

Stephanie Bengtsson, Rachael Fitzpatrick, Claire Thibault, Helen West

# Teacher management in refugee settings: **UNRWA schools in Jordan**

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## IIEP-UNESCO

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## List of acronyms

<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to Affected Populations	<b>JFO</b>	Jordan Field Office
<b>AEO</b>	area education officer	<b>LftF</b>	Leading for the Future
<b>ASU</b>	Area Staff Union	<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>AU</b>	Assessment Unit	<b>MOPAN</b>	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
<b>CPD</b>	continuing professional development	<b>MTS</b>	Medium-Term Strategy
<b>CRRF</b>	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework	<b>NAT</b>	Newly Appointed Teacher
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development	<b>NTS</b>	National Teacher Survey
<b>EDC</b>	Education Development Centre	<b>OD</b>	Organisational Development
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System	<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>EP</b>	Education Psychology	<b>OTI</b>	opportunity to improve
<b>ePER</b>	electronic performance management system	<b>PDCU</b>	Professional Development and Curriculum Unit
<b>ERS</b>	Education Reform Strategy 2011–2015	<b>QRF</b>	Queen Rania Foundation
<b>ESF</b>	Education Science Faculty	<b>QRTA</b>	Queen Rania Teacher Academy
<b>ETI</b>	Educational Technical Instructions	<b>SBTD</b>	School-Based Teacher Development
<b>EU-FPI</b>	European Commission’s Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>FESA</b>	Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts	<b>SSU</b>	Strategic Support Unit
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence	<b>SQAU</b>	School Quality Assurance Unit
<b>GCR</b>	Global Compact on Refugees	<b>TALIS</b>	Teaching and Learning International Survey
<b>GES</b>	Gender Equality Strategy	<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>HRCRT</b>	Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>HR</b>	human resources	<b>UNHCR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>ICT</b>	information and communication technology	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>IIEP-UNESCO</b>	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning	<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
<b>INEE</b>	Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies		
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee		

# Overview



## Globally, there are 70.8 million forcibly displaced persons, the highest number since the Second World War. Among these are 25.9 million refugees, over half of whom are children. This unprecedented displacement poses challenges for the world's education systems.

In fact, Goal 4 of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seeks to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all', remains far out of reach for many of the world's refugees. According to a recent report from the International Rescue Committee (IRC), refugees are largely excluded from SDG-related data collection, monitoring frameworks, and national reporting and development plans.<sup>1</sup> As of 2018, only 63% and 24% of refugees had access to primary and secondary schooling respectively.<sup>2</sup> There is therefore an urgent need to improve the equitable provision of quality education that is inclusive of refugees.

Effective teacher management is a key policy lever for ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education systems. Research has shown that the quality of the teaching workforce is the most important factor affecting student learning among those that are open to policy influence.<sup>3</sup> In crisis and displacement situations, the role of teachers is particularly significant; they are the 'key to successful inclusion' and are sometimes the only educational resource available to students.<sup>4</sup> Teachers are a source of continuity in students' disrupted lives; they play a key role in developing their social and emotional skills and in protecting and supporting their scholastic success.<sup>5</sup> However, teachers working in refugee contexts are unable to play this crucial role without appropriate support and training to be able to handle the often overcrowded, mixed-age and multilingual classrooms.<sup>6</sup>

Although teachers and teaching practices have received increasing attention in education in emergencies research in the last few years,<sup>7</sup> most of the data available about teachers of refugees are limited to numbers of teachers, qualifications and certification, and compensation.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, it is understandable that these data are cited most often in the discourse, considering that mass shortages, particularly of qualified teachers, are a significant problem 'across displacement settings, both at the onset of crisis and in cases of protracted displacement'.<sup>9</sup>

More research is needed – particularly from the perspectives of teachers in refugee settings – to identify the many challenges they face and to support the development of strategies to overcome them. Challenges include a lack of appropriate preparation to provide psychosocial support and practise self-care, uncertain career opportunities, financial and social insecurity, language barriers, gender inequality, and a lack of coordination between the many non-governmental and governmental actors involved.<sup>10</sup>

As more emergencies become protracted crises and refugee populations continue to grow, there is an urgent need for evidence to guide the development and implementation of policies for the effective management of teachers working with the populations affected. Such research should pay attention to the dynamics and context of the displacement crisis, focusing on teachers *in refugee settings* rather than teachers *of refugees*, as not only can the global refugee crisis change from day to day with the outbreak of new

<sup>1</sup> IRC (2019) <sup>2</sup> UNHCR (2019b) <sup>3</sup> OECD (2010); Hattie (2002) <sup>4</sup> UNESCO (2019); World Bank Group (2010) <sup>5</sup> Richardson et al. (2018) <sup>6</sup> UNESCO (2019) <sup>7</sup> INEE (2019) <sup>8</sup> Richardson et al. (2018) <sup>9</sup> UNESCO (2019) <sup>10</sup> Mendenhall et al. (2018)

### Box 1: Teacher management

The studies conducted as part of this research programme examine teacher management policies in refugee settings. Broadly speaking, teacher management is a ‘process which encompasses the personnel functions relating to the appointment of teachers, their deployment, confirmation, appraisal and professional development, promotion, discipline and all other matters affecting their teaching service’.<sup>11</sup> Following a review of the relevant international standards and frameworks such as the 1966 International Labour Organization/ UNESCO *Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers* and the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) *Minimum Standards for Education (2010)*, we have grouped these personnel functions into three key categories to guide our data collection and analysis: (1) recruitment and deployment, (2) teacher professional development, and (3) job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path. Underpinning this research is the idea that strengthening the teacher management process will lead to improved motivation, wellbeing, teaching quality and retention in the teaching workforce, which will in turn help to ensure quality, inclusive education for refugees and host communities alike.

crises, including climate-related emergencies, but sometimes host communities are just as vulnerable, if not more so, than their refugee peers. In other words, research is needed that will align with the ‘whole society approach’ advocated by the international community and support planning for the society as a whole instead of planning in parallel for the host community and the refugee community.

### A programme of research in response

In 2018, IIEP-UNESCO and Education Development Trust jointly published a review of the literature relating to teacher management in refugee settings.<sup>12</sup> The review concludes that for displaced populations, realising their legal rights, where afforded, can be challenging when international frameworks have not been ratified or adapted into national legal frameworks. It can be equally difficult when legal frameworks are poorly integrated into social service policies, plans and strategies (e.g. within national education sector plans). Also, research is needed to understand what host governments

managing large refugee populations have done to reconcile the tensions between their international obligations and their capacity to fulfil them. Relatedly, research is needed on how the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) will affect government capacity to effectively manage teachers of refugees. Overall, we need to learn more about how to provide education to refugee children by better exploring examples of teacher management models.

The review also concludes that much of the literature indicates that teachers from the refugee community are best placed to teach, or should at least be a part of the education provision. Host countries are aware of this, and are utilising refugees to support national teachers, as is the case to some extent in Ethiopia, Kenya and Turkey. Nevertheless, in most contexts more and more national teachers are teaching refugees, with very limited support and preparation. Fragmented information on refugee teachers, coupled with a lack of information on host teachers charged with refugee students’ education, points to a need for more research. Issues like the portability of certification and adequate pay are important management factors for both refugee and national teachers. Yet, beyond these issues, there are few studies that critically analyse teachers’ perceptions. A wider study of how teachers of refugees perceive their selection and management will go a long way to ensuring policies and programmes are appropriate, effective and sustainable.

Following the review’s conclusions, IIEP-UNESCO and Education Development Trust embarked on a multi-year, multi-country research initiative aiming to provide research-informed policy recommendations for more effective teacher management in refugee settings, supporting UNESCO member states and other partners in responding to the call set out in the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4:<sup>13</sup>

***to ensure that teachers ... are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.***

At the time of writing, five case studies have been completed or are under way. These include a completed report on Ethiopia and two reports on Jordan – this report on teachers working with Palestine refugees in schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and another report on teachers working with Syrian refugees in host community public schools – plus a further two country studies taking place in Kenya and Uganda.

<sup>11</sup> Halliday (1995) <sup>12</sup> Richardson et al. (2018) <sup>13</sup> UNESCO (2015)

## UNRWA Jordan study

UNRWA provides protection and essential services to Palestine refugees in five sites known as ‘Fields’, namely Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Agency has a long history of providing education, and UNRWA students are among the most highly educated in the region.<sup>14</sup> In Jordan, at the basic education level, UNRWA provides free, formal education for over 120,000 Palestinian children, employing over 4,000 teachers, school principals and other education personnel.

UNRWA recognises the key role that education has to play in personal and societal development and, according to its *Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2016–2021*, the Agency aims to ‘ensure school-aged children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education to enable students, over time, to develop the cognitive, social, cultural and personal capabilities to best equip them to realize their potential as an individual and as a member of their society’.<sup>15</sup> In 2011, UNRWA launched an ambitious Education Reform Strategy (ERS), which led to the development and implementation of a comprehensive Teacher Policy in recognition of the central role teachers have to play in ensuring that all children are able to complete quality, equitable and inclusive education.

This case study aims to contribute to the burgeoning evidence base on teachers working in crisis and displacement contexts and to provide UNRWA and key partners with research-informed policy guidance to inform the ongoing effective management of teachers to ensure quality education for all learners.

Using a collaborative, two-phased, mixed-methods approach, the research, which was conducted between September 2019 and April 2021, examines how teachers are managed in policy and practice in the UNRWA system in Jordan.<sup>16</sup> The case study identifies promising policies and practices and gaps in policy and practice in order to reveal potential areas for further development and successful implementation of policies to support effective teacher management in refugee settings.

### The study had three objectives

**1.** Build an understanding of the policy landscape guiding the management of elementary-level (Grades 1 to 6) teachers in UNRWA schools catering to Palestine refugees in Jordan by identifying and exploring with research participants:

- a.** relevant international, regional and national policies,
- b.** perceptions of the enactment of these policies, and
- c.** awareness of these policies at different levels of the education system.

**2.** Explore teacher management in practice by examining:

- a.** who is teaching Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools,
- b.** recruitment and deployment,
- c.** teacher professional development,
- d.** job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career paths, and
- e.** motivation and wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention.

**3.** Identify promising areas for further policy development and implementation to support effective teacher management in practice.

The presentation of findings is structured through these objectives as outlined in table 1 (page 14).

### The research was conducted in two phases:

- Phase 1, which explored the policy landscape framing the management of teachers in the UNRWA system in Jordan, the profile of the teaching workforce, and the management of teachers in practice at the school level
- Phase 2, which further explored research participants’ perceptions of the policy enactment process, or how policies are communicated, interpreted, discussed and implemented at various levels of governance.

### The case study involved a mixed-methods approach:

- policy document analysis
- analysis of available secondary data (e.g. Education Management Information System [EMIS])
- analysis of data from Jordan’s 2018 National Teacher Survey (NTS), which was conducted by the Queen Rania Foundation (QRF) on behalf of the Ministry of Education (MoE)
- semi-structured interviews with representatives from UNRWA Headquarters (HQ)
- semi-structured interviews with school principals at four schools
- focus groups with teachers at four schools
- semi-structured interviews with senior education representatives from UNRWA’s Jordan Field Office (JFO) and the Strategic Support Units (SSUs), area education officers (AEOs) and education specialists.

<sup>14</sup> World Bank Group (2014) <sup>15</sup> UNRWA (2015, p. 6) <sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the management of teachers working with Syrian refugees in MoE double-shift schools, please see *Teacher Management in Refugee Settings: Public Schools in Jordan* (Bengtsson et al., 2021).

