studies of which the most recent in 2000 on the status of children in Lebanon. • Conducted a national study on children aged 0-6 in the areas of health, nutrition, education, and social and economic conditions. The study examines the effectiveness of the programmes that are implemented on a national level which receive local or international funding. Furthermore, the study evaluates the training manuals used in early childhood programmes as well as early intervention programmes for children with special needs. It also highlights the research studies done in this field in Lebanon as well as reviews all the laws pertaining to early childhood. It is expected that the findings will be out by the end of 2005.
Sudan	• Established in 1996 the National Centre for Curricula and Educational Research Act to collect relevant data • Singled out a day for statistical data collection [65]
Syria	• Conducted family health survey (2001) • Established a department for early childhood at MOE's Research Directorate to conduct studies and research

Part of providing access and equity to ECCE services is also addressing the needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable children in the country. Although a system is needed for the registration of disability cases, the procedures did not clearly address that issue. However,

procedures relating to inclusion of children with special needs had to do with legislation and building codes (Table 8)

Table 8: Measures to Expand ECCE Access and Equity by Country

Country	Measures
Lebanon	• Exempted children in public preschools and grades one and two from registration fees. • Built 62 schools to accommodate 40, 000 students with funding from World Bank. • Developed new guidelines on the criteria for building public schools-physical space-indoor and outdoor, classrooms and labs, and accommodation for the disabled (2002). • Launched the National Inclusion project with NGOs in 2004 to improve the lives of the disabled. • Increased government contribution to semi private schools for each student.
Sudan	• Stipulated that public and private sectors establish child care facilities to orphaned children providing them with education and health care, either through direct sponsorship or through foster families[66].
Syria	• Worked to support and expand kindergartens with NGOs. • Made school buildings accessible to physically handicapped people.

Quality is an important issue and relates to the physical environment as well as the nature of the curriculum. Measures taken to address quality focused on developing guidelines for curricula and settings as indicators of quality but no specification of mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of these indicators.

Table 9: Measures Addressing Quality by Country

Country	Measures
Lebanon	• Issued a decree that outlined the new guidelines for operating a day care center since the previous ones lacked appropriate details, comprehensiveness and quality. • Defined kindergarten curriculum goals and objectives for public schools (1997)
Sudan	• Specified guidelines for setting up day care centers and kindergartens • Designed a unified national curriculum for both public and private preschools.[67]
Syria	• Launched official kindergarten curriculum in 1998/1999. • Issued manuals for nurses and published booklets concerning the activities of the kindergarten's kids according to modern kindergartens curricula.

Among the challenges to providing quality ECCE programmes is having qualified teachers. High turnover and lack of trained personnel could render the programmes ineffective. All the countries (Table 10) acknowledge the necessity of t a good educational background for teachers of young children. They also ascertained the role of higher education institutions in providing academic preparation and continuous teacher training. Appendix A13 through A16 shows that since 1990 universities in each given country have introduced education as a major, but only few included early childhood as an area of concentration.

In Jordan, there has been an increase in the number of private academic institutions. Of the universities researched, 8 are public and 10 are private. About 30 % of the total number of university students is enrolled in these private institutions[68]. A majority of these universities

offer an undergraduate degree in Education but only 5 of the 14 have an education major with emphasis on early childhood (Table A13, Appendix).

Although there are about 42 colleges and universities in Lebanon, yet only 6 of the universities provide an early childhood major.

In Sudan, two major universities have been offering early childhood education major at the undergraduate level but under different faculties since the 1970s. Ahfad University offers it under the faculty of Psychology and Kindergarten and the University of Khartoum (1969) under the faculty of Family Sciences. In 1994, the Nile Valley University established teachers college and offers early childhood education major.

As for Syria, there are four universities that are run by the government and three of them have started an education major in 1997 but only two of them offer early childhood education major.

Table 10: Actions to Ensure Qualified Staffing

Country	Actions
Lebanon	• Enacted legislation that candidates for teaching positions must have a university degree (educational degree) for all grade levels. • Organized training sessions for MOSA personnel working on childhood issues • Provided nation-wide training of trainers workshops on CRC and worked on incorporating children's rights into the educational curricula[69]
Sudan	• Set standards for qualification of teachers • Developed five training manuals and is in the process of developing two more. • Increased the number of universities providing an early childhood major (now three)
Syria	• Implemented on-the-job training for 160,000 unqualified teachers via e-learning. This plan will be implemented within two years, and the targeted teachers will get a university degree at the end of the training[70] • Discontinued admission into the teachers colleges and preparation institutes of teachers by the academic year 2004-2005. Teachers holding university degrees will be employed for all stages of education instead of the graduates of intermediate institutes[71]. • Stipulated that training of teachers and teacher assistants will be provided in faculties of education instead of teacher-training institutes

Policy Challenges

Although these countries are at different stages of their policy development, they face similar challenges. In a recent Arab Regional Conference (2004) on *Improving Policies and Practices on Early Childhood Care and Education*, the participants of these four countries noted continuing challenges:

• Lack of qualified personnel, educational materials, appropriate facilities, and a child-centered curriculum
• Lack of sufficient in-service training for early childhood teachers
• Lack of smooth transition between KG and early primary grades
• Insufficient education supervision
• Limited public awareness and parent education programmes
• Uneven access by social class, special needs, and geographical area
• Lack of incentives for workers in remote areas
• Lack of incentives for private institutions such as tax exemptions
• Lack of coordination among concerned public agencies

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- Limited research projects that assess the impact of policies on children's development and learning[72].

Another important challenge that has not been cited in the literature is the low enrollment in education majors in universities, particularly male students. The percentage of women entering the field of education relative to other university majors is low (4% in Lebanon and 11% in Jordan[73]). Furthermore, the ratio of males to females in the field particularly primary education majors is low. Therefore, governments in these countries should encourage males to enter the early childhood major by providing incentives such as improving salaries that are compatible with any other profession.

Innovative ECCE Projects in the Arab Countries and Case Countries

Innovative projects are projects that break new ground in tackling pertinent issues related to the field of early childhood or offer new approaches that have the potential to increase awareness of the importance of early childhood education especially to vulnerable and disadvantaged children, increase partnership between the community and the government on that issue, provide innovative teaching methods and training for teachers, and provide early intervention programmes for children with special needs.

The four countries have benefited from several projects whether they were in informal or formal settings. These projects varied from being funded by international organizations to local NGOs. Certain projects were in the form of training workshops limited in duration while others lasted for a number of years. These projects can be grouped into two categories: (a) projects involving governments and (b) projects involving local and regional NGOs. Both types of projects received funds from various local, regional, and international sources, the details and descriptions of them are included in Tables A17-A19 in the Appendix.

A- Projects Involving Governments

The Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) (2003-2008): In July 2003, the Government of Jordan launched the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) initiative. Its fourth component is to promote learning readiness through early childhood education and is designed to enhance equity through public provision to children 4-6 years in low-income areas. This ECE component seeks to improve the physical appearance and readiness of ECE facilities, increase access to KGs for the poor, modernize and update the ECE curriculum, strengthen the skills of ECE professionals, and promote high quality ECE. The ECE component also aims to strengthen parent and community participation and partnership by raising public awareness and understanding. Among the MOE goals in this project is to target children whose parents cannot afford private ECCE services by providing for these in areas of the country where there is no private investment, i.e., remote and/or rural low-income areas. Furthermore, the MOE plans to add about 250 public KGs to its primary schools providing them with appropriate equipment and learning materials. The programme will also support equipping about 50 KGs managed by non-profit NGOs. There are also plans for establishing community-based ECD and parenting centers to support young children's learning and parents' roles. These centers will be expanded and starting with the poorest and most rural areas.

In July 2004, the ERfKE Support Project (ESP) began as a USAID-funded project to support Jordanian governmental education reforms in order to achieve these goals and the vision having the ideal education system that will effectively contribute to building an economy based on knowledge.

In April 2005, the ESP reported major accomplishments in terms of renovating and equipping four public kindergarten classroom in underprivileged areas in Amman. The ESP also provided training on the use of Jordan's first national ECE curriculum to 29 early childhood trainers

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from the MOE as a first step. Then it trained all 258 ECE teachers. In addition, the project also provided training for the Ministry's 11 ECE supervisors. The ERfKE Support Project also worked with the MOE officials to help them design the structure for the Ministry's new ECE Directorate and started assessing the national ECE curriculum with the Ministry of Education.[74]

Global Education: In Lebanon, in 1999, NCERD with UNICEF began a project on Global education using for their pilot study 16 schools (14 public, 2 private). Global education gives priority to active learning, peer-learning, problem solving, and is child-centered. This approach to education emphasizes human and child rights and self- esteem and it incorporates themes such as environment, ecology, peace, tolerance, personal health and cooperative skills. The NCERD produced activity manuals that integrated academic subjects under one theme. In 2003, this approach was evaluated but the results have not been published yet.