**Table 1: Structure of report findings**

<b>Part 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Policy landscape framing teacher management in UNRWA schools</li> <li>b Perceptions of policy enactment</li> <li>c Awareness of policy</li> </ul>
<b>Part 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Who teaches Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools?</li> <li>b Recruitment and deployment</li> <li>c Teacher training and professional development</li> <li>d Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path</li> <li>e Motivation and wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention</li> </ul>
<b>Part 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Promising areas for policy and practice</li> <li>b Strengthening teacher management in the UNRWA system in Jordan</li> </ul>

## Summary of key findings

### Part 1: Policy landscape

This part addresses the first of the three study objectives, to build an understanding of the policy landscape guiding the management of teachers in UNRWA schools in Jordan.

#### Part 1a: Policy landscape framing teacher management in UNRWA schools

UNRWA has a politically neutral mandate to provide aid and protection to Palestine refugees, rather than to seek durable solutions for refugees such as repatriation, integration into host communities, or resettlement to a third country, which is the responsibility of the international community.

Despite its formal designation as a temporary humanitarian agency, the protracted nature of the Palestine refugee situation means that UNRWA has come to play a key role in supporting development, acting as a ‘quasi-governmental service provider’ of sorts.

The nature of UNRWA’s mandate means that the Agency is not required to align with national development results. However, as its work is dependent on maintaining good relationships with host governments, UNRWA works with ministries of education, health, social affairs and planning to ensure that the services they provide complement those provided by host authorities. It therefore demonstrates strong alignment with host countries, particularly in the areas of health and education. Within the education sector, for example, UNRWA schools will follow host country curricula, though they will review and enrich them if deemed necessary.

Since 2006, UNRWA has been undertaking sweeping organisational and strategic reforms to improve the quality of services offered to Palestine refugees, placing access to quality education as a top priority. In 2011, the Agency launched its ERS, based on organisational reform priorities and an external review conducted by Universal Management Group in 2010.

As a key component of the education reform, UNRWA developed a new Teacher Policy in 2013, which outlines the guiding principles governing teachers, teaching and the professional support structure within the entire UNRWA system, focusing on career progression and professional development.

Other relevant teacher management policies include Educational Technical Instructions (ETIs), guidelines issued by the human resources (HR) department, the Norms and Standards, and the Education Action Plan derived from the MTS. Teachers’ work is also framed by UNRWA’s Gender Equality Policy, policies on neutrality and ethics, and the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) framework.

#### Part 1b: Perceptions of policy enactment

Generally, stakeholders felt that UNRWA takes a participatory approach to the policy development process. While the initial drafting of policies is the responsibility of UNRWA HQ, the policy development process involves input from various actors at multiple levels of governance and from different departments and divisions within the Agency, as well as external partners.

Broadly speaking, interviewees agreed that the Teacher Policy had been developed through an inclusive process. However, teachers and school principals were less actively involved in policy development than other stakeholders in the system, though senior education representatives mentioned that school principals and teachers are able to provide feedback on policies at any time, and noted that teachers’ interests are supposed to be represented by the Teachers Section of the Area Staff Union (ASU), which is consulted throughout the process.

Interviewees from multiple levels of the system felt that the Teacher Policy had been successfully implemented to date.

**Table 2: Key policy documents framing teacher management in UNRWA schools in Jordan**

Policy name	Relevance to teacher management in refugee settings
<b>ERS 2011–2015</b>	In 2011, UNRWA launched its ERS based in large part on the findings and recommendations of an external review, the Universalia review of UNRWA's Education Programme (2010). The ERS identified eight interrelated focus areas for reform, four that are substantive or programme-oriented (teacher development and school empowerment; inclusive education; technical and vocational education and training [TVET]; curriculum and student assessment), and four that are supportive (research, development and EMIS; governance, strategic planning, management and projects; partnerships; communication and information and communication technology [ICT]).
<b>UNRWA's MTS 2016–2021</b>	The MTS 2016–2021 includes a strategic outcome related to education, that is, 'school-aged children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education', and it aims to achieve this through, among other factors, 'continued emphasis on enhancing the professionalization of teachers in UNRWA schools'. The importance of education is reflected in UNRWA's budget structure, which is based on the MTS, and typically earmarks over half of the Programme Budget for education.
<b>Teacher Policy (2013)</b>	The Teacher Policy was published in 2013, as a key sub-component of the ERS. It presents the guiding principles governing teachers and teaching within the entire UNRWA system, focusing on career progression and professional development. One key aspect was to follow through on a proposed costed restructuring of the programme in each of UNRWA's five Fields. This restructuring included setting up three SSUs: the Professional Development Curriculum Unit (PDCU) and Assessment Unit (AU), which report to the Education Development Centre (EDC), and the School Quality Assurance Unit (SQUA), which reports to the Deputy Chief of Education. Further, certain key roles were upgraded and redefined: head teachers and assistant heads were upgraded and their titles changed to school principals and deputy school principals respectively; some school supervisors were upgraded and renamed education specialists; and a handful were upgraded to the position of coordinators to staff the newly created SSUs.
<b>Technical instructions, norms and standards</b>	Education staff in UNRWA are expected to follow ETIs, which regulate their work, set out roles and responsibilities, and provide a mechanism for accountability. There are also rules and regulations on payment, roles, duty hours, etc. that are issued by HR. Further, the Norms and Standards, which set out key guidance on student and staff numbers each year, are also part of the rules and regulations governing the work of the Education Programme. Finally, a key guiding document is the Action Plan for education that is derived from the MTS and takes into consideration the specific contexts in each of the five Fields in order to determine how best to implement the MTS.
<b>UNRWA's gender policies</b>	UNRWA developed an Agency-wide Gender Equality Policy and launched its first Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in 2007, which aimed to address gender as a cross-cutting issue across the system. The most recent Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2016–2021 takes a 'dual-track' approach to gender, focusing on changes in both organisational practices and programme implementation. Each Field is expected to produce a time-bound Gender Action Plan to help make the GES a reality. UNRWA has also developed guidance on human resources management, and has attempted to enhance accountability on gender, including in the area of recruitment. One such example is UNRWA's Human Resources Action Plan on Gender Parity, which is designed to support the Agency in attaining and sustaining gender parity at all levels. The gender policy framework also includes a Gender Guide for Teachers, which, among other issues, addresses protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV) in UNRWA schools.
<b>UNRWA's policies on neutrality and ethics</b>	UNRWA has developed a number of processes and mechanisms to ensure that all its staff, including teachers, adhere to and comply with neutrality regulations as articulated in the UN Charter, as adhering to principles of neutrality is seen as a question of operational necessity. UNRWA has also developed an ethics framework in the form of a set of core values and standards of conduct and its <i>Handbook on Ethics</i> , which, among other issues, outlines the Agency's expectations around the reporting of incidents of misconduct and ethical violations. UNRWA also has a whistle-blower protection policy and provides staff with independent channels for reporting incidents confidentially and anonymously, and has specific provisions for reporting and oversight at the highest levels of the Agency.
<b>Accountability to affected populations</b>	UNRWA has articulated an AAP framework, which sets out formal and informal mechanisms to ensure that they remain accountable to Palestine refugees and that Palestine refugees have the opportunity to participate throughout the programming cycle and are involved in decisions that affect them. To date, the Agency does not have consensus on what 'participation' means, so it is left to each programme and Field to determine how to engage Palestine refugees.

### Part 1c: Awareness of policy

In general, interviewees at multiple levels demonstrated a high level of awareness and were able to articulate a clear understanding of the major key policies and strategies related to education, including the ERS and the Teacher Policy (2013), suggesting that UNRWA's communication strategy has been successful.

This strategy involves making sure that the chiefs of education in the different Fields and other senior staff are able to explain the benefits of the policy to all staff, and

also engaging the staff union in discussions early on in the process to ensure buy-in.

Most workshops and training held with teachers, school principals and other key education personnel make explicit reference to education reform. This not only increases awareness of policies across the system, but also helps stakeholders to understand how their own work relates to the reform, and how they can help to ensure the sustainability of the reform, an understanding that was demonstrated by a number of informants during interviews.

## Part 2: Who teaches Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools and how are they managed?

This part addresses the second of the three study objectives and aims to build an understanding of who is teaching Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools and how they are managed in practice.

### Part 2a: Who teaches Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools?

All of UNRWA's teachers in Jordan are registered Palestine refugees, regardless of the type of contract they are on. Most of these elementary-level teachers are hired on three-year regular renewable contracts, following an initial probation period, a contracting modality that was introduced in 1995.

In addition to these fixed-term teachers, UNRWA recruits and deploys daily paid teachers, who are contracted for a period of nine months for the current school year, but are paid based on days worked and do not qualify for benefits. Though not of direct relevance for this study, UNRWA also hires daily paid teachers for short durations to work as temporary/substitute teachers.

At the time of writing, there was a cap of 7.5% in the proportion of posts held by daily paid teachers engaged for the whole school year, but interviewees mentioned that the cap may have to be revisited and lifted given UNRWA's ongoing precarious financial situation and the impact of COVID-19.

Almost all of UNRWA's teachers have met the minimum pre-service qualification requirement of a bachelor's degree.

There is a shortage of male teachers at the elementary level in UNRWA schools, particularly in the lower grades and in certain subjects, including Arabic, mathematics and the sciences.

### Part 2b: Recruitment and deployment

Teachers who teach at the lower elementary level (Grades 1 to 3) must hold a bachelor's degree in education or classroom teaching. In contrast, subject teachers (Grades 4 to 6) should have a bachelor's degree in their subject specialisation, but pre-service pedagogical training is not required. All novice teachers must take the Newly Appointed Teacher (NAT) programme during their first years of teaching, including those with a bachelor's degree in education or classroom teaching.

Whether they are recruited on a fixed-term or temporary basis, future UNRWA teachers have to go through a rigorous three-step recruitment process, which is standardised across the system. The process consists of an application screening,

followed by a computer-based exam, followed by a panel interview. Teachers described the process as rigorous but fair.

UNRWA has its own tertiary institutions, including the Faculty of Educational Science and Arts (FESA) in Jordan, though these are not large enough to cater to all Palestine refugees who wish to pursue higher education, so many Palestinians attend Jordanian universities instead. In theory, graduates from UNRWA tertiary institutions are not given priority to teach in UNRWA schools. However, in practice, they often appear more qualified than other candidates.

While UNRWA has built flexibility into its recruitment system through hiring daily paid teachers to limit wastage following class formation exercises, times of increased financial instability force the Agency to hire more daily paid teachers. An over-reliance on these daily paid teachers was described as a major challenge by informants, who were concerned about high turnover rates among these teachers.

The shortage of male teachers was identified as another challenge, though the gender disparity is less pronounced in the UNRWA system than in the country as a whole. However, interviewees noted that fewer men are opting to pursue teaching careers, leading to inequity in the distribution of teachers in the system. Some interviewees suggested that appointing more female teachers to teach at boys' schools could be one strategy to address this challenge, but explained that some people do not think such a strategy is culturally appropriate.

Every year, the JFO participates in the system-wide class formation exercise based on the annual Planning Norms and Standards, where information is collected on how many students, teachers and other education personnel there are in different schools in order to determine how many teachers are needed and where.

As part of this class formation exercise, AEOs identify where there may be a teacher surplus and where teachers may be transferred according to school need, vacancies and resource availability. Some teachers expressed concern about the possibility of being transferred to a different school, noting that they did not have a say in where they would be deployed.

### Part 2c: Teacher training and professional development

UNRWA has a long history of providing professional development support to teachers. The Agency's Teacher Policy emphasises the importance of providing adequate support to teachers to allow them to participate in lifelong professional learning in order to better meet the needs of the UNRWA education system.