Aga Khan Foundation: It began in Syria in 2002. The Foundation's programmes include education (early childhood development), health (improving maternal and infant health), rural development (water resource management), micro-credit (for income generation and housing improvement), and culture (rehabilitation of cultural assets). The foundation is organizing in Syria various projects for the rehabilitation of workers, supervisors and directors in the field of early education in hundreds of kindergartens. It is also in the process of preparing a national strategy for the care and development of early childhood [75]. The network is consulting with other institutions concerned with planning and training such as ARC which in turn has contributed to the organization of training sessions about "the holistic and integrative method for early childhood care and development."

Syrian Inclusive Education Project 2003-2005
Following the national seminar on inclusive education in Syria and to promote inclusion of children with disabilities into regular school, a pilot project is being implemented in five Syrian schools distributed in different areas in Syria. Activities included teacher training, advocacy seminars and physical school adaptation. The project has also helped in the creation of a National Task Force on Inclusion which planned, implemented and evaluated a project which saw 50 children with disabilities included in four primary schools and one kindergarten. This project is being supported by UNESCO/Beirut, UNICEF/Syria, Karim Rida Said Foundation, Save the Children–UK, and Save the Children–Sweden.[76]

Better Parenting Project - Amongst the non- formal early childhood programmes is the Better Parenting Project that was launched by UNICEF. The programme aims to train caregivers and parents on the knowledge, skills and practices needed to promote holistic development of their children. It also creates more awareness among the caregivers of children up to three years of age to help provide a healthy, stimulating, and loving environment for children. UNICEF worked on the production of four training videos, booklets, and booklet sets for the participants.
Since it began in Jordan in 1996, the programme has reached more than 45,000 parents and 1,500 caregivers and social workers. The maternal and health care centers as well as kindergartens that were under MSD which benefited from this project were 40. In an evaluation of its impact, particpants reported that they would like to see this project expand in terms of content and scope but voiced their concern that without funding from UNICEF, the government may not see its value. An evaluation of this project generated some concerns. Among these concerns were that more training is needed on the issue of violence in the family and its effect, emotional abuse, the psychological development of children, the role of the eldest child in child-rearing, and more information on behavior management. The evaluation also addressed the quality of the training which was seen often as very traditional rather than

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interactive and involving active learning[77].It also called for male participation. In order to reach men in Jordan and convey the message that child care is also the responsibility of men, UNICEF started a partnership with Islamic associations where it produced a book "Imam's Guide to Early Childhood Development" and started training 10 Imams in three mosques. The training soared where UNICEF now works with 30 imams in 40 mosques.[78]

In Lebanon, there were 32 participants in this project who worked in public day care centers. They were trained on how to train parents of low income and educational background on establishing home environments that are safe and stimulating, protecting children from injury, and the importance of breastfeeding and the quality of parent-child interaction. Informal evaluation of the project indicated that 400 families have benefited from the information particularly those concerning home safety measures to protect the child from injury, providing proper nutrition for children, and providing emotional support as well.

B- Projects Involving Local, Regional, and International NGOs

1- Projects on a Particular Curriculum Model
Child-to-Child Programme: The Arab World was first introduced to this approach in 1981 where the first child-to Child activity book was published in Syria and Lebanon. The main focus of this approach was on health education. It also stressed the role of the older child in caring for younger siblings which is already present in the Arab social culture. This programme was included in early childhood workshops in 1992 and has broadened to include child rights and child empowerment. In 2001, the Child-to-Child training pack was adapted to the Arab countries and children's books published by Child-to-Child were translated to Arabic. The main themes in these books deal with issues such as pollution, disability, health, and nutrition.

ARC has been introducing the health education aspect of the programme in schools through promoting active learning methods. Since ARC has constantly stressed the need to address children who are socially and economically disadvantaged and in its promotion of an inclusive, integrated, and holistic vision, it has worked with the Kanafani Foundation and the Naba'a Foundation on implementing the Child-to-Child programme in those areas[79]. In addition, ARC has conducted a series of workshops on the "child-to-child" approach, established a basic opportunity to link and associate the training of trainers to that of direct field work.
The impact of participation in such an approach on children can foster and consolidate self-esteem, help in acquiring information pertaining to their lives and surroundings, assist in developing planning, evaluating and communicating skills as well as putting those skills into practice, and strengthen their ability to bear responsibility

High/Scope in Jordan
In Jordan, the High/Scope curriculum is implemented in one school and one center. The Iman Centre School in Jordan has been implementing this curriculum for about ten years. The Modern School in Amman began implementing this model which uses the "learning by play methodology". The main challenge was when children from kindergarten transitioned to grade one where they had to follow an official curricula that is not related neither to High/Scope nor to the importance of play. So, teachers in kindergarten had to change their methods in teaching children in order to prepare them for the idea of 'classes.' The result was negative, as students enjoyed kindergarten less. The other challenges the school faced had to do with the huge amounts of materials needed and financial resources. The training of teachers on that model could not eliminate the traditional mentality in teaching since High/scope considers the backbone of the education process to be the child, not the teacher. This model was also new to parents who were doubtful and expected homework[80].

2-Project on Teacher Development and Training of Trainers
The Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU): is an original and multifaceted approach to addressing ECD capacity building and leadership development in the Middle East and North Africa. Several international, regional and local organizations, including the employers of participants support this virtual university. It offers training and uses face-to-face interaction and distributed learning methods including: residential seminars, web-based instruction, CD-Rom and print material support, and a 'community of learners' strategy within and among cohort countries[81]. The first group of ECDVU learners in the Middle East region consisted of 13 committed professionals from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen and Tunisia. In Lebanon, three participants joined the ECDVU and UNICEF funded their training[82].

Holistic and Integrated Approach to ECCD: The Holistic Integrated Approach relies on two internationally recognized pillars: the Child's Rights and developmental psychology and where children with special needs are integrated and participate in the learning process.. In Sudan, a series of workshops began in 2002 by ARC and EAI. The purpose was to introduce the concepts of ECCD and CR to a number of teachers working with children in Khartoum. During the field visit, the consultant observed the following:

> *Physical living and learning environments were dismal. Huge areas of camps without a blade of grass or tree to relieve the barren landscape, which included evidence of old landfill garbage sites. Classrooms were empty except for a blackboard, and in some cases a few simple home made educational games. Children sat in rows; boys separate from the girls, on long benches, or in groups on rush mats. In one kindergarten, children brought their own chairs from home[83].*

It is apparent that early childhood programmes in Sudan need good Arabic resources, more practical training for its teachers, and the support of regular networking and exchange. For a period of 15 month (January, 2005-March 2006), ARC will be working on developing a group of trainers who will promote the ECCD sector in northern Sudan, The training will include 30 administrative, 25 trainers of teachers, 50 early childhood teachers. In order to assess it, field trips will be carried out.

In Lebanon, two workshops one in October 2002, and April 2004 involved 20 professionals. Participants were trained on the ARC Manual "adults and children learning: A holistic and integrated approach to early childhood care and development".

Capacity Building in ECCD in Sudan: ARC and Education Action International (EAI) worked to assess the ECD sector in Sudan. EAI is concerned mainly in enhancing access to and quality of education for refugees and people affected by conflict. In the Arab region, EAI's priority is in countries like Sudan, Yemen, Palestine, and Lebanon. In their Sudan field visit, ARC noted the challenges facing that sector which included traditional training and teaching methods, and the prevalence of child violence. Teachers in Sudan need to be trained more on child-centered approaches, active learning, and critical thinking. In addition, The AGFUND has provided donations for the Early Childhood Education Centre for Ahfad Center in Sudan.

3- Projects Targeting Children with Special Needs
Portage Project: One of the projects that have been implemented in some of the Arab countries is the Portage Project. The Project was originally designed in 1969 to provide services to young children from birth to six years of age in rural communities with disabilities in Portage, Wisconsin, USA. It is a family-guided, home-based programme to serve children with disabilities from birth to 6 and their families[84].