In terms of pre-service qualifications and training, most UNRWA teachers are graduates from Jordanian universities with bachelor's degrees in a number of subjects, including but not limited to education, mathematics, Arabic, English and geography. Typically, bachelor programmes in subjects other than education focus on pure subject matter, building content knowledge and skills only, without pedagogical training.

FESA is the only pre-service teacher education provider in the UNRWA system in Jordan, offering a lower elementary teaching/education bachelor programme in addition to degrees in Arabic, English and geography, but it does not have the capacity to provide sufficient numbers of teachers to staff all of UNRWA's schools, and graduates are neither required nor given preference to teach in UNRWA schools.

The Teacher Policy sets out a goal of recruiting more teachers with pre-service teacher training but does not outline a strategy for how this will be accomplished. Interviewees in the study agreed that while it would be good for UNRWA to recruit more teachers with a pre-service teaching qualification, they were not aware of any existing or future plans to do so, noting that it would be cost-prohibitive for both UNRWA and Palestine refugees themselves.

UNRWA considers it more cost effective to continue to invest in training newly appointed teachers 'in situ' during their first three years of service, and recently revitalised its training offering for novice teachers through a review of its own programmes and international best practice. The result of these efforts is known as the NAT programme, which was launched in 2018 and is mandatory for all novice teachers, even if they have a Bachelor of Education or other pre-service qualification. At the time of writing, it was too soon to come to a definitive conclusion about the NAT programme, as only one cohort had been trained by this point, but education specialists and senior education representatives were positive about the content and the emphasis on blended learning and opportunities for self-reflection.

Data from the Jordan NTS 2018 suggests that most UNRWA teachers participate in some form of continuing professional development (CPD), particularly when it comes to formal courses and workshops. In-service training opportunities offered through UNRWA, including the School-Based Teacher Development (SBTD) programme, are perceived to be of high quality and relevance. Some of these opportunities emphasise non-cognitive learning outcomes and psychosocial support and protection, helping to equip teachers to build their own socioemotional skills and respond more effectively to their students' psychosocial support and protection needs.

Not only are teachers offered a wide range of quality in-service training opportunities, but they are also supported by the EDC, the three SSUs, and an extended network of actors at the school and Field level (school principals, education specialists, coordinators and AEOs). The establishment of the education specialist role in 2011 to replace school supervisors in particular was considered a key step to ensuring teachers' ongoing professional development.

## **Part 2d: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path**

UNRWA teachers in Jordan are paid according to a salary scale that is pegged to respective national government salary scales. Typically, UNRWA hires teachers on fixed-term contracts, which are renewable every three years.

The daily paid teachers who work with UNRWA have proper contracts and are technically paid the same amount per day as a fixed-term teacher; however, they are only entitled to be paid for the days they work and do not have access to any benefits. For example, they are only able to access primary health services through their status as Palestine refugees, whereas their fixed-term peers are able to access additional health services through their health insurance.

According to the NTS 2018, the main challenges identified by teachers in the UNRWA system were high pupil–teacher ratios, heavy workload and overall poor quality of infrastructure, rather than low salaries, which was reported by a much smaller group.

When it comes to supervision and appraisal, a formative approach to evaluation is encouraged, and the process has been facilitated by introducing an electronic performance management system known as ePER.

Previously, school supervisors would visit teachers, often unannounced, as a key part of their annual evaluation. Following the reform, education specialists now only play an informal role in evaluation. The role of supervisor and the task of evaluation of teachers now falls to the school principal, who may or may not seek input from education specialists in this regard. The AEO acts as a kind of 'second supervisor', reviewing school principals' comments and adding remarks as necessary. Some stakeholders expressed concern that education specialists no longer had a formal role to play in evaluation, and felt that this function should be partially restored, not only because they are external to the school, but also because they are technical specialists.

The Teacher Policy sets out a clear, organised career structure, which is directly linked to professional development and experience and explicitly articulates what is needed to progress from one grade to the next.

### Part 2e: Motivation and wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention

UNRWA's ERS recognises teachers as the Agency's single most important resource and emphasises that teachers' professional empowerment and motivation are key to ensuring quality, inclusive education for all.

According to data from the NTS 2018, 'Passion for teaching' was the main reason for becoming a teacher, with 47% of female teachers and 62% of male teachers indicating this response. For female teachers, the next most popular response at 39% was 'suitable for gender', while for male teachers at 18% it was 'restricted options due to academic circumstances'.

Despite being highly motivated themselves, and recognising the importance of the teaching profession, there is a general perception that the status of the profession has decreased over time and that teaching is no longer valued in society as a whole.

The quality of UNRWA's teacher professional development system and teaching workforce is widely recognised, including in other countries in the region. This means that UNRWA teachers are highly sought after outside of the UNRWA system, including in the private sector and in Gulf countries, and may therefore choose to leave the Agency for these better-paying jobs, resulting in a loss on investment for

UNRWA. Daily paid teachers are more likely to leave if given the opportunity, given that they are only paid for days worked and do not qualify for benefits.

### Part 3: Identifying promising areas and making recommendations

This part addresses the third and final objective of this study: to identify promising areas for further policy development and implementation to support effective teacher management in practice.

#### Part 3a: Promising areas for policy and practice

The study adopts a conceptual framework that recognises policy implementation as a complex, dynamic process and considers sociopolitical contexts and the complex interactions between various policy actors, particularly at the local level and between levels. It explores international, regional and national policies that frame teacher management in refugee contexts and presents findings on local practice, which reveal both strengths and gaps. We use a matrix to document and categorise findings related to policy and practice, as captured in table 3.

- In the top left quadrant, we provide examples of promising policies that we identified during data collection and analysis that seem to be reflected in practice.
- In the top right quadrant, we provide examples of promising policies that we identified during data collection and analysis that do not seem to be reflected in practice, indicating that more work needs to be done to overcome the barriers preventing the translation of promising policy into practice.

**Table 3: Summary of promising policies and practices and policy and practice gaps**

	Promising practice	Gaps in practice
Promising policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNRWA follows a consistent, rigorous and transparent recruitment process for both fixed-term and daily paid teachers (1)</li> <li>• Teachers are supported to engage in lifelong professional learning at the system level and at the school level (2)</li> <li>• UNRWA offers a range of rich, practical and diverse CPD opportunities, including those oriented towards the specific needs of Palestine refugees and reflecting UN values (2)</li> <li>• A central element of UNRWA's education reform is the implementation of an incentivised career structure for teachers that is clearly linked to professional development (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNRWA hires qualified daily paid teachers as a cost-saving measure and to limit wastage following class formation exercises, but these teachers can be difficult to retain (1)</li> <li>• A shortage of male teachers persists, while initiatives to increase the proportion of females in leadership/senior-level positions have seen some success (1)</li> <li>• Despite policy efforts, coherence between pre- and in-service teacher training is lacking according to interviewees (2)</li> <li>• UNRWA invests heavily in the professional development of its teachers, who may leave the system for better-paying jobs in the private sector or in Gulf countries, resulting in a loss on investment (2)</li> </ul>
Gaps in policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a generic system, ePER is not as responsive to the needs of the education system as it could be (3)</li> <li>• The complete removal of the evaluative function of education specialists means that teachers may not be evaluated based on technical skills (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor programmes focusing purely on subject matter do not cover pedagogy or provide opportunities for practical teaching experience, resulting in a lack of preparedness among subject teachers when they first start teaching (2)</li> <li>• Working conditions can be difficult and stressful due to poor infrastructure and high pupil-teacher ratios (3)</li> </ul>

**Key categories:** (1) Recruitment and deployment; (2) Teacher training and professional development; (3) Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path

- The bottom left quadrant includes examples of promising practices that are not based on or reflected in policy, indicating a promising area for further policy development informed by good practice.
- The bottom right quadrant captures findings which indicate gaps in both policy and practice. Any findings in this quadrant will require future policy development, with attention paid to how the subsequent policy would be successfully implemented in practice.

### Part 3b: Strengthening teacher management in the UNRWA system in Jordan

The study concludes with a set of preliminary recommendations aimed at strengthening the different dimensions of teacher management in the UNRWA system in Jordan.

#### To sustain promising policies that are reflected in practice, there is a need to:

- regularly review elements of the established teacher recruitment process to ensure the system remains up to date and responsive to the context (*Target dimension: Recruitment and deployment*)
- maintain support for education specialists, SSU coordinators and school principals, and regularly review elements of the professional development system to ensure efficiency and effectiveness (*Target dimension: Teacher professional development*)
- continue to offer the NAT, SBTD, Inclusive Education, Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) and other programmes, and revise and update these programmes on a regular basis to ensure they are responsive to the needs of teachers and learners (*Target dimension: Teacher professional development*)
- conduct an independent review of the implementation of the new career structure for teachers to date to determine if adjustments need to be made for the Jordanian context (*Target dimension: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path*).

#### To ensure promising policies are more systematically translated into practice, there is a need to:

- explore possibilities for increasing compensation and/or expanding access to benefits for daily paid teachers on annual contracts through alternative means (*Target dimension: Recruitment and deployment*)

- as part of the annual Gender Action Plan, explore opportunities for collaborating with the Jordanian MoE and other partners to address the root causes of the shortage of male teachers (*Target dimension: Recruitment and deployment*)
- review the relationship between FESA, EDC and the PDCU, and explore possibilities for collaborating with the Jordanian MoE, the Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA) and other partners to improve coherence between pre- and in-service teacher education (*Target dimension: Teacher professional development*)
- investigate possibilities for cost- and knowledge-sharing with governments and other partners in CPD provision to minimise investment loss (*Target dimension: Teacher professional development*).

#### To build policy around promising practices, there is a need to:

- work with HR to include education-specific sections in the ePER (*Target dimension: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path*)
- ensure that the evaluation of teachers is formative by reviewing, clarifying and formalising the roles and responsibilities of education specialists and school principals in supervision and appraisal (*Target dimension: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path*).

#### To address areas where there are gaps in both policy and practice, there is a need to:

- expand opportunities to participate in teaching practicum for all prospective subject teachers during their bachelor's programmes (*Target dimension: Teacher professional development*)
- explore possibilities for resource-sharing between schools and facilitate in-kind donation opportunities for local and global partners to improve working conditions for teachers (*Target dimension: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path*).

# UNRWA Jordan study



Jordan is home to over 2 million of the world's 5.6 million Palestine refugees, making it the largest host of this group of refugees in the world. Most Palestine refugees in Jordan have been granted full Jordanian citizenship, with the exception of approximately 140,000 refugees originating from Gaza.<sup>17</sup> While citizenship theoretically entitles them to a standard of living equivalent to that of other Jordanians, in reality some Palestinians experience discrimination, particularly when it comes to education and employment.<sup>18</sup> All Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA are eligible for essential services provided by the UNRWA JFO, including education, healthcare and other social services.

### UNRWA's role in the region

UNRWA was established in UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 to assist Palestine refugees following the 1948 Arab–Israeli War and is mandated by the UN General Assembly to provide essential services to Palestine refugees. The UN General Assembly has also mandated the Agency to provide services to persons displaced as a result of the 1967 Arab–Israeli conflict known as the 'Six-Day War' and subsequent hostilities, though these persons may decide not to register as Palestine refugees.<sup>19</sup>

The Agency's protection mandate specifically addresses vulnerable groups' rights – women, children and persons with disabilities. The UN General Assembly has encouraged

### Box 2: Definition of 'Palestine refugee'

According to a definition introduced by the UN General Assembly in 1952, Palestine refugees are 'persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict'. The definition has since been expanded to include those displaced as a result of the 1967 Arab–Israeli conflict known as the 'Six-Day War' and descendants of Palestine refugee males, including adopted children.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Bidinger et al. (2015) <sup>18</sup> Bidinger et al. (2015) <sup>19</sup> UNRWA (n.d.) <sup>20</sup> Bidinger et al. (2015)

UNRWA to further address their needs and rights in its operations following relevant international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

As UNRWA was initially founded as a temporary humanitarian agency, the necessity and relevance of its work are assessed regularly by the UN General Assembly to determine whether or not its mandate should be renewed, typically on a three-year cycle. Following the most recent review, UNRWA's mandate was extended until 30 June 2023.<sup>21</sup>

Today, UNRWA is operational in five sites known as 'Fields', namely Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. UNRWA HQs are located in Amman, Jordan, Jerusalem-West Bank and Gaza, and the Agency maintains a Field Office in each of its five operational sites.