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The Portage Project was introduced to the Arab world in 1984 in the Gaza strip, Palestine by the president of an NGO "Gaza Society for the Care of Handicapped", Dr. Hatem Abu Ghazaleh and Dr, David Shearer. The Portage materials were translated and around 400 home visitors were trained. In Gaza strip, 4500 children (handicapped and at risk) received services weekly. In 1992, it was adopted by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, - ACCD and with finance from the Arab Gulf Programme for the Support of UN Development Organizations (AGFUND); it started implementing the programme in Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan. Detailed description of the targeted groups in these countries[85] is available in Table A20 of the Appendix. It is also working on implementing the programme in Qatar and Morocco.[86] Other countries like Bahrain and Kuwait have also used this early intervention programme. [87]

Impact and Challenges of the Portage Project
Feedback on the project noted that families were satisfied with the programme and the training methods. Though they had misgivings initially, they were surprised with the results as they played more with their children, and noticed that the children made progress. Goals are clear and have applicability. Others pointed out the suitability of this project for use in all environments and that the exercises used with children are a means for evaluation. In addition, the project allows for work with cases of simple and moderate mental retardation. However, Portage does not work with children who suffer from motor or sensual problems (blindness, deafness, etc.) or severely retarded or autistic children. [88]

On the other hand, parents and home visitors reported certain challenges. Home visitors need to be aware of the level of education of parents since parents' role is that they take written notes. As for parents, it became apparent that they need encouragement to continue and to record activities. Other challenges had to do with the nature of the materials of the project. For example, many of the materials were translated into the Arabic language. However, the translations varied a lot and were more a direct translation without any attempts to arabize them. In addition, the cost of the full material package was expensive particularly when a larger number was needed. [89]

Disability and Early Intervention Projects by Karim Rida Said Foundation
Since 1996, KRSF has worked with the MOSAL and NGOs in Syria on a disability programme. KRSF has supported training disability workers by sending them to conferences and seminars to enhance their knowledge. The foundation also sponsored projects in remote areas to improve disability services. To develop early intervention work with infants with special needs, the Foundation helped the Drop of Milk Society hold a training course for kindergartens that are including disabled children. It also provided a handbook on cerebral palsy and trained teachers working with the visual and hearing impaired.

In Jordan,the KRSF developed a sign language book for parents to help them teach and communicate with their children. The book offers 200 concepts with photo illustrations, is in Arabic and is generic making it accessible to other Middle Eastern countries. The Foundation supported areas where there was a lack of disability services especially in the south of Jordan. In June 2004, it also supported the establishment of the first specialized centre for autism in Amman and is working on providing trained teachers. This project will target over 120 children and their parents directly and indirectly in addition to 40 staff working with autism throughout the country and in neighboring countries.

In Lebanon, the Foundation supported local NGO's in integrating 22 blind and visually impaired children into five mainstream schools in different parts of Lebanon in 2003 and 2004.

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Conclusion

The paucity of data on early childhood education poses challenges to any study on the status of ECCE services, recent policies, strategies and innovative projects or initiatives. There is a need for: (a) accurate and detailed information base, and (b) research projects that assess the impact of national policies on children's development and learning. Moreover, the limited educational research in the region is written in Arabic which further limits its dissemination to other parts of the world, thus hampering its integration within the world knowledge base.

In Arab countries, children of higher income, better educated parents are more likely to have the advantage of participating in early childhood programmes than children from low socio-economic backgrounds given the fact that most of the programmes are still run by the private profit making sector. The lack of public structures in early childhood education, regional disparities, and the differences in cost and quality between public and private sectors create inequality. This uneven access is worrisome because learning gaps are developing among children in the preschool years. These disparities are likely to show as children enter formal schooling.

There is general assumption that achieving universal access to affordable and high quality ECCE services depends mainly on public funding and government investment in early learning. However, now that many governments are resorting to outsourcing and privatization, the challenge is how Arab governments can achieve this goal. One possible way to improve access is through some kind of financing mechanism- direct funds, subsidies, tax exemptions, or contributions. Social organizations- NGOs, religious organizations or communities- can play a leading role in financing ECCE services in cash or kind, such as donation of materials, buildings, or equipment. Funding may also be secured through a micro-credit system that trains women and offers them loans to open day care/KG centers particularly in rural areas.

The diverse sponsorship for ECCE services requires coordination, non-duplication, and central administration. It is evident that the role of NGOs is expanding, especially in caring for vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The government is not the only party responsible for public welfare. Society's well being and social development depends on the collaboration between civil society and government. Therefore, NGOs have a responsibility to promote public-private partnerships to support actions for children.

In order to improve quality, there is a need for qualified professionals. However, the reality that presents itself is the low status, salary and working conditions of teachers. The likelihood that the pervasiveness of these conditions prevails poses a challenge to the high turnover and retention among workers in this field.

There is a need for a unified vision of early childhood education in the Arab countries in light of its international definition. The primary age group that is included in this definition (6-8 years) is already in the compulsory school system where the emphasis is on literacy and numeracy rather than on the child's holistic development. The challenge is reconciling this with the transition from KGs to early primary grades.

Since religion plays a major role in the life of Arabs, religious leaders can assist in raising awareness on the importance of early childhood education in their Friday prayers or Sunday masses. Parents need to be more involved in understanding the value of that period and see it for what it is, a time to value and cherish and not make the child ready for school. Furthermore, the media can be instrumental in supporting the advocacy for early childhood.

Appendix

List of Tables

Table A1: Maternity Leave Benefits in the Arab Countries /2004

Country	Length of maternity leave	Percentage of wages paid in covered period	Provider of maternity benefits coverage
Algeria	14 weeks	100 %	Social security
Comoros	14 weeks	100%	Employer
Djibouti	14 weeks	50 % (100 % for public servants)	Employer
Egypt	90 days	100 %	Employer
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	50 days	50 % (100 % for self-employed women)	Employer (social security for self-employed women)
Mauritania	14 weeks	100 %	Social security
Mauritius	12 weeks	100 %	Employer
Morocco	14 weeks	100 %	Social security
Somalia	14 weeks	50 %	Employer
Sudan	8 weeks	100 %	Employer
Tunisia	30 days	67 %	Social security
Bahrain	45 days	100 %	Employer
Iraq	62 days	100 %	Social security
Jordan	10 weeks	100 %	Employer
Kuwait	70 days	100 %	Employer
Lebanon	7 weeks	100 %	Employer/Social security
Oman	No data	No data	No data
Qatar	50 days	100 %	Employer
Saudi Arabia	10 weeks	50 % or 100 % (depending on the duration of employment)	Employer
Syrian Arab Republic	50 days	70 %	Employer
United Arab Emirates	3 months	100 %	Employer
Yemen	60 days	100 %	Employer
Source: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/ww2005/tab5c.htm Statistics and indicators on women and men Table 5c - Maternity leave benefits ILO, Conditions of Work and Employment database: Maternity protection.: (http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2004-2005/europe/index.html)			

Table A2: Selected Arab Organizations for Early Childhood*

Name	Year established	Type	Aims
Kuwait Society for the Advancement of Arab Children, (KSAAC), Kuwait	1980	Local and regional non-profit and non-governmental organization	It aims to advance knowledge in the field of education in the Arab world and in particular early childhood education. It also encourages development of research regarding the early stage of the child's development. It has an Arabic Journal on the Arab Child (1999) that publishes academic research from various Arab universities. It aims to offer new techniques to advance the educational systems in the Arab world. It produced books and studies on early childhood education in the Arab regions. There were 26 studies written in Arabic that dealt with gifted children, Arabic children literature, studies in the social upbringing of the Arab child, and also produced a parent's manual on how to deal with ADHD children.
Arab Resource Collective- ARC	1988	Regional non-profit and non-governmental organization	Produces books, newsletters and other resources in Arabic, for the use of teachers and community workers in health, education and development projects. It also facilitates networking among national and international organizations with the aim of improving children's rights and child health. To date, ARC has worked with 90 Civil Society Organizations and government departments. ARC works with a large number of partners in Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan Syria, Sudan and Yemen.
The Arab Council for Childhood and Development- ACCD	1987	Regional- non-governmental	It serves the needs of the Arab children through supporting and coordinating with governmental and non-governmental and ensuring that children are included in the national development plans. It encourages the implementation of pioneer projects in the field of childhood and development in the Arab world. It also publishes books, reports, and studies on early childhood: ***Khutwa*** is a quarterly magazine specialized in

			early childhood and kindergartens. Also, **Al-Tufula wal-Tanmiya** which is a scientific, specialized and concise periodical that includes various studies and research on early childhood.
Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization -ALECSO	1970	Regional	It works within the Arab league and provide studies on various areas towards human development.
The Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND)	1980	Regional- Leaders of the Arab Gulf States constitute its membership and contribute to its budget. A regional developmental institution.	It supports sustainable human development efforts. It targets the neediest groups in the developing countries, particularly women and children, in cooperation with the organizations and institutions active in this field. It supports and funds programmes and projects in the sector of health, especially for motherhood and childhood. It funds educational programmes and projects targeting women and children, particularly the disadvantaged groups.