## The situation for Palestine refugees in Jordan

Jordan is the largest of UNRWA's five Fields. While there are ten official and three unofficial refugee camps for Palestinians in the northern and central regions of the country, these are less like traditional refugee camps and more like urban settlements or neighbourhoods, and over 75% of Palestine refugees actually live outside these camps.<sup>22</sup>

Over the past few years, approximately 17,000 Palestine refugees from Syria, 47% of whom are children, have fled to Jordan as a result of the ongoing Syrian crisis. Most of them are considered very vulnerable and also receive assistance from UNRWA, though the Agency is not re-registering these refugees if they are already registered in Syria to ensure that they are able to return to Syria when the conflict ends.<sup>23</sup> Many of them also face a difficult protection situation, mainly due to their precarious legal status.

## Basic education in the UNRWA system in Jordan

In Jordan, basic education consists of a ten-year cycle. It is preceded by a two-year cycle of preschool education and followed by a two-year cycle of secondary academic or vocational education. At the end of the secondary cycle, students sit for the Tawjihi, a General Certificate of Secondary Education exam. Basic education is compulsory and free of charge in public schools. It is broken down into three cycles:

### Box 3: Key demographic information about the Jordanian context

- Jordan is classified as a high human development country with a Human Development Index of 0.729. However, the Gender Inequality Index reflects gender-based inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity.<sup>24</sup>
- The population has increased from 5.7 million in 2005 to 10.8 million in 2020 due to crises in neighbouring countries and a high fertility rate.<sup>25</sup>
- Approximately one out of every three people living in Jordan is a refugee, with Palestine refugees (over 2.2 million) and Syrian refugees (over 650,000) accounting for the greatest number.<sup>26</sup>
- Jordan's population is relatively young, with 50% of the population being below 22.4 years old.<sup>27</sup>
- 90% of the population lives in urban areas and the tertiary sector accounts for most of the workforce.<sup>28</sup>

1. lower elementary cycle from Grade 1 to Grade 3
2. upper elementary cycle from Grade 4 to Grade 6
3. lower secondary cycle from Grade 7 to Grade 10.

In the lower cycle, that is, up to and including Grade 3, children are taught all subjects (except English) by homeroom or classroom teachers, and boys and girls can be taught together. In the upper elementary cycle and lower secondary cycle, that is, from Grade 4 upwards, children are taught by subject teachers.

UNRWA's schools follow the same curriculum offered in Jordanian public schools, though UNRWA complements the curriculum with content reflecting the UN values of neutrality, human rights, tolerance, equality, and non-discrimination regarding race, gender, language and religion, as well as environmental education, human rights education and Palestinian culture and heritage.

All Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA are eligible for free basic education through the Agency's schools in Jordan, though many Palestine refugees attend Jordanian MoE schools instead, which they are able to do as most of them have Jordanian citizenship. UNRWA estimates that only approximately 30% of its target school population in Jordan

<sup>21</sup> UNRWA (2019a) <sup>22</sup> Bidinger et al. (2015) <sup>23</sup> Bidinger et al. (2015) <sup>24</sup> UNDP (2020) <sup>25</sup> Department of Statistics of Jordan (n.d.) <sup>26</sup> CIA (2021) <sup>27</sup> Department of Statistics of Jordan (2019)

<sup>28</sup> Department of Statistics of Jordan (2019)

attends UNRWA schools, compared with between 50% and 75% in other Fields, though there were no available tools to capture the actual proportions enrolled in UNRWA versus public schools at the time of writing this report. However, although the proportion of Palestinian learners enrolled in UNRWA schools in Jordan is relatively low, the country has the second largest UNRWA student population of the five Fields. The choice to send a child to an MoE school instead of an UNRWA school may be because of the geographical spread of the refugee population, the lack of coverage in some areas and a preference for single-shift schools, as most UNRWA schools use double-shifting to maximise access.<sup>29</sup>

There are 169 UNRWA schools in Jordan, providing formal education to approximately 120,000 registered Palestine refugee children from Grades 1 to 10. Approximately three fifths of these schools are located outside the ten refugee camps. UNRWA uses double-shifting to maximise access, where two separate administrative schools share one building, so the number of UNRWA school buildings is likely to be closer to 100. Many of these schools are UNRWA-built rather than rented facilities. UNRWA schools are generally segregated by gender, though boys and girls may be educated together at the lower elementary cycle.

### Key stakeholders involved in the management of teachers in the UNRWA system in Jordan

At UNRWA HQ, the Education Department is led by the Director of Education, who is responsible for overseeing the Education Programme in all five Fields, liaising with other departments at HQ and reporting to the Commissioner-General. The Director is supported by a number of key staff members. Of particular relevance when it comes to teacher management is the Chief of Teaching and Learning and team.

As with the other four Fields, the JFO also has a Chief of Education, who is supported by a Deputy Chief in charge of Administration and a Deputy Chief in charge of Technical Issues. The JFO also has an EDC, which is responsible for the professional development of teachers, and three SSUs: the PDCU, the AU and the SQUA. The EDC and the three SSUs are staffed by a head and a team of coordinators, who have a key role to play in a number of teacher management activities, ranging from in-service training and training for newly appointed teachers, to supporting the monitoring of student learning, to evaluating the quality of teaching and learning at schools to support school development.

### Box 4: Elementary-level teachers working in UNRWA schools

UNRWA's elementary-level teachers in Jordan are Palestine refugees, recruited and hired through the UNRWA system. There are two main types of teachers that are of interest for this study:

**1. fixed-term teachers**, who are engaged on three-year regular contracts, following an initial probation period<sup>30</sup>

**2. daily paid teachers** for the whole school year, who are contracted on an annual basis for a nine-month period covering the school year, but are paid based on days worked and do not qualify for benefits.

In addition, there are also **daily paid teachers for short durations**, who are temporary/substitute teachers, and are hired on an indefinite basis.

At the time of writing, across the Agency's five Fields, there was a cap of 7.5% in the proportion of posts held by daily paid teachers hired for the whole school year, but UNRWA staff noted that the cap might have to be revisited and possibly lifted given UNRWA's ongoing precarious financial situation and the impact of COVID-19.

### Box 5: The UNESCO–UNRWA relationship

UNRWA has had a partnership with UNESCO since the Agency was first established by the UN General Assembly. UNESCO supports the implementation of UNRWA's Education Programme in a number of ways, including through the recruitment and appointment of the Agency's Director of Education and the Deputy Director of Education. The UNESCO Director of Education has played a key role in UNRWA's educational reform, which started in 2011. In March 2014, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Commissioner-General of UNRWA signed a Memorandum of Understanding, renewing the commitment of the two Agencies to work together to support quality education for Palestine refugees (this was renewed again in June 2019).

<sup>29</sup> UNRWA and UNESCO (2010) <sup>30</sup> Note that this contracting modality was introduced in 1995. Prior to that, teachers were hired on a *temporary indefinite basis*. Teachers who were hired before 1995 would have been engaged on this basis.

UNRWA also runs FESA, where Palestine refugees can pursue bachelor's degrees in lower elementary teaching, English, Arabic and geography. However, UNRWA teachers are more likely to have obtained their bachelor's degree from one of the other Jordanian universities.

The JFO's Education Programme is further decentralised to Area Education Offices, which are headed by AEOs and have a key role to play in annual class formation exercises, recruiting and deploying teachers, and ensuring that teachers, school principals and deputy school principals have adequate support. Each Area also has a team of education specialists, who are responsible for providing in-school support and professional development for teachers in a supportive rather than an evaluative role.

# Research approach and methods

The study had three objectives:

- 1.** Build an understanding of the policy landscape guiding the management of elementary-level teachers in UNRWA schools catering to Palestine refugees by identifying and exploring with research participants:
  - a.** relevant international, regional and national policies,
  - b.** perceptions of the enactment of these policies, and
  - c.** awareness of these policies at different levels of the education system.
- 2.** Explore teacher management in practice by examining:
  - a.** who is teaching Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools,
  - b.** recruitment and deployment,
  - c.** teacher professional development,
  - d.** job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career paths, and
  - e.** motivation and wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention.
- 3.** Identify promising areas for further policy development and implementation to support effective teacher management in practice.



The research in Jordan followed a collaborative, mixed-methods, dual-phased approach. The research was iterative, meaning that research tools and the original research design and initial data analysis were shared with key stakeholders to inform further data collection and analysis, the writing up of research findings and the drafting of policy recommendations.

Throughout the research process, the research team, made up of international researchers from IIEP-UNESCO and Education Development Trust and local researchers from Integrated International, a Jordan-based organisation, worked closely with key stakeholders from Jordan, including UNRWA and the MoE, to ensure the ethics, rigour and robustness of the research design, data collection and analysis. Further, the study aimed to include the voices and perspectives of school principals and teachers.

In terms of scope, this research focuses on formal elementary education (Grades 1 to 6) offered by UNRWA schools in Jordan, excluding other education system levels and alternative, non-formal basic education. Data for this study were collected at multiple administrative levels, including the international level, the regional level, the national level, the area level and the school level. A summary of the two phases of data collection is provided below.

## Phase 1 data collection

**Table 4: Phase 1 data collection activities**

Dates	Activities
October 2019 to June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review</li> <li>Policy document collection</li> <li>Secondary data collection (teacher survey conducted by QRF)</li> </ul>
February 2020 to March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two semi-structured interviews with key representatives at UNRWA HQ</li> <li>Four semi-structured interviews with school principals at UNRWA schools</li> <li>Four focus group discussions with teachers at UNRWA schools</li> </ul>

During Phase 1, an understanding of the policy landscape framing teacher management in UNRWA schools in Jordan was built through a literature review, mapping and analysis of key policy documents, and analysis of data from semi-structured interviews with stakeholders at UNRWA HQ. This phase also aimed to build a profile of who is teaching Palestine refugees

in the UNRWA system and to explore teacher management in practice at the school level through interviews and focus groups with school principals and teachers. As UNRWA school principals and teachers face heavy workloads and there have been numerous studies conducted in UNRWA's schools in the past few years, we asked UNRWA to select a small number

of schools for us to visit that were not ‘over-researched’, and planned the schedule and duration of school visits in collaboration with them to ensure that disruption of teaching and learning was minimised. We were able to conduct interviews with school principals and focus group discussions with teachers in two boys’ schools and two girls’ schools in Amman, amounting to four interviews and four focus groups, using semi-structured interview guides. Table 5 shows the characteristics of the schools visited as well as the number of teachers who participated in the focus groups.

We recorded all interviews and took extensive field notes before and after the interviews and focus groups that we organised according to our research categories, that is, pre-service training and ongoing professional development, employment and career conditions, and motivation and being a teacher. Because of the length of our discussion guide and to allow for in-depth explorations of key topics, we alternated what topics we asked about in different focus groups.

Phase 1 also included an analysis of data from the 2018 Jordan NTS, in order to support the development of a more comprehensive profile of the elementary-level teaching workforce and to complement the in-depth qualitative data gathered through our school visits. More information about the NTS 2018 is given in box 6, and table 6 provides information about the gender and school type of teachers included in the NTS 2018.