* Relevant data made available to the author on these organizations only
Websites for these organizations
Kuwait Society for the Advancement of Arab Children, (KSAAC), Kuwait
http://www.arabpsynet.com/Journals/jac/jac.7.htm and http://www.ksaac.org.kw/ in Arabic-
The Arab Council for Childhood and Development- ACCD
http://www.arabccd.org/docs/index.htm
The Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations www.agfund.org/
Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization -ALECSO http://www.alecso.org.tn/
Arab Resource Collective- ARC http://www.mawared.org/

Table A3- Regional Meetings that Focused Attention on Early Childhood: Timeline and Outcomes

Title	Place and Date	Organizers and participants	Highlights of Outcomes/Recommendations
First Arab High Level Conference on Children	Tunisia, 1992	Ministers from Arab States	Adopted a set of global goals for the year 2000
Arab Conference on Education	Cairo, Egypt January 2000	Arab ministers of education and UNESCO's director general.	• Identified Early childhood as a priority area • Called on Arab States to make early childhood education widely available and accessible particularly among the more disadvantaged groups, and to enhance the quality of early childhood education. • Stressed the importance of basic education in consolidating human development plans and exchanging expertise among the Arab states in the education field for better living conditions for the Arab people.
A Regional Youth Forum on 21st century issues	Amman, Jordan, October 29 - November 1, 2000	120 people from 16 different countries in the Middle East and North Africa region	Prepared a "Call for Action" on youth issues in the region asking for more child-friendly curricula, better quality teaching, a revision of the image media portrays of youth and a better dialogue with adults.
A Regional Civil Society Forum	Rabat, Morocco February 15-19, 2001	250 representatives of NGOs, parliamentarians from 21 countries and 10 regional and international organizations.	Issued a declaration that focused on early childhood, quality education, young people and improved protection.
Arab Summit	Amman, Jordan March, 2001	Arab World leaders	Approved *'The Arab Framework for the Rights of the Child'* a contemporary document that describes the Arab concern about children/childhood took shape at the beginning of the new millennium
A Regional Symposium on Children	Beirut, Lebanon, 24-27 April 2001	ESCWA, UNICEF's Regional Office, the League of Arab States, and 130 participants from 16 countries	Reviewed the major challenges to child rights such as poverty, conflict, child labour, disability, and violence. Debate and refine the proposals from youth and civil society. Examined the situation of children in the region
Second Arab High-Level Conference on Children	Cairo, Egypt, July 2001	150 delegates from 22 member countries, ministers, NGOs, and 33 young people	Issued a resolution on the Arab framework which was later adopted by the Arab summit. Recommendations called for making childhood a standard item on all future Arab summit agendas. Another recommendation was to declare the year 2002 as the *Year of the Child in the Arab World*.

Amman Arab Summit	Amman, Jordan March, 2002	Arab world leaders	Adopted an Arab framework on the rights of the Child, the first time that children were placed on the summit agenda since the establishment of the League of Arab states in 1945.
Beirut Arab Summit	Beirut, Lebanon March, 2003	Arab world leaders	Adopted the "Arab World Fit for Children" declaration reflecting the key themes agreed at the United Nations Special Session on Children- UNSSC
Third Arab High-Level Conference on Children	Tunis, Tunisia January 12-14, 2004	Delegates from 22 member countries, ministers, NGOs, and young people	Passed a resolution on the regional strategy for children which was later adopted by the Arab summit.
Arab Regional Conference on Improving Policies and Practices on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)	Cairo, Egypt February 23-25, 2004	UNESCO Regional Bureau in Beirut in collaboration with UNICEF, AGFUND, and UNESCO National Commission in Egypt. Representatives from the following countries participated in the conference: Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Kuwait, Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria	56 people from 16 Arab countries participated in the conference. Conference sessions tackled the following points: -The trends, principles and policies of early childhood care and education -Planning for an increase in the capacity and quality of early childhood programmes -Services provided in this field by the private sector and civil society -Family upbringing/education -Developing and implementing integrative policies in this field
16th Arab Summit	Tunis, Tunisia, May 22-23 , 2004	Arab world leaders	Adopted a regional plan aimed at realizing global targets for children by 2015 where the plan commit summit members to design national plans of action that allocate resources to realizing minimum standards for the children in the region.
Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities'	Beirut, Lebanon August 2004	ESCWA, the Arab Organization of Disabled People and other regional and international organizations	Discussed the development of capacity-building in Arab countries in areas of policy, programmes, and planning as related to the materialization of 'Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities'. It also discussed developing a unified position towards the preparation of an Arab Plan of Action to support the objectives of the 'Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities'
Source: Arab summit approves plan of action for children (Thursday, May 27, 2004). *Jordan Times* http://www.jordanembassyus.org/05272004001.htm			

Statistical Tables on Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Syria

Table A4: Demographic Data on the Four Countries

Country	Total population in thousands (% female)	% of population of children under the age of 5 (2004 est.) [*]	% of Population under 15	Annual GDP in US dollars (2003) per capita
Jordan	5703 (48)	13	37	1803
Lebanon	3577 (51)	9	29	5023
Sudan	36233 (50)	15	39	459
Syria	19044 (49)	13	37	1497
Source: United Nations- Statistics Division: *Social Indicators*. April 22, 2005 Source: * UNICEF State of the World's Children 2006: *Excluded and invisible*.				

Table A5: Data on Women's Fertility, Economic Activity, and Urban Population

Country	Total Fertility rate (births per women)		Under five mortality rate (2003) per 1,000 live births		Female economic activity (aged 15 and above) Rate (%)	Urban population (% of total population)
	1970-75	*2000-05*	*1970*	*2003*	**2003**	
Jordan	7.8	3.5	107	28	28.1	80
Lebanon	4.8	2.3	54	31	30.7	88
Sudan	6.7	4.4	172	93	35.7	40
Syria	7.5	3.5	129	18	29.5	50
Source: United Nations Development Programme -Human Development Report 2005: International Cooperation at a Crossroad: Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World. http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/						

Table A6: Pre-primary Education: Entry Level and Duration

Country	Entrance age	Duration
Jordan	4	2
Lebanon	3	3
Sudan	4	2
Syria	3	3
Source: UNESCO: Institute of Statistics- Global Education Digest (October, 2005). *Comparing education statistics across the world*.		

Table A7: Pre-Primary Gross Enrolment Rates

Country	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
Jordan	29	30	--	31	30
Lebanon	66	70	74	74	75
Sudan	21	22	20	20	27
Syria	8	9	9	10	11
Source: Gross and net enrolment ratios, pre-primary, for school years 1998/1999 to 2004/2005. http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=5037_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC					

Table A8: Children entering primary school with ECCE experience[90]

Country	% of those entering primary with ECCE experience
Jordan	42
Lebanon	94
Sudan	46
Syria	12
Source: UNESCO: Institute of Statistics -Global Education Digest (October, 2005). *Comparing education statistics across the world*.	

Table A9: Pupil-Teacher Ratio

Country	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
Jordan	22	22	-	21	20
Lebanon	13	14	19	18	18
Sudan	30	30	27	25	35
Syria	24	26	25	26	22
Source: UNESCO: Institute of Statistics -Pupil teacher ratio by level of education for the school years 1998/1999 to 2004/2005.Global Education Digest (October, 2005). *Comparing education statistics across the world*. http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=5257_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/html/Exceltables/education/ptr.xls					

Table A10: Maternity Leave and Provision for Day Care Centers

Country	Length of leave	% of paid wages	Who pays?	Provision for setting up Day Care Centers (0-3)
Jordan	10 weeks	100	Employer	A minimum of twenty female married employees in one workplace are entitled to the provision of a suitable place to care for the employees' children who are less than four years of age provided that the number is not less than ten children (Article 72)
Lebanon	7 weeks private sector, 60 days public sector	100	Employer	Not available
Sudan	Originally 8 weeks	100	Employer	Not available
Syria	75 days	100	Employer	Set up day nurseries in places where mothers work and stated the health and material conditions that should be provided in those nurseries, as well as some details on child nutrition and location of nurseries

Table A11: Legislations Related to Early Childhood Care and Education

Country	Legislation	Purpose
Lebanon	*No. 36, 1995*	*Classification of disabilities and the issuance of a personal card for the disabled to obtain health care with full coverage by the MOPH and other government institutions.*
	No.96/536 date 1996	Lifted the minimum age for working children from 8 to 13 completed years and widened protection related to conditions of employment and labor.
	No. 10227/97, 1997	New Education system with a curriculum for preschools that is used by the public sector.
	No-686 date 1998	Amended the Decree 134/59, Section 49 of the year 1959 from "Free elementary education for all Lebanese children" to "**Compulsory** free elementary education for all Lebanese children".
	No. 220 date May 29, 2000	*Formation of the National committee for People with Special Needs.*
	No. 4145 date 2000	Increased government contribution to semi private schools for each student.
	No. 344 date 2001	New teachers hired must have a university degree (educational degree) for all grade levels.
	No. 5684 and 3801 date 2001 No. 9091 date 2002	Space specifications for public school buildings, facilities and classrooms with disability access.
	No-8970 date 30-10-2002	KGs are two years in duration and entrance age is 4.
	No. 47 date 18-9-2003	Exempt public school children in KGs and grades one and two from school fees.
	No- 12268 date 2004	New regulations concerning the criteria for opening a private day care center
Syria	Law No. 35 on Compulsory Education, endorsed by the People's Assembly on 12 August 1981,	Stipulates the age (6 years) at which children are obligated to enter primary school (six-year programme), the competent enforcement authorities, and the sanctions imposed on families failing to send their children to school. This law also provides for incentives to be granted to both children and staff.
	Decision No. 967 of 12 March 1997	Issued by the Regional Leadership of the Baath Socialist Party determines that the training of teachers and teacher assistants will be provided in faculties of education instead of teacher-training institutes
	Legislative Decree No. /290/ of 1997	Establish three faculties for Education is Aleppo University, Tishreen University in Lattakia, and Al Ba'ath University in Homs in addition to Damascus University. By virtue of Decree No. /61/ of 1999, these four faculties were assigned to prepare and graduate educational recruits for all stages of education including the elementary stage and kindergartens.
	No. 2640/543 (3/4) 2001	*Special Education- set admission guidelines for light cases of special needs into the official education. The law requires that school buildings are made accessible to physically handicapped people. A new code is in process for new and existing buildings.*
	Law No.32 date 7/4/2002	Basic education from grade 1 to grade 9 and education is free and compulsory. Grades 1-4 should have a home room teacher who must hold a college degree in education.
	No. 55 date 2004	Specified criteria for KGs- adult/child ratio, fees, insurance
Jordan	MOE legislation (No. 3) 1994	The Act states that education is compulsory for all children (girls and boys) for the ten years stretching from primary education to the first cycle of secondary, and the first year of the second secondary cycle.

		It included classification of educational cycles into: kindergarten cycle (two-year programme); basic education (ten-year programme); and secondary education (two-year programme), consisting of comprehensive secondary education (academic and vocational) and applied secondary education
	Act for the Handicapped No.23, 1993	*Emphasized the right of all categories of students to equal opportunities in education in a way that meets their special needs and abilities.* *The Ministry of Education started to apply the 'resource room programme' in the mid 1990s to provide supportive and enrichment services to students with special needs. The 200 resource rooms available benefited 2,400 students in the scholastic year 1999-2000.*
Sudan	Council of Ministers Resolution No. 1799 of 1990	The pre-school stage has become an integral part of the formal education system.
	General Education Organization Act of 1992	General education objectives, examination regulations, educational policies and general administration. According to this Act, approved curricula must be applied nationwide; Arabic is the language of instruction and religious education is compulsory.
	MOE 1999	Basic Education is compulsory and lasts 8 years
	General Education Planning Act of 2000	Abrogated the General Education Organization Act of 1992 and in Chapter Three stated that each Sudanese child at the age of 6 had the right to basic education It also specified the general education cycles, which were 5 in number: - 1. Pre-school education for the age group (4-5) 2. Basic Education which lasts 8 years (6-13) 3. Adolescent and Adult Education and Private/Special Education 4. Secondary Education for the age group (14-16) 5. Informal Education- Educating Adolescent in the context of their local Environment project.
	Child Law 2003	Specified regulations for setting up day care centers and kindergartens. Articles 38 to 47 deal with the following: •The right to general education. •Aims and objectives of education in the three levels of general education. The abolition of corporal punishment and all forms of offending treatments in schools. •To single out a day for statistical data collection pertaining to education.

Table A12: Legislation concerning Maternity Leave in Labor Law

Country	Law	Content
Jordan	Jordanian labour law no (8), 1996 Chapter 8- Regulation of Work and Leaves.	**Article (67)**: The woman who works at an establishment which engages ten Employees or more shall have the right for a leave without pay for a maximum period of one year in order to devote her full time for looking after her children. She shall have the right to return to her work upon the expiry of this leave, provided that, she shall lose this right, if she works against payment during such period in any other establishment. **Article(70)**: Motherhood Leave -The working woman shall have the right to obtain a maternity leave totaling ten weeks with full pay prior to and after delivery provided that the period subsequent to delivery may not be less than six weeks. It shall be prohibited to put her to work prior to the expire of such period. **Article(71):** The working woman shall have the right subsequent to the expiry of the maternity leave provided for under article (70) of this law, to obtain, within a year of the date of delivery, a period or periods not exceeding one hour in total per day with pay for the purpose of nursing her new born. **Article(72):** Looking After the Children of the Working Women-The Employer who employs a minimum of twenty female married Employees should provide a suitable place under the custody of a qualified govern to care for the Employees children of less than four years of age provided that the number is not less than ten children **Article(77)**: The Employer of establishments Manager shall be penalized for every violation of any of the provisions of this chapter, any regulation or discussion issued pursuant thereto by a minimum fine of one hundred Dinars and not exceeding five hundred Dinars. The penalty shall be doubled in the case of repetition. The penalty may not be reduced below its minimum limit due to the extenuating discretionary circumstances.
Lebanon	Decree No. 207 dated 1/6/2000	The Lebanese Labor Law was amended such that employed women were ensured, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination: -The right of equal remuneration, the right to promotion, job security and allowances, the equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work and in dress codes, as well as the right to receive vocational training and retraining including apprenticeships. -The prohibition of unjustified dismissal of employed women by the employer on the ground of pregnancy, at the early stages of or during childbearing, and until the end of the maternity leave. -The extension of the term of maternity leave from 40 days to 7 weeks, with the possibility of annexing the allowed yearly leave. **Article 28 -** specifies that private sector employers are required to give an expectant mother seven weeks of maternity leave with full pay **Article 38** was amended to provide women employees in the public sector with 60 days' maternity leave.

Sudan	Labour Act 1997	**PART VII:WORKING HOURS AND LEAVES** 46.1. A woman worker after the completion of one year's service from the date of her appointment and for any subsequent year of service shall be entitled to a delivery leave on full pay calculated as follows: (a) Four weeks before delivery and four weeks after delivery provided that the probable date of delivery and the actual date on which delivery takes place shall be certified by the Medical Practitioner; (b) A permission may be given optionally for the same period of leave as provided in paragraph (a) to be two weeks before delivery and six weeks after delivery; (c) If the woman worker absents herself after the completion of the period mentioned in paragraphs (a) and (b) above due to illness resulting from pregnancy or delivery which makes her unable to resume work with a certification of the medical practitioner, in such case she is considered to be on a sick leave. 46.2. Without prejudice to the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of section 34 (1) and the provisions of section 50, the woman worker shall not be dismissed during the period of pregnancy or during the delivery leave. *In November 2000, the President decreed that women would receive two years paid maternity leave.*
Syria	Article 54 of statutes of the law governing public sector. **First and current law:** 1959 (social insurance), with 1976 and 2001 amendments.	For women- it gives special and fully paid holidays (seventy-five days) to women who just deliver. After this period, and if they desire, these women are entitled to an additional month with 80% salary, but without salary for another month. Working woman has the right for an hour breast feeding during working hours when motherhood holidays are finished and until her baby is one year old. The law obliges institutions and heads of companies to set up day nurseries in places where mothers work. The law also stated the health and material conditions that should be provided in those nurseries, as well as some details on child nutrition and location of nurseries.