### Box 6: About the Jordan NTS 2018

The NTS is a nationally representative survey conducted in 2018 by QRF in coordination with the MoE. ‘The survey explored Jordanian teachers’ educational backgrounds, experience, training, attitudes, pedagogical practices, challenges and experiences serving refugee students in various contexts.’<sup>31</sup> Survey design and instruments aligned with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), thus including some of the TALIS research questions (about 50%), while other questions related to policy-relevant issues for Jordan’s education system. Among the nine research questions addressed in the survey, two were directly concerned with refugees:

1. What are teachers’ experiences in serving refugee students in various contexts?
2. What further support do teachers serving refugee students need?

The final sample included 5,722 basic level teachers and 360 principals or principals assistants from 361 MoE, private and UNRWA schools. Schools enrolling Syrian refugees amount to one fourth of the school sample and UNRWA schools to 10%. The MoE and QRF generously agreed to share their data with us, enabling us to run our analysis aligned with our research objectives.

**Table 5: Characteristics of schools visited**

School	Location	School type	Shift visited	School gender	Number of students	Number of teachers		Number of teachers in focus group
						Fixed-term	Daily paid	
1	Amman	Double-shift	Morning	Female	+/- 950	28	2	6
2	Amman	Double-shift	Morning	Male	950	28	3	8
3	Amman	Double-shift	Morning*	Female	900–950	31	0	11
4	Amman	Double-shift	Both**	Male	961	29	2	6

\*Note that for School No. 3, the school principal covered both shifts.

\*\*Note that for School No. 4, the school principal interviewed was from the afternoon shift, while the teachers who participated in the focus group were from the morning shift.

**Table 6: Distribution of Grade 1 to 6 teachers across school types by gender in the NTS**

School type	Number of teachers surveyed		
	Female	Male	Total
UNRWA schools	161	179	340
Jordanian schools with no Syrian refugee learners	186	39	225
Jordanian schools integrating Syrian refugee learners	749	213	962
Syrian second-shift schools	339	191	530
Syrian refugee camp schools	172	106	278
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,607</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>2,335</b>

<sup>31</sup> QRF (2020, p. 3)

## Phase 2 data collection

**Table 7: Phase 2 data collection activities**

Dates	Activities
December 2020 to February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One semi-structured interview with the Director of Education (UNRWA HQ)</li> <li>• One follow-up focus group with the Chief of Teaching and Learning (UNRWA HQ) and members of her team</li> <li>• Four semi-structured interviews with three senior education representatives from UNRWA JFO (one representative was interviewed twice)</li> <li>• Two semi-structured interviews with senior SSU representatives</li> <li>• Two semi-structured interviews with AEOs</li> <li>• Two semi-structured interviews with education specialists</li> </ul>

After the analysis of Phase 1 data was validated through discussions with key stakeholders, perceptions of the policy enactment process, or how policies are communicated, interpreted, discussed and implemented locally, and the extent to which they are translated into action or (at times) contested and resisted were further explored during Phase 2. Phase 2 data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from Jordan Field, as well as follow-up interviews with stakeholders consulted during Phase 1.

### Analysing policy enactment

To understand the interaction between policy and practice, some scholars argue that a nuanced approach to policy analysis is required, one which considers sociopolitical contexts and the complex interactions between various policy actors, particularly at the local level and between levels.<sup>32</sup> Such an approach views policy as a complex, dynamic process, and explores how ‘education policies are “made sense of”, mediated and struggled over, and sometimes ignored, or, in another word, *enacted* in schools’.<sup>33</sup>

This research project builds on the idea that ‘[p]olicy is done by and done to teachers; they are actors and subjects, subject to and objects of policy’.<sup>34</sup> Recognising that the management of teachers happens across multiple levels – from the international level, through to the national level, to the regional level, to the district level, to the community level, to the school level – the study identifies other relevant policy actors and policy texts that make up the complex policy network. It explores policy enactment, or how stakeholders at

various levels understand and engage with policies relating to refugees and to teacher management. Finally, it explores whether or not there is room for good practice to inform the development or revision of policy.

Based on a review of the literature, discussions with key stakeholders (including representatives from the Jordanian MoE and UNRWA and our national research partners), and our previous and ongoing research on teacher management in refugee settings, we developed a coding scheme and preliminary analysis worksheets to support our analysis work. The main categories of codes in our coding scheme were those related to the three ‘personnel functions’<sup>35</sup> of teacher management, the ‘goals/outcomes’<sup>36</sup> of teacher management, and the ‘policy enactment process’, from development through to implementation. We also developed an analysis framework that allows us to articulate whether promising teacher management policies are enacted in practice and where there are gaps in policy and practice in each of the three personnel function dimensions of teacher management. This framework is depicted in table 8.

- In the top left quadrant, we provide examples of promising policies that we identified during data collection and analysis that seem to be reflected in practice.
- In the top right quadrant, we provide examples of promising policies that we identified during data collection and analysis that do not seem to be reflected in practice, indicating that more work needs to be done to overcome the barriers preventing the translation of promising policy into practice.

**Table 8: Analysis framework**

	Promising practice	Gaps in practice
Promising policy	Promising policy reflected in practice	Promising policy not systematically reflected in practice
Gaps in policy	Promising practice not based on/reflected in policy	Gaps in both policy and practice

<sup>32</sup> Schulte (2018); Steiner-Khamsi (2012); Tyack and Cuban (1995) <sup>33</sup> Ball et al. (2012, p. 3) <sup>34</sup> Ball et al. (2012, p. 3) <sup>35</sup> The three personnel functions include: (1) recruitment and deployment, (2) teacher professional development and (3) job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career paths. <sup>36</sup> The goals/outcomes include: (1) motivation, (2) wellbeing, (3) teaching quality and (4) retention.

- The bottom left quadrant includes examples of promising practices that are not based on or reflected in policy, indicating a promising area for further policy development informed by good practice.
- The bottom right quadrant captures findings which indicate gaps in both policy and practice. Any findings in this quadrant will require future policy development, with attention paid to how the subsequent policy would be successfully implemented in practice.

As mentioned previously, this research took a collaborative, iterative approach, meaning that we presented and discussed ongoing coding and analysis during internal working sessions and presented initial findings to key stakeholders at UNRWA for feedback to ensure they were meaningful, relevant and practical. Table 9 provides a timeline of data analysis activities.

**Table 9: Timeline of analysis**

Dates	Data analysis activity
October 2019 to February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coding and analysis of policy documents</li> <li>• Preliminary analysis of secondary data</li> <li>• Preparation for Phase 1 interviews and focus groups</li> </ul>
February 2020	<p><b>EVENT: Stakeholder workshop with MoE, UNRWA and research team</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To continue to analyse secondary data</li> <li>2. To share and review/revise qualitative data instruments before first round of interviews and focus groups</li> </ol>
February 2020 to March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1 interviews and focus groups</li> </ul>
March 2020	<p><b>EVENT: Preliminary qualitative data analysis workshop with research team</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To capture key reflections from data collection</li> <li>2. To set groundwork for data analysis work</li> </ol>
March 2020 to June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing policy document analysis and analysis of secondary data</li> <li>• Preliminary coding and analysis of Phase 1 interview and focus group data</li> </ul>
July 2020	<p><b>EVENT: Virtual working session with research team</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To share key findings and triangulate analysis</li> <li>2. To determine next steps</li> </ol>
July 2020 to November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing analysis of Phase 1 interview and focus group data</li> <li>• Write-up of 'Initial Findings'</li> <li>• Preparation for Phase 2 interviews based on Phase 1 analysis</li> </ul>
December 2020	<p><b>EVENT: Knowledge-sharing with MoE and UNRWA (asynchronous)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To share initial findings with key stakeholders</li> <li>2. To solicit feedback to support revisions</li> </ol>
December 2020 to February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 2 interviews</li> </ul>
December 2020	<p><b>EVENT: Virtual working sessions with research team</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To capture key reflections from ongoing data collection</li> <li>2. To triangulate preliminary analysis with initial findings</li> </ol>
January 2021 to March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coding and analysis of Phase 2 data</li> <li>• Review of Phase 1 data analysis in light of feedback and emerging analysis from Phase 2</li> </ul>
February 2021	<p><b>EVENT: Virtual working session with research team</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To share key findings and triangulate analysis</li> <li>2. To outline structure for final report and assign roles and responsibilities</li> </ol>
March 2021 to May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing analysis of Phase 2 data</li> <li>• Drafting and finalising of case study report and policy brief</li> </ul>

### **Box 7: Limitations of the study, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the research**

The scope of the research was limited to the management of teachers working in the formal elementary education (Grades 1–6) system, excluding other education system levels and alternative, non-formal basic education. Also, as previously mentioned, we wanted to minimise disruption to teaching and learning, and to avoid conducting research in over-researched schools, meaning that our selection of schools was not systematic.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a notable impact on different steps of the research. First, the second round of data collection

was delayed from June 2020 to December 2020. We were also unable to travel to Jordan to conduct in-person interviews for Phase 2 of the research and so conducted virtual interviews with stakeholders. Not all stakeholders we approached were available to participate in the research, so some perspectives are missing from the research.

Developing policy guidance that a range of stakeholders can use is a challenge. Our initial research design's mitigation strategy consisted of sharing preliminary findings and soliciting feedback throughout the process.

Unfortunately, the health crisis also disrupted such a plan and the knowledge-sharing event we planned with stakeholders from UNRWA and the MoE to present and discuss initial findings from the first phase of data analysis could not occur. Instead, we used an asynchronous virtual format solution, which consisted of recording presentations to be shared with key stakeholders. We got feedback on these presentations a few weeks later, meaning that it would not inform our second round of data collection. However, we incorporated this feedback in our second phase of data analysis.

# Part 1

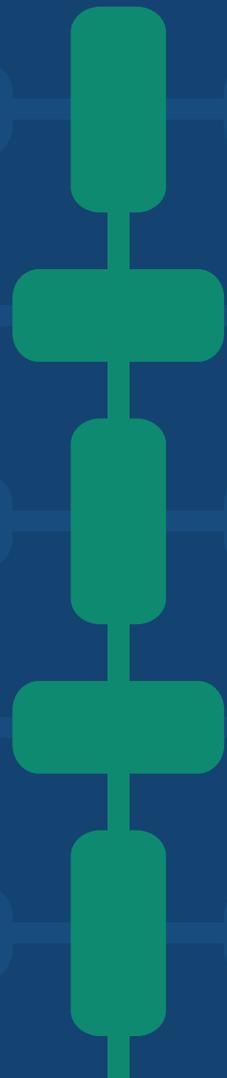
## Policy landscape

This part addresses the first of the three study objectives and aims to build an understanding of the policy landscape guiding the management of elementary-level teachers in UNRWA schools catering to Palestine refugees by identifying and exploring with research participants:

- a.** official international, regional and national policies framing the management of teachers in refugee settings,
- b.** perceptions of the enactment of these policies, and
- c.** awareness of these policies at different levels of the education system.

The main sources of data analysed for this part of the report include policy documents and semi-structured interviews with central-level stakeholders and key representatives from JFO and Area Education Offices. We also looked at school-level interview and focus group data to complement our analysis.

A summary of key points is provided at the end of Part 1.



## Part 1a

# Policy landscape framing teacher management in UNRWA schools

This part identifies official policies and related documents, such as international agendas and Agency-wide reforms and strategies that are of relevance to education and the management of elementary-level teachers working in UNRWA schools in Jordan.