Sources- Ministry of Labor , Jordan http://www.mol.gov.jo/ch8_f8

National Commission for Lebanese Women http://www.nclw.org.lb/activityAdet.cfm?id=80

Damachquiya,, N., et al. (13-14, July, 2001). Working paper presented in the Conference on " Role of Women in Economic Development" Brussels – Belgium http://www.aim-network.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/show_doc/doc_id/91

Sudan: http://www.sudan.net/government/constitution/compile.html

Table A13: Universities in Jordan that have Education Major by Type (government, private) and Date of Establishment

University	University Type	Year established	Education Programme Major
1. Al Al-Bayt University http://www.aabu.edu.jo/	Government	1995	Department of Education
2. Al-Balqa Applied University http://www.bau.edu.jo/ /	Government	1997	A state university in the field of Bachelor and Associate degree Applied Education
3. Al-Hussein Bin Talal University http://www.ahu.edu.jo/	Government	1999	College of Education- Educational Sciences include -Basic-phase Teacher, -Basic-phase Teacher, -Basic-phase Teacher/ English Language, - Kindergarten, BA-Special Education (2005/2006) *Priority to academic research*. The Deanship of academic research was established to organize, encourage and support academic research. The Deanship was established in 2001
4. Mu'tah University http://www.mutah.edu.jo	Government	1981	Has Curricula and Instruction, Educational Foundation and Administration, Queen Rania Al- Abdallah Center For Children's Studies (2002), Teachers Education and Certification. *Deanship of the Academic Research* (DAR) at Mutah University (MU). DAR was founded in 1990 to be responsible for the supervision, promotion and support of academic research under the name "Deanship of Academic Research and Graduate Studies".
5. Yarmouk University http://www.yu.edu.jo	Government	1976	In 1988/1989 Department of Education- Curriculum & Instruction, Counseling & Educational Psychology, Educational Administration And Foundation. It offers BA, MA, PhD in that major. In the year 2004/2005, number of undergraduate and graduate students majoring in different fields of education was 4703
6. The Hashemite University http://www.hu.edu.jo/	Government	1992 Teaching began in 1995/1996	Queen Rania's Faculty of childhood which offers Majors offered: Undergraduate majors in Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Care. Number of students enrolled by years for the last three years: has been 190 (2003), 212 (2004), and 393 (2005) Also has Department of Curricula and Instruction, Department of Foundations of Education, and Department of Educational Psychology, and Class Teacher.
7. University of Jordan http://www.ju.edu.jo	Government	1962	Faculty of Educational Sciences of The University of Jordan, the first faculty established in the country to prepare educational leaders founded in 1973. Has

			Center for Educational Development, Child Education. Classroom Teacher. It has 4,000 students enrolled in this faculty. **The Practical Education Programme...** The programme was established in 1993 with the main purpose of training pre-service teacher in areas such as planning for teaching, teaching practices, classroom management and evaluation, in addition to providing them with methods of professional development. **The Model School** was set up in 1983 to provide high standards of basic and secondary education. The School applies the syllabus prescribed by the Ministry of Education, in addition, a special syllabus in English and French.
8. Al-Ahliyya Amman University http://www.amman.edu/	Private	1990	English Literature- no education emphasis Psychology
9. Al-Isra Private University http://www.isra.edu.jo	Private	1991 – 1992	Faculty of Education: Grade Teacher, Child Care, Subject Teacher - Arabic, Subject Teacher - English
10.Al-Zaytoonah Jordanian Private University http://www.alzaytoonah.edu.jo	Private	1993	Class Teacher. The number of students enrolled at this Faculty for the academic year 2005 / 2006 is 932
11.Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies http://www.aau.edu.jo/	Private	1999/2000	Offers Graduate degrees in Education Studies
12.Applied Science University http://www.asu.edu.jo/	Private	1991	Education/Social Sciences
13.Irbid National University http://www.inu.edu.jo/	Private	1994	Education is under the faculty of Literature. The class teacher/English major was established in 2005/2006.
14.Jerash University http://www.jerashun.edu.jo	Private	1993	Under the faculty of literature. It offers Education Studies/Class Teacher
15.Philadelphia University http://www.philadelphia.edu.jo/	Private	1992	English Arabic
University of Petra (http://www.uop.edu.jo/	Private	1991	Child Education, Classroom Teacher *Deanship of Research* was established in 1991
16.Zarka Private University http://www.zpu.edu.jo/	Private	1994	The Faculty of Educational Sciences consists of 2 programmes : Class Teacher and Class Teacher of English language. The Number of Students at The Faculty for the academic year 2005 / 2006 is 932.

Table A14: Universities in Lebanon that have Education Major by Type (government, private) and Date of Establishment

University	Type	Year Established	Education Programme major
1. Al-Jinan University www.jinan.edu.lb	Private	1988 Official 1991	Education
2. Al-Manar University of Tripoli (MUT) Rashid Karami Institution for Higher Education http://www.almanar-university.com/	Private	1990- is supervised and managed by "Al-Manar Association". A non-profit Islamic Charity Institution, founded in 1958 to set up learning institutions that cater for students from Tripoli and the North in particular and from Lebanon and the Arab world.	Education- Elementary and Secondary
3. American University of Beirut http://www.aub.edu.lb	Private	1866.	Education- no Early Childhood Education
4. Arab Open University http://www.arabou-lb.edu.lb	Private	2002	Education
5. Beirut Arab University www.bau.edu.lb	Private	1960	No education major English, Arabic, Psychology
6. Haigazian University www.haigazian.edu.lb	Private	1955 as a college 1992 as university college 1996- university	Education Early Childhood Education
7. Holy Spirit University of Kaslik www.usek.edu.lb	Private	1961	Elementary education
8. Lebanese American University www.lau.edu.lb	Private	founded in 1885 as the Beirut College for Women	Education Early Childhood Education
9. Lebanese International University www.liu.edu.lb	Private	2001	Education and Early Childhood Education
10. Lebanese University www.ul.edu.lb	Government	1953	Education and Early Childhood Education
11. Notre Dame University www.ndu.edu.lb	Private	1990	Have an education major and offers a BA in early childhood
12. Saint- Joseph University www.usj.edu.lb	Private	1860	Education Early Childhood Education
13. University of Balamand www.balamand.edu.lb	Private	1988	Education

Table A15: Universities in Sudan that have Education Major by Type (government, private) and Date of Establishment

University	University Type	Year Established	Education Programme Major
1- Ahfad University for Women www.ahfad.org	Private	First known as Ahfad University College for Women in 1966 In 1995, full university status	The School of Psychology and Pre-School Education founded in 1967, which is the only source in the country for personnel in the area of early child development and education. Early Childhood Development Centre, which provides a center for practical training for students from the School of Psychology and Pre-School Education who opt to specialize in early childhood education. Teacher Research Resources Unit, whose mission is to improve the quality of instruction and learning at Ahfad.
2- Al Zaiem Al Azhari University http://www.alazhari.net/	Government	1990	Has an education major
3- Nile Valley University http://www.nilevalley.edu.sd/	Government	Started as a college for engineering in 1971, then education faculty was added in 1984. Officially recognized as a university in 1990	Have a major in Education and a graduate programme but no early childhood major. Teachers College was established in 1994 for teachers in primary grades.
4- Omdurman Islamic University http://www.oiu-sd.net/	Government	1912 but in 1965 it was known as a university	Has an education major that began in the mid 1970s as part of Islamic studies and then had its own faculty of education in 1991. *There is no major in early childhood*
5- Sudan University of Science and Technology http://www.sustech.edu/	Government	1975 which was upgraded to Sudan University of Science & technology in 1990	Women and Child Health and Development is an academic, an income generating institution designed for promotion of women, child development.
6- University of Gezira http://www.gezirauniversity.net/ last updated 200/2001	Government	1975	Faculty of Education
7- University of Juba http://jubauniversity.net/	Government	1975	Faculty of Education This faculty includes departments of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, English and Arabic languages.

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8- University of Khartoum http://www.uofk.edu	Government	Began as Gordon Memorial College Officially opened in 1902. In 1951, it become Khartoum University College and then in 1956 it had full university status	The Education Campus is in Northern Omdurman. Has Curriculum and Teaching Methods, Department of Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Technologies, Department of History and Philosophy of Education
9- University of Kordofan http://www.uni-kordofan.com/	Government		B.Sc. in Education after a four-year course. The university also started a programme for training high school teachers has been started in 2001.

Table A16: Universities in Syria that have Education Major by Type (government, private) and Date of Establishment

University	University Type	Year established	Education Programme major
Damascus University http://www.damasuniv.shern.net	Government	It was founded in 1901 and later named the "Syrian university "in 1923. In 1958, the university became known as Damascus University	The Education programme has been in this university since 1946 but it offered a teaching diploma. Since 1976, the university in its faculty of education offered a degree in education and it has a graduate programme. Offer Early Childhood Education
University of Aleppo-Aleppo http://www.alepuniv.shern.net	Government	The university began in 1946	In 1999, the education major was established for graduates to be classroom teachers or KG.
Tishreen University- Lattikia www.tishreen.shern.net	Government	1971 known as the University of Lattikia	The Faculty of Education was founded in 1997-1998
Al-Baath University http://www.baath.shern.net	Government	1979	The faculty of education was established in 1999. Majors in education include class teacher. No indication of whether there is a major for Early childhood

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Table A17: Selected International Organizations that Work with Regional Arab NGOs

Name and Type	Year established	Description and Aims
The Karim Rida Said Foundation http://www.krsf.org/ non-governmental organization	1982	It aims to support the development of disadvantaged children and encourage the education of young people for whom such opportunities would not otherwise be available. In 2004/2005, the Foundation supported 20 project partners in its target countries of Iraq, Jordan Lebanon and Palestine and with focus mainly on disability, health, education and projects for children at risk. These projects directly targeted around 10,832 beneficiaries while the Foundation estimates that around 25,000 have indirectly benefited from the services offered.
The Bernard van Leer Foundation http:// www.bernardvanleer.org charitable foundation	1949	It aims to improve opportunities for children between the ages of 0 and 8 who live in circumstances of social and economic disadvantage It funds and supports early childhood development projects across the world
Aga Khan Foundation: The AKDN http://www.akdn.org/ group of private, non-governmental agencies & institutions	1967	It is active in over 20 countries world wide and it seeks to empower communities and individuals that are often in disadvantaged circumstances in order to improve living conditions and opportunities. It is active in Syria.
Education Action International http://www.education-action.org/ charitable company	1920	Works with people affected by conflict in their home countries and countries of refuge. It supports children and adults to achieve their potential through literacy, life-skills and employment training. Education Action supports the development of innovative school-based education. EAI is working with primary schools and literacy teachers in Palestine, and Sudan to develop effective practical in-service teacher training courses that have an immediate impact on teacher attitudes and practice. Through collaboration with ARC, it is expanding resource capacity in the Arab World through which it will involve approximately 20,000 direct and secondary stakeholders. EAI also has Early Childhood Resource Centre which produces educational materials and trains pre-school teachers across the West Bank and Gaza Strip. During the time they worked with the ECRC, they have trained over 600 teachers who will go on to teach thousands of children during their working life. EAI also works with fifteen displaced communities' organizations in Northern Sudan. It assists internally displaced people in their attempt to improve the quality of education in the Khartoum refugee camps. This project trains 250 teachers per year and reaches 10,000 children and 2,000 adult learners. Sudan Curriculum and Teacher Training (NSEA - Sudan) This project focuses on curriculum development and teacher training in the last year as

		well as working to ensure that the partner organization becomes independent in its work to promote quality education and gender equality in Southern Sudan. The project aims to reach 1,000 teachers and 45 teacher trainers over a four year period Education and Training for Southern Sudanese -This is a network of four Sudanese organizations that provide infrastructure and organizational support to refugee community organizations for education services. The objective is to promote self-reliance and less donor dependency among Sudanese refugees and displaced people. In Northern Sudan, the EAI has been funding ARC since 1996 where ARC is conducting workshops and training as part of a five-year programme (2001-2006).
War Child Netherlands http://www.warchild.nl/ independent humanitarian NGO	1995	Empower children in war-affected areas through: Psychosocial programmes applying the power of creative arts and sports to strengthen the children's psychological and social development and well-being. Creative arts and sports programmes to reconcile groups of children divided by war, to build a peaceful society. Creating public awareness and support on/for the plight of children in war zones From 2004 onwards, the main focus of War Child's intervention in Khartoum (and the Sudan) is to increase awareness of child rights in Sudan at all levels of the community. War Child involves children in designing child rights advocacy initiatives. This includes the production of child rights materials including comic books, posters, music cassettes, events, a Child Rights Newsletter as well as media spots. War Child trains the teachers of the government and private schools in using creative means to support psychosocial development of children. The cycle of training also includes integrating child rights messages in schools and in the workshops. During the school year 2003-2004, the War Child Training of Teachers (ToT) has been successful training 20 out of 52 teachers and has reached some 8,000 children. The creative activities have now been included in the curriculum of the Ministry of Education. In the school year 2004-2005, War Child will work with the Ministry of Education and the already trained teachers in developing a second phase to the teacher-training programme. In the second phase, it will train an additional 32 teachers in giving psychosocial support to children using creative means and in child rights at each of the 26 schools in Malakal thus reaching all children of primary school age.
Save the Children http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/index.html non governmental organisation	1919	The International Save the Children Alliance currently comprises 30 organizations around the world. Working in over 100 countries, Save the Children is the world's largest independent movement for children. In Jordan- Working with Jordan River Foundation and the Queen Zain Al Sharaf Institute for Development where the organization has been developing, testing, modifying and using tools and materials that encourage healthy, safe early childhood development and

		education. These tools include learning through play methodologies in kindergartens and a child safety puppet theatre. <u>In Lebanon-</u> Save the Children UK is working with the MOE and UN agencies on funding programmes for at risk children. It is also supporting inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools and providing for early childhood centers in disadvantaged areas. As for Save the Children-Sweden (RÃdda Barnen), its work in Lebanon is focused mainly on Palestinians in refugee camps in South Lebanon and supporting children with disabilities. Save the Children UK ran youth and early childhood development projects, especially in Palestinian camps where they set up kindergartens reaching more than 20,000 children, and pioneered informal approaches to early learning. Many more children will be reached through an Arabic manual that was created with a local partner, for use across the region. Much of this work has been handed over to a national NGO called Naba'a. <u>In Sudan-</u> Save the Children-Sweden (RÃdda Barnen) continues to support pre-school education in southern Sudan. The aim of the project is to provide forum for physical and mental growth of pre-school age children through play and to promote girls'education through early enrollment in school. One form of support was to train pre-school teachers in 2004. As such, 29 pre-school teachers completed phase one training. Three model pre-schools were also constructed through community participation and SCS support and another 39 new pre-schools were established. As a result, there was an 82% increase in pre-school enrolment (there are now 4,854 pupils attending) and a 59% increase in girls' enrolment in pre-school . It also funded the participation of two Sudanese children in a 2004 conference on *Child Participation in the Arab Plan for Childhood Care*.

Table A18: Selected Local Organizations by Country

Country	Name and Type	Year established	Target group	Purpose
Lebanon	The Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation	1974	Children in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon	This foundation runs six KGs and two rehabilitation centers for children with disability. It has partnership with Handicap International which supports GKCF Habilitation School for children with multiple disabilities in the camp of Mar Elias. GKCF also has three public libraries in refugee camps. More than 7000 children have benefited from GKCF. The foundation also has a two year training programme for KG teachers where it provides a Baccalaureate degree and includes in its syllabus the Child-to-Child approach and Child Rights.
	Association Najdeh (AN)	1978	Has a Pre-School Education Project targets 600 children per scholastic year	Focuses on the empowerment of refugee women through participation and development activities Najdeh has projects in Beirut, Tripoli (north), Sidon (south), Tyre (south-south)
	Maarouf Saad Foundation (MSSCF)	1980		MSSCF aims to provide medical and educational facilities to deprived areas. MSSCF attempts to create an awareness of the importance of health and education for children. It seeks to help the people of Lebanon to understand their rights. Primary areas of work: MSSCF focuses on health, education, training, social services and children's activities - implemented through the clinics and the schools.
	Developmental Action without Borders. The Nab'a Foundation	2001	serves 8000 children in Palestinian refugee camps in north and south Lebanon	Basically works with children, women, community and young people aged 0-25 years old and children with disability Works with the Child-to-Child programme and promotes inclusive education. Furthermore, as part of its community outreach, it involves the youth who conduct summer workshops for children aged 5-11 years-old. Has partnership with Save the Children-UK, Save the Children-Sweden, UNESCO. Has partnership with Karim Rida Said Foundation (KRSF) July 2003-July 2008
Sudan	Om El Mominein Charity Organization non-governmental organization	1984	families and orphans	Provides long and short-term care. It selects children from the poorest communities and makes sure that their basic needs are met--health care, nutrition, education, guidance--getting a shot at a brighter future
	Sabah Association For Child Care And Development (SACCD)	1986	Children 5 - 18	Provide training or education on child rights, Research child rights, Undertake legal casework on behalf of children, Work directly with