### UNRWA's mandate and international policy framework

As a humanitarian UN agency, UNRWA operates on the basis of the legal framework applicable to all UN organisations, including the UN Charter, and in accordance with the key humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity.<sup>37</sup> As such, it is important to note that UNRWA has a politically neutral mandate to 'provide assistance and protection to Palestine refugees *pending* a just and lasting solution to their plight'; the Agency is not mandated to support the finding of such a solution, which is a political issue.<sup>38</sup> In other words, unlike its sister agency, UNHCR, it has no mandate to seek durable solutions for refugees, which include repatriation, integration into host communities, or resettlement to a third country.

While UNRWA has a distinct mandate from UNHCR, the Agency regularly contributes to the international discourse on refugees and forced displacement more broadly. For example, the Agency made a written contribution to the first formal consultation on the GCR in 2018, where it highlighted that, while Palestine refugees encounter many of the same challenges as other refugees, their situation is unique as they have no state to which they are able to return.<sup>39</sup> Further, it notes that the Agency has a lot of experience when it comes to the direct delivery of protection and essential services in both stable and conflict settings and that it therefore 'bridges the humanitarian–development divide'.<sup>40</sup>

### Box 8: UNRWA's mandate

UNRWA was established in UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 to assist Palestine refugees following the 1948 Arab–Israeli war. The Agency is mandated by the UN General Assembly to provide protection and essential services, including health, education, and relief and social services, to Palestine refugees and to persons displaced as a result of the 1967 Arab–Israeli conflict known as the 'Six-Day War' and subsequent hostilities, who may or may not decide to register as Palestine refugees. Key aspects of UNRWA's programming, including its Education Programme, are regularly endorsed by the UN General Assembly, following annual reporting sessions.

For UNRWA, the key issues addressed by the GCR that are of particular relevance for the Agency are:

- adequate, sustained and predictable funding
- the legal framework that protects refugees
- the root causes of protracted refugee situations
- the importance of education in refugee responses
- access to civil documentation during displacement.

Despite its formal designation as a temporary humanitarian agency, the protracted nature of the Palestine refugee situation means that the Agency has come to play a key role in supporting development. In fact, at the UN General Assembly in 2017, member states recognised the Agency's role as a 'quasi-governmental service provider', emphasising 'its hybrid humanitarian and development functions, which enabled it to lead emergency responses while continuing human development work'.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, UNRWA also aligns itself with broader development agendas, including the 2030 SDG Agenda.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> UNRWA (n. d.) <sup>38</sup> UNRWA (n. d.) <sup>39</sup> UNRWA (2018b) <sup>40</sup> UNRWA (2018b, p. 1) <sup>41</sup> UN (2017, Paragraph 16) <sup>42</sup> UNRWA (2020b)

### Box 9: A renewed international commitment to address the global refugee crisis

In 2016, as a reaction to the global displacement crisis, the international community came together during a Leader Summit to formulate a more equitable and predictable refugee response. During the summit, UN member states, including Jordan, adopted the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, thereby agreeing upon the core elements of a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF),<sup>43</sup> and initiating the development of two global compacts for safe and orderly migration and for refugees. The GCR<sup>44</sup> was affirmed by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 2018, after two years of extensive stakeholder consultations led by UNHCR. The Compact aims to strengthen international collaboration in response to the refugee crisis, providing support to both host communities and refugees through four key objectives:

- ease the pressure on host countries
- enhance refugee self-reliance
- expand access to third country solutions
- support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

### UNRWA's relationship with host country governments

Given the Agency's operational mandate, which translates to it acting as a 'quasi-governmental service provider' of sorts, who UNRWA works with and how it delivers those services vary based on context. UNRWA is to a large extent dependent on maintaining good relationships with host governments, and works with ministries of education, health, social affairs and planning, and with UN country teams (where relevant) in order to ensure that the services they provide complement those provided by host authorities.<sup>45</sup>

According to an assessment of the Agency conducted by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) in 2017–2018, the nature of UNRWA's mandate means that the Agency is not required to

contribute to or align with national development results, though in all five Fields it demonstrates 'strong alignment with the priorities of host authorities, particularly in terms of education and health'.<sup>46</sup> Within the education sector, UNRWA will follow host country curricula and will review these to ensure adherence to UN values and neutrality and enrich them through the addition of a focus on human rights, critical thinking and life skills, among other topics.

Indeed, a representative from UNRWA HQ commented on how all of UNRWA's Field Offices work to align their services with the host governments, but that this was particularly true for Jordan and for education:

*I mean, all Fields do [align] to some extent, but Jordan the most ... But there's a real strong alignment, a real strong push for alignment from our UNRWA Jordanian people ... and in the same way, the Jordan Ministry, and higher education institutes, and others are also very, very interested in UNRWA and UNRWA's alignment with it. So there's a very different relationship here. UNRWA HQ representative*

While UNRWA seeks political and technical alignment with host governments, the Agency attempts to ensure the continuity of services for Palestine refugees by maintaining self-reliance as much as possible and avoiding dependency on partners.<sup>47</sup> As UNRWA operates within a resource-constrained environment and relies primarily on voluntary financial contributions, which accounted for 94% of its income for its programme budget in 2017,<sup>48</sup> the Agency is always ostensibly planning for a deficit and regularly adopts austerity measures. Many interviewees from UNRWA HQ through to the Field mentioned how UNRWA relied on so-called 'zero-cost' interventions.

In addition to its adeptness at cost-effective planning in resource-constrained contexts, UNRWA has a wealth of experience and expertise when it comes to operating at the nexus of humanitarian and development assistance, responding to both immediate needs and more long-term socioeconomic development goals, particularly in the area of education.<sup>49</sup> The potential for leveraging this organisational knowledge and expertise to build and sustain effective partnerships in host countries that go beyond alignment and occasional knowledge-sharing is worth exploring in the future, especially following a major reduction in funding with the loss of key donors in 2018, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>43</sup> UNHCR (2001–2021) <sup>44</sup> UNHCR (2019a) <sup>45</sup> MOPAN (2019) <sup>46</sup> MOPAN (2019, p. 30) <sup>47</sup> MOPAN (2019) <sup>48</sup> UN (2017, Paragraph 20) <sup>49</sup> MOPAN (2019)

## Policies related to education

### Organisational Development and UNRWA's MTS 2010–2015

In 2006, UNRWA launched a comprehensive reform known as Organisational Development (OD), which aimed ‘to strengthen its management capacity and provide more effective and efficient services to Palestine refugees’.<sup>50</sup> OD fed into the development and implementation of UNRWA’s MTS 2010–2015,<sup>51</sup> which signified a shift in the Agency’s planning approach to one informed by human development. Basic education is defined as a core service in the MTS 2010–2015: it is considered to have the highest priority, which is common to all Fields. The underlying principles of OD and the MTS 2010–2015 include evidence-based planning, decentralisation and empowerment, active stakeholder participation, and effective partnerships and coordination, among others. In line with the MTS 2010–2015, the Agency embarked on implementing programme reforms in its three key programmes, namely health, education, and relief and social services. The education reform will be discussed in more detail below.

### ERS 2011–2015

As the first step in its reform of the Education Programme, and as part of its commitment to evidence-based planning, UNRWA commissioned an external review, the Universalia review of UNRWA’s Education Programme (2010).<sup>52</sup> In 2011, UNRWA’s Education Programme launched its ambitious ERS 2011–2015 based in large part on the findings and recommendations from that review.<sup>53</sup> The ERS (2011–2015) identified eight interrelated focus areas for reform, four that are substantive or programme-oriented (teacher development and school empowerment; inclusive education; TVET; curriculum and student assessment), and four that are supportive or considered essential for ensuring that the reform is successfully and sustainably implemented (research, development and EMIS; governance, strategic planning, management and projects; partnerships; communication and ICT).

According to a representative from UNRWA HQ, the strength of the ERS is that it took a systemic approach, starting with the child at the centre and then building a vision for the kind of education system that is needed around that child:

***Going back out from that child to think, ‘Ok, what does that mean for the teacher, what does that mean for the school leader, what does that mean for the community,***

***what does that mean for the professional support structure? What does it therefore mean for strategies? What does it mean for policy?’ So, I think the key thing I would say is that it was a systemic reform that looked at all areas and all levels ... And the teacher is obviously crucial within that system, but there’s no way it can only be the responsibility of that teacher. The teacher has to be supported fully.*** UNRWA Director of Education

In order to strengthen the system in this way, the education reform addressed three levels – the policy level, the strategic or structural level, and the level of individual capacity development.<sup>54</sup> Further, the reform was underpinned by ‘[s]trengthened planning, monitoring and evaluation, and measurement of impact’ and the role of the teacher was viewed as central.<sup>55</sup>

### UNRWA’s MTS 2016–2021

In 2015, UNRWA published its MTS 2016–2021.<sup>56</sup> The MTS 2016–2021 reaffirms UNRWA’s commitment to a human development approach, noting that while it is a humanitarian agency by definition, it remains fully committed to addressing the longer term socioeconomic goals for Palestine refugees, allowing them to ‘achieve their full human development potential, become self-reliant, and live in dignity’.<sup>57</sup> The MTS 2016–2021 includes a strategic outcome related to education, that is, ‘school-aged children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education’. The focus of the Agency will therefore be on improving quality, equity and inclusiveness of both education provision and outcomes. It aims to achieve this through, among other factors, ‘continued emphasis on enhancing the professionalization of teachers in UNRWA schools’ and ‘evidence-based policy planning’ will be central to this approach.<sup>58</sup>

The importance of education is reflected in UNRWA’s budget structure, which is based on the MTS 2016–2021, and typically earmarks over half of the Programme Budget for education. In 2020, 58% of the Programme Budget of US\$806 million was set aside to support the priority goal that ‘school-aged children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education’ compared with 15% that went to protecting refugees’ health and reducing the disease burden.<sup>59</sup> Of course, a major portion – usually approximately 90% – of the funds for education goes to staff costs, including teachers, as the Education Programme is the largest employer within the UNRWA system.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>50</sup> UNRWA (2017) <sup>51</sup> UNRWA (2009) <sup>52</sup> Universalia Management Group (2010) <sup>53</sup> UNRWA (2011) <sup>54</sup> Pontefract and Dabit (2019) <sup>55</sup> Pontefract and Dabit (2019, p. 1) <sup>56</sup> UNRWA (2015) <sup>57</sup> UNRWA (n. d.) <sup>58</sup> UNRWA (2015, p. 47) <sup>59</sup> UNRWA (n. d.) <sup>60</sup> UNRWA (2019b)

## Policies related to teacher management

### Teacher Policy (2013)

Recognising the central role of teachers, the Universalia review had specifically identified the urgent need for a single coherent Teacher Policy to support UNRWA's Education Programme, a recommendation that was taken up by the ERS (2011–2015):

*it will support the development of an overall UNRWA Teacher Policy and Strategy, one which addresses issues from recruitment, training, and career progression to performance evaluation. Training of teachers will be intensified with emphasis placed on pre-service training, ongoing professional development, and monitoring and evaluation of the impact of training undergone.*<sup>61</sup>

Such a Teacher Policy was published in 2013,<sup>62</sup> as a key sub-component of the ERS. It presents the guiding principles governing teachers and teaching within the entire UNRWA system, focusing on career progression and professional development.

One of the key aspects of the Teacher Policy was to follow through on a proposed costed restructuring of the Programme in all the Fields. This restructuring included setting up three SSUs: the PDCU and AU, which report to the EDC, and the SQUA, which reports to the Deputy Chief of Education. Further, certain key roles were upgraded and redefined: head teachers and assistant heads were upgraded and their titles were changed to school principals and deputy school principals respectively; some school supervisors were upgraded and renamed education specialists; and a handful were upgraded to the position of SSU coordinators to staff the newly created SSUs. These changes will be described in more detail in later sections of the report.