	non governmental organisation			children, Work in partnership with organizations such as Amal and Hope and Homes. It is funded by Save the Children, Sweden, UNICEF, ECCO. It established 26 KGs in Mayo settlement where 1400 children benefit from these KGs.
	Amal Friends of Children Society non-governmental organization	1984	At risk children; street, displaced, disabled	Established by a group of academicians whose purpose is to protect children in difficult circumstances. It has 150 volunteers. In 1991, started establishing KGs as a way to solve the problem of street children. It contributed to the drafting of Child Law and revision of it. Has partnership with Hope and Homes, Save the Children, Sweden, War Child Holland, and Christian Aid.
Syria	Drop of Milk Society -Non - profit charity organization	1922	children 0-3, and children 0-5 with special needs and parents	It provides care for children 0-3. In 1997, the D.O.M. established an early intervention center for children with special needs. The early intervention center treats children with special needs and confers with parents to identify and treat their disabilities. The center offers speech therapy to children with speech and hearing problems, as well as serious mental development and emotional disabilities. It provides parents with educational video films in coordination with UNICEF.
	Syrian Women's Federation Organization partially funded by the government	1967	Children 0-6	Provides a non profit service to working mothers for the care of their young children. It now owns and manages around 400 nurseries and kindergartens targeting working women.
	Mabaraa Women's Association	1945	Orphaned children	Provides day care centers for orphaned children. In 1982, it provided day care centers for low income families who work. In 1979, provided 100 orphaned children from 0-6 with assistance to poor families.
	Fund for Integrated Rural Development Of Syria – FIRDOS A non-profit humanitarian organization	2001	Rural areas	Established by Mrs. Asma Al-Assad, the Syrian First Lady. The purpose is to promote comprehensive socio-economic development in Syria's rural communities. It aims is to strengthen and enhance the capacity of communities and local groups, whilst respecting the positive values of local culture and heritage.
	Al-Madaen Association Social Services Centre	1963	Poor and Disabled children and parents especially in rural areas	Community-based approach to help disabled children where it trains mothers how to deal with their children. The centre's services are free and cover speech therapy, physical therapy and early detection. It also provides educational classes for children with special needs, literacy classes for women and home visits to children who are unable to travel. With support from an Italian organization MOVIMONDO in 200-2001, it has helped 300 families and 237 children with disabilities.

Jordan	The Joranian Hashemite Fund for Human Development non-governmental	1980	pre-school education model in rural areas (1984)	Focuses on a model of integrated development activities ranging from child development, family health and nutrition, education and awareness, leadership skills for women, to income-generation and enterprise development. The Fund has supported over 234 societies and established more than 450 classes in local communities - providing training and technical assistance. Women entrepreneurs have been encouraged to set up their own pre-school classes with training and credit from the Fund. Jordan's first Pre-school Teacher's Guide Book was published in 1991 as a result of collaboration between the Fund, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF.
	The Al-Hussein Society for the Habilitation/Rehabilitation of the Physically Challenged (AHS) An educational, vocational and therapeutic NGO	1971	Children with special needs and their parents	Provides comprehensive habilitation/rehabilitation services to physically challenged individuals, with the emphasis on children. Through the Portage Programme, it trains mothers on how to handle their disabled children (from birth up to nine years of age) in their own environment.
	Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID)	1994	Trainers, teachers, and especially poor community	Provides information, training and consultancy to trainers and development workers, and hosts national, regional and international events related to development It takes a human rights-based approach to development, encouraging gender equity in all our activities, and advocates policy changes to bring lasting improvements to the lives of poor communities. The Social Development Training Centre is also active in developing training materials, and runs a model kindergarten for the applied learning of pre-school teachers

Websites for some of these organizations
Jordan- The Joranian Hashemite Fund for Human Development http://www.johud.org.jo
Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID) www.zenid.org.jo
The Al-Hussein Society for the Habilitation/Rehabilitation of the Physically Challenged (AHS) http://www.alhusseinrehab.org.jo/
Syria- Drop of Milk Society -Non - profit charity organization http://dropofmilk.org/aboutus1.htm
Fund for Integrated Rural Development Of Syria – FIRDOS www.firdos.org.sy
Lebanon- Association Najdeh (AN)- http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/360/362/najdeh/
Developmental Action without Borders -The Nab'a Foundation http://www.nabaa-lb.org/
Sudan- Sabah Association For Child Care And Development sabah_ass@hotmail.com
Amal Society amalsociety@yahoo.com

Table A19: Description of Selected Projects/Approaches by Country

Project	Arab Country	Year it began	Target population	Description
Child-to-Child Programme-CtC http://www.child-to-child.org/newsletter/2000-17.html	Sudan, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon	1978	children	Child-to-Child is an approach for helping children to help themselves and other children to improve health and social conditions for themselves, their families and the community. The first local CTC programme was launched in the Arab World in 1987. The Institute for Arab Research had published an introduction to the CTC approach in Arabic. The Arabic version became available in 1994. It started first in Yemen and Iraq and has been in classrooms since 1996. It helps children with disabilities in Yemen learn about CRC.
The High/Scope approach http://www.highscope.org/	It was translated to Arabic in 1999 in Jordan.	1970 by Dr. David P. Weikart	Originally designed for low-income, "at-risk" children. It is a preschool approach used in both public and private half- and full-day preschools, nursery schools, day care centers, home-based day care programmes, and programmes for children with special needs.	The High/Scope is now used for the full range of children and has been successfully implemented in both urban and rural settings both in the U.S. and overseas. It does not directly teach math, reading, writing and other academic skills through sequenced activities, drills, workbooks, or other "school-like" activities. Instead teachers provide key experiences and materials that help children develop the broad language and logical abilities that are the foundation for later academic learning.
Better Parenting Project Funded by UNICEF	Jordan & Lebanon	1996-Jordan	Parents from low income background, low literacy, and no or minimal employment, , facilitators, community workers	The Better Parenting Project was initiated by UNICEF with local partners in six countries within the Middle East Region. The Better Parenting project integrates information from several areas: health issues such as diseases and vaccines, nutrition concerns, child-rearing practices, and the importance of play, social and emotional development, and language and movement activities for children (birth-6 years) which are essential to the child's whole and healthy start in life. **In Jordan-** in just 3 years, it: Reached 13,317 parents

				Trained 18 core master trainers Trained 284 facilitators Trained 182 community workers
The Portage Project http://www.portageproject.org/	See table A19	1969 in Portage, Wisconsin, USA	A family-guided, home-based programme to serve children with disabilities, from birth to 6, and their families.	The Project was originally created in response to the need to provide services in a rural community to young children (0-6 years) with disabilities. It emphasizes teaching parents to teach their own children. The project involves a weekly home visit to the parents and the child by workers trained on the programme. The home teacher teaches the parents how to teach, what to reinforce and how to observe and collect data on their child's behaviors. The parents keep a daily record of the task carried out by the child. Skills are usually devised according to the interests of parents and what they know about their child and his/her abilities. The devised plan helps parents and boosts their ability to work successfully with their child. The Portage Guide to Early Education has undergone 37 translations and it has been introduced in over 78 countries worldwide where they have implemented this model as a delivery system of quality early intervention services. Portage is now practiced in Saudi Arabia in cities like Riyadh, Abha, Al Hafouf, Medina, Qassim and Jeddah. The centers using Portage have al reported that they find it useful and easy to implement.

Table A20: The Portage Project in the Arab Countries

Year	Location and Sponsor	Brief Description
1991	Cairo, Egypt	14 home visitors were trained. 168 families received services weekly
1992	Regional training workshop (T.O.T).	18 Arab specialized trainers from 9 Arab countries
1993	Yemen, Ministry of Social Affairs .	11 home visitors were trained. 79 families received services weekly
1994	Beirut, Lebanon, 3 different areas local NGO .	35 home visitors were trained. 630 children/families received weekly services
1994	Qassim, Saudi Arabia, with the Ministry of Health and a local NGO .	24 home visitors were trained 144 children/families received weekly services.
1995	Al-Madina Al-Mounawara and Abha, Saudi Arabia	24 home visitors were trained 144 children/families received weekly services
1996	Kuwait	Provided Portage Training to early intervention staff through the Ministry of Education.
1997	Jordan, 4 NGO's in four districts.	24 home visitors were trained 300 children/families received weekly services
1998-99	Jordan	The Hashemite Jordanian Fund for Human Development (formerly Queen Alya's Fund for Voluntary Social Work) adopted Portage
1998	South Lebanon, Lebanon-3 major cities, a local NGO	24 home visitors were trained 300 children/families received weekly services
1999	Kuwait, The First Arab Regional Conference of Rehabilitation & the 2nd Gulf Conference of Medical Rehabilitation,	Over 60 families were involved.
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