### Technical instructions, norms and standards

In addition to these key policies, education staff in UNRWA's five Fields are expected to follow ETIs, which, according to a senior education representative from the JFO, regulate their work, set out roles and responsibilities, and provide a mechanism for accountability. There are also rules and regulations on payment, roles, duty hours, etc. that are issued by HR. Further, the Norms and Standards, or 'the quantifiable measures and criteria governing [their] work, for example, the maximum number of students that you can maintain in a classroom, the number of periods that the teacher should teach, the number of school principals per number of teachers', are also part of the rules and

regulations governing the work of the Education Programme (senior education representative, JFO). Finally, a key guiding document is the Action Plan for education that is derived from the MTS and takes into consideration the specific contexts in each of UNRWA's five Fields in order to determine how best to implement the MTS (senior education representative, JFO).

### UNRWA's gender policies

In 2007, UNRWA developed an Agency-wide Gender Equality Policy and launched its first Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2008–2015, which aim to address gender as a cross-cutting issue across the UNRWA system. The most recent GES 2016–2021 builds on these documents as well as the MTS, and takes a 'dual-track' approach to gender, focusing on changes in both organisational practices and programme implementation in order to ensure 'more inclusive and equitable services for Palestine refugees'.<sup>63</sup> Each Field is expected to produce a time-bound Gender Action Plan to help make the GES a reality across the Agency.

While much of UNRWA's gender policy framework is directed at maintaining gender equity in school enrolment, and raising awareness and building staff capacity to mainstream gender and respond to GBV, UNRWA has also developed guidance on human resources management, and has attempted to enhance accountability on gender in the Agency, including in the area of recruitment. One such example is UNRWA's Human Resources Action Plan on Gender Parity, which builds on the UN Secretary-General's System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity issued in 2017 and is designed to support the Agency in attaining and sustaining gender parity at all levels. The gender policy framework also includes a Gender Guide for Teachers, which, among other issues, addresses protection risks, including GBV, in UNRWA schools. This Guide was rolled out to all Fields starting in 2017, and targeted SSU staff or education specialists, who would then work with teachers on these key issues.

### UNRWA's policies on neutrality and ethics

UNRWA operates in a highly politicised environment, so the Agency has developed a number of processes and mechanisms to ensure that all its staff, including teachers, adhere to and comply with neutrality regulations as articulated in the UN Charter. Staff members are instructed to refrain from engaging in political activities and to comply with rules about posting on social media, as adhering to principles of neutrality is seen as a question of operational necessity.<sup>64</sup> Many interviewees, including teachers and education specialists, stressed the importance of neutrality and UN values to fulfilling UNRWA's mission.

<sup>61</sup> UNRWA (2011, p. 37) <sup>62</sup> UNRWA (2013) <sup>63</sup> UNRWA (2018a, p. 4) <sup>64</sup> UNRWA (n. d.)

Beyond neutrality, UNRWA has developed an ethics framework in the form of a set of core values and standards of conduct along with its *Handbook on Ethics*, which, among other issues, outlines the Agency's expectations around the reporting of incidents of misconduct and ethical violations. UNRWA also has a whistle-blower protection policy which provides staff with independent channels for reporting incidents confidentially and anonymously, and has specific provisions for reporting and oversight at the highest levels of the Agency.<sup>65</sup> UNRWA has also rolled out mandatory online training on ethics and neutrality to all staff and, within schools, there are now strict guidelines on classroom management and a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to corporal punishment, according to school principals and education representatives from the JFO interviewed as part of this study.

### **Accountability to affected populations**

One final point regarding UNRWA's policy framework related to teacher management is that the Agency has articulated an AAP framework, which sets out formal and informal mechanisms to ensure that it remain accountable to Palestine refugees and that Palestine refugees have the opportunity to participate throughout the programming cycle and are involved in decisions that affect them.<sup>66</sup> To date, the Agency does not have consensus on what 'participation' means, so it is left to each programme and Field to determine how to engage Palestine refugees.<sup>67</sup> As will be discussed in the following sections, the Education Programme has employed some participatory approaches in developing its policies and strategies, though when it comes to teachers and school principals, participation is limited to the opening up of feedback channels and/or relying on soliciting the input and buy-in from the teachers' union.

<sup>65</sup> MOPAN (2019) <sup>66</sup> MOPAN (2019) <sup>67</sup> MOPAN (2019)

## Part 1b

# Perceptions of policy enactment

During interviews, research participants were asked about the development of policies and how they are enacted in practice. Analysis of interview data from both phases of the research reveals that, while initial drafting of policies is the responsibility of UNRWA HQ, the policy development process involves input from a diverse range of stakeholders. Broadly speaking, interviewees agreed that the Teacher Policy had been developed through an inclusive process, involving a range of stakeholders at multiple levels of the system, though teachers and school principals were generally not directly involved in actual policy development. Our data also highlighted that the implementation of the Teacher Policy is considered successful at multiple levels of the system.

### **Initial drafting of policies is the responsibility of UNRWA HQ but involves input from a diverse range of stakeholders**

One senior education representative from JFO gave a detailed description of the participatory process by which education policies and related documents are developed, noting that while UNRWA HQ is responsible for producing initial drafts, it is not a ‘factory of developing policies’:

*The Education Department calls representatives from every Field – the Chiefs, the Deputy Chiefs – according to the policy, the level of the policy, who’s engaged, who are the most pertinent staff to be called. But always the Chiefs, the Deputy Chiefs, maybe the Head of the EDCs, maybe sometimes the Area Education Officers, maybe sometimes some technical experts from the EDC are being called. And workshops are facilitated around certain themes, facilitated by a consultant who specialises in a certain topic, for example, that is the focus of discussion. Feedback is collected. Challenges are collected. The way forward is identified. Recommendations are identified.*

She went on to explain that the strength of such an approach is that the policies have been ‘prepared by passing through the minds of the people who will be using and applying them’.

Once UNRWA HQ has incorporated the inputs and feedback resulting from the consultations with the Fields, as the proposed policies may have financial or legal or HR-related

implications or even health implications, the resulting drafts are then sent to all concerned departments at HQ for review to ensure that there are no contradictory components or breaches of governing rules and regulations. Once the feedback has been collected and incorporated from the relevant HQ departments, the policies are approved by the UNRWA Executive Office and finalised.

### **UNRWA’s Teacher Policy was developed through an inclusive process, involving participation of external experts and representatives from multiple levels of the UNRWA system**

According to a senior representative from UNRWA HQ, the Teacher Policy was developed ‘very inclusively’, with a combination of external expertise and the participation of representatives from multiple levels of the system. Indeed, from interviews it was clear that stakeholders from a number of levels were asked for inputs into the Teacher Policy (2013). For example, one education specialist explained that when the policy was developed, school supervisors were randomly selected from each of the five Fields to provide input, noting that there were too many school supervisors for everyone to have the opportunity to participate.

Given the significant share of UNRWA’s budget that goes to education and the commitment to cost-effectiveness emphasised in the MTS 2016–2021, it was important that

*Financial computations were undertaken at every step of the Teacher Policy development process to ensure that the Policy would be financially sustainable in UNRWA’s constrained financial environment. An Agency-wide financial simulation model was developed in 2011, enabling Education to identify a professionally sound policy which could be implemented at zero additional cost, as long as a number of ‘trade-offs’ were factored in. These ‘trade-offs’ were discussed and contextualized in each Field through a series of missions during the first half of 2012.*

She went on to explain that the precarious financial situation of UNRWA at the time meant that many of the identified ‘trade-offs’ were deployed, and the Teacher Policy had to be further revised, ‘adjusting norms to ensure financial

sustainability alongside professional soundness in the evolving financial context'. Once final computations were developed, a memo was circulated by HR and validated by Finance, which details the budget of all elements of the Teacher Policy, per Field and year.

### **School principals and teachers are less involved in actual policy development, though they are able to provide feedback**

However, when it comes to school principals and teachers, they seem to be less involved in the actual policy development process, though according to a senior education representative, once the policies have been implemented, 'the door for feedback is open, and this door for feedback it goes from down to up'. Also, any policy that relates to teachers will need buy-in from the ASU before it is issued, so, in theory, teachers have a powerful entity representing their interests.

### **Interviewees from multiple levels of the system felt that the Teacher Policy had been successfully implemented**

Broadly speaking, interviewees agreed that the Teacher Policy (and the education reform as a whole) had been implemented successfully to date, particularly when it came to ensuring the establishment of the SSUs, and to ensuring a clearer and fairer career path for teachers. One education specialist described the positive impact the policy had had on her when she worked as a teacher:

*Actually, during my experience as a teacher, I was affected by this policy very positively, because it impacts my teaching practices in the classrooms. It was focusing on implementing some active pedagogies and highlighting the students' inclusiveness. So it has different levels. So there was more a transformation and a refreshment of some of the skills we should be equipped with, so it had a good impact on me as a teacher.*

An AEO explained that when the Teacher Policy was first introduced, there had been some resistance, but that from her perspective, this was a natural response to anything new:

*I think, at the beginning because you know there is change resistance for anything new, or for when you take any decision, a lot of resistance to change from the people. But with time ... the people accept more the Teacher Policy.*

However, she did note that a small number of education specialists who were formerly school supervisors prior to the introduction of the Teacher Policy are still not happy about it because of the shift in their role and their relationship to other actors in the system that the policy brought with it.

## Part 1c

# Awareness of policy

Once the policies are finalised and signed, they are communicated to the Fields, usually through emails. In addition, a dissemination and implementation plan is developed, which usually involves a series of workshops and training to ensure that stakeholders at multiple levels (including the school level) understand the policies and how they relate to the overall education reform, and learn how to implement these policies in practice. According to a senior education representative from the JFO, workshops and other dissemination activities are sometimes organised to ensure that awareness is raised in a ‘cascading manner’.

As a strong point in UNRWA’s system, one representative from an SSU mentioned what he called ‘the communication tree, starting with the Director of Education and going right down to the teacher’, referring to the solid processes of communication within the educational system in UNRWA, which renders all other processes such as developing and disseminating policies, providing all kinds of support for teachers, communicating with the Field and others, significantly more effective.

In general, interviewees at multiple levels demonstrated awareness and were able to articulate a clear understanding of the major key policies and strategies related to education, including the ERS, the Teacher Policy (2013) and the Inclusive Education Policy (2013), suggesting that the communication strategy has been successful. In addition to the presence of the ‘communication tree’, an UNRWA HQ representative explained that another reason for the success of their policy dissemination strategy within education is that everything is connected to the education reform:

***And even every single workshop, even up until last year, when we were looking at the classroom observation study that we were supposed to do this year, always we’ve begun every workshop in Amman with people from the Field, we’ve said, ‘Look: this is the reform. This is where we are. This workshop today belongs to this bit over here and it’s this.’ So it’s every single time, putting it back in its place, you know. You would never just think, ‘Oh, this is just a workshop on classroom observation.’ And that’s the other thing. Coming back to that. Adding to that information.***

In fact, many interviewees were able to explain how their work related to the overall education reform, and how they

were responsible in part for ensuring the sustainability of the reform. In the words of one education specialist:

***Actually, we are working under this reform strategy because it taps different levels of curriculum, students, inclusion, teacher professional development, so this is the first key policy. The other policies that are imposed on us by the Field or HQ, it would be more like more supportive, or it would be like going in line with the reform strategy, but this is the key policy that we go with.***

When it comes to the Teacher Policy (2013), one SSU representative explained that the regular meetings and workshops about the policy had helped to ensure that there were no major issues with interpretation:

***No, there weren’t any [problems with the communication and interpretation of the Teacher Policy] because there were periodical meetings with the teachers and school principals about the policy. So, the communication tree made things clearer and more transparent for all the parties concerned. So, there is an efficiency.***

On the other hand, a senior education representative from the JFO noted that some tensions had emerged when the Teacher Policy (2013) was first launched, which she remarked was quite typical when it comes to these types of policies that bring with them reforms that directly impact the lives of teachers:

***Of course ... sometimes people feel that this Teacher Policy ... People always are suspicious, and ... they start raising some ideas beyond the thoughts of those who developed the policy or the strategy or the document. There are different interpretations ... and sometimes staff are afraid about their entitlements, or work settlements, and so they start raising concerns.***

However, she went on to explain that the Agency has now amassed experience when it comes to ‘how to disseminate such policies that touch staff and their positions, their promotions, their ability to be promoted’. They do so by ensuring that the chiefs of education in the different Fields and other senior staff are able to explain the benefits of the policy to all staff, and also, as previously mentioned, by working to ensure that they have the buy-in from the Staff Union.

# Summary

## Part 1a: Policy landscape framing teacher management in UNRWA schools

UNRWA has a politically neutral mandate to provide aid and protection to Palestine refugees, not to seek durable solutions for refugees such as repatriation, integration into host communities, or resettlement to a third country.

Despite its formal designation as a temporary humanitarian agency, the protracted nature of the Palestine refugee situation means that UNRWA has come to play a key role in supporting development, acting as a 'quasi-governmental service provider' of sorts.

The nature of UNRWA's mandate means that the Agency is not required to align with national development results. However, as its work is dependent on maintaining good relationships with host governments, UNRWA works with ministries of education, health, social affairs and planning to ensure that the services they provide complement those provided by host authorities. It therefore demonstrates strong alignment with host countries, particularly in the areas of health and education. Within the education sector, for example, UNRWA schools will follow host country curricula, though they will review and enrich them if deemed necessary.

Since 2006, UNRWA has been undertaking sweeping organisational and strategic reforms to improve the quality of services offered to Palestine refugees, placing access to quality education as a top priority. In 2011, the Agency launched its ERS, based on organisational reform priorities and an external review conducted by Universalis in 2010.

As a key component of the education reform, UNRWA developed a new Teacher Policy in 2013, which outlines the guiding principles governing teachers, teaching and the professional support structure within the entire UNRWA system, focusing on career progression and professional development.

Other relevant teacher management policies include ETIs, guidelines issued by HR, the Norms and Standards, and the Education Action Plan derived from the MTS. Teachers' work is also framed by UNRWA's Gender Equality Policy, policies on neutrality and ethics, and the AAP framework.

## Part 1b: Perceptions of policy enactment

Generally, stakeholders felt that UNRWA takes a participatory approach to the policy development process. While the initial drafting of policies is the responsibility of UNRWA HQ, the policy development process involves input from various actors at multiple levels of governance and from different departments and divisions within the Agency, as well as external partners.

Broadly speaking, interviewees agreed that the Teacher Policy had been developed through an inclusive process. However, teachers and school principals were less actively involved in policy development than other stakeholders in the system, though senior education representatives mentioned that school principals and teachers are able to provide feedback on policies at any time and noted that teachers' interests are supposed to be represented by the Teachers Section of the ASU, which is consulted throughout the process.

Interviewees from multiple levels of the system felt that the Teacher Policy had been successfully implemented to date.

## Part 1c: Awareness of policy

In general, interviewees at multiple levels demonstrated a high level of awareness and were able to articulate a clear understanding of the major key policies and strategies related to education, including the ERS and the Teacher Policy (2013), suggesting that UNRWA's communication strategy has been successful.

This strategy involves making sure that the chiefs of education in the different Fields and other senior staff are able to explain the benefits of the policy to all staff, and also engaging the Staff Union in discussions early on in the process to ensure buy-in.

Most workshops and training held with teachers, school principals and other key education personnel make explicit reference to the education reform. This not only increases awareness of policies across the system, but also helps stakeholders to understand how their own work relates to the reform, and how they can help to ensure the sustainability of the reform, an understanding that was demonstrated by a number of informants during interviews.

# Part 2

## Who teaches Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools and how are they managed?

This part addresses the second of the three study objectives and aims to explore teacher management in practice by examining:

- a.** who is teaching Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools,
- b.** recruitment and deployment,
- c.** teacher training and professional development,
- d.** job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path, and
- e.** motivation and wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention.

The main sources of data analysed for this part of the report include semi-structured interviews with key representatives from the JFO and the Area Education Offices and school principals, and focus groups with teachers in UNRWA schools. This analysis was supplemented by data from the NTS (2018). We also relied on our review of policy documents and interviews with central-level stakeholders to determine what official teacher management processes should look like according to policy, in order to better understand the interaction between policy and practice at the school level.

A summary of key points is provided at the end of Part 2.

## Part 2a

# Who teaches Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools?

### All of UNRWA's teachers in Jordan are registered Palestine refugees

UNRWA is one of the largest employers of registered Palestine refugees in the region. UNRWA's Education Programme is its largest, not only in terms of budgetary allocation but also in terms of staff, and all teachers teaching at UNRWA's schools in Jordan are Palestine refugees, recruited and hired through the Agency's system.

### While there is a cap on how many UNRWA teachers can be employed on a daily paid basis, this can be revisited in times of crisis

At time of writing, across UNRWA's five Fields, there was a cap of 7.5% in the proportion of posts held by daily paid teachers engaged for the whole school year, but interviewees mentioned that the cap may have to be revisited and lifted given UNRWA's ongoing precarious financial situation and the impact of COVID-19.

### The majority of teachers in UNRWA have met the minimum qualification requirement of a bachelor's degree

It is a requirement for all UNRWA teachers to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree. NTS data indicate that this requirement is largely met, as only 0.8% of respondents did not reach this minimum standard, as illustrated in figure 1 (page 44). A representative from the JFO confirmed that all but two teachers hold at least a bachelor's degree, and that those two teachers are studying for one.

### Box 10: Types of teachers included in this research

#### Fixed-term teachers

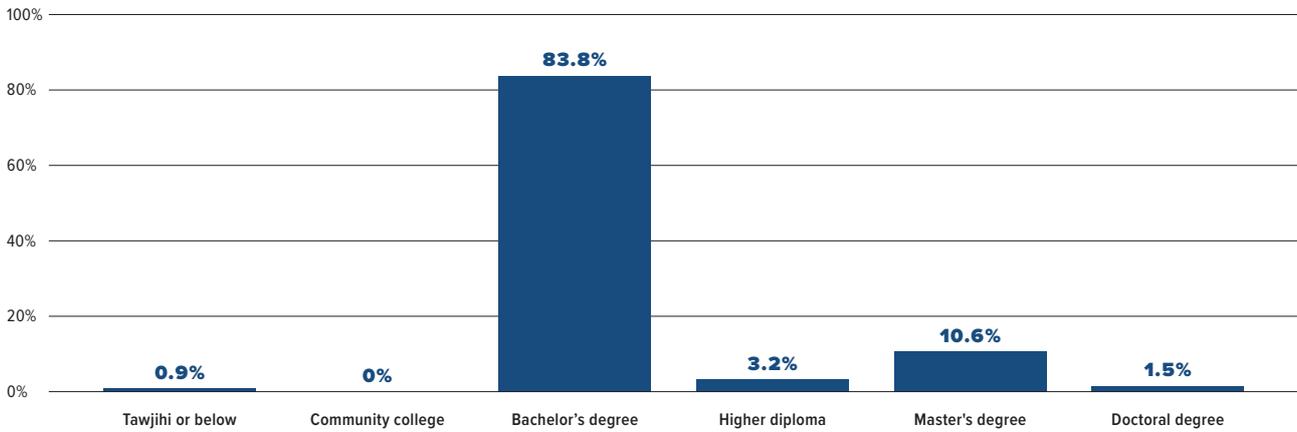
In UNRWA schools in Jordan, typically over 90% of elementary-level teachers are engaged on three-year regular renewable contracts,<sup>68</sup> following an initial probation period. Classroom or general teachers (for Grades 1 to 3) are generally Bachelor of Education holders, while subject teachers (Grades 4 to 6) should hold at least a bachelor's degree in their chosen subject. Schools are segregated by gender starting in Grade 4, so generally female teachers will teach at girls' schools and male teachers will teach at boys' schools.

#### Daily paid teachers hired for the whole school year

In addition to these fixed-term teachers, UNRWA contracts daily paid teachers on an annual basis, for nine months, who are paid based on days worked and do not qualify for benefits.

While not covered by this research, it is important to note that UNRWA also hires **daily paid teachers for short durations** as temporary/substitute teachers.

<sup>68</sup> Note that this contracting modality was introduced in 1995. Prior to that, teachers were hired on a temporary indefinite basis. Teachers who were hired before 1995 would have been engaged on this basis.

**Figure 1: Highest qualification level among teachers, Grades 1 to 6, N = 340 (NTS data 2018)**

### There is a shortage of male teachers at the elementary level in UNRWA schools, particularly in the lower grades and in certain subjects

UNRWA employs over 2,000 teachers at the elementary level in Jordan. According to recent data from the JFO, 53.5% of the elementary teaching force is female, and 46.5% male. The total number of teachers, as well as the percentages of male versus female at each grade level, are provided in table 10.

The gender disparity at the Grades 1–3 level, with more female teachers than male, is in part due to a shortage of male teachers, which has meant that UNRWA has allocated more female teachers at this level, where classes may be co-ed, according to UNRWA stakeholders at the JFO. These stakeholders also explained that they faced difficulties recruiting qualified male teachers in specific subjects such as Arabic, mathematics and the sciences.

**Table 10: Percentage of male versus female teachers at UNRWA schools (Source: UNRWA JFO data, 2020–2021)**

Grade level	Total number of teachers	Male	Female
Grades 1–3	894	41.8%	58.2%
Grade 4	363	48.5%	51.5%
Grade 5	391	50.9%	49.1%
Grade 6	419	50.6%	49.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,067</b>	<b>46.5%</b>	<b>53.5%</b>

## Part 2b

# Recruitment and deployment

### Minimum qualification requirements

#### What the policies say

UNRWA has required a minimum of a bachelor's degree for all prospective teachers who wish to teach at the elementary level since 2006, a policy that pre-dates the ERS (2011). Teachers who teach at the lower elementary level (Grades 1–3) are required to hold a bachelor's degree in education or in classroom teaching, while subject teachers (Grades 4–6) should hold a bachelor's degree in their subject specialisation.

As a rule, pre-service pedagogical training is not required for subject teachers, as UNRWA has been providing formal teacher education for newly appointed or novice teachers in their first three years of service since the 1970s through a programme called Education Psychology (EP) offered by the Institute for Education and run through the EDC. The EP was replaced by the NAT programme in late 2018. Unlike the EP, the NAT programme is required of all novice teachers, even if they already have a Bachelor of Education or Classroom Teaching. Both the EP and the NAT programme will be described in more detail in the section on teacher professional development.

According to the Teacher Policy (2013), the Agency would like to recruit more teachers with pre-service pedagogical training, though the policy does not provide any information about how this goal would be attained. However, given the financial constraints facing UNRWA and the significant costs associated with formal pre-service programmes, it seems unlikely that this aim will be achieved.

UNRWA has its own tertiary institutions, including FESA in Jordan, and graduates from these institutions are eligible to apply for teaching posts at UNRWA schools. According to the ERS (2011), there are not enough graduates from these institutions to meet the demand for new teachers each year, and not all of these teachers are able or willing to pursue a job within the UNRWA system. Further, UNRWA does not require graduates from its institutions to teach at UNRWA schools, nor are they given preference during recruitment. As explained by a senior Education Programme representative from the JFO:

***the Agency looks to this matter from service and from an eligibility of service perspective by saying that we supported these students who are refugees by giving***

***them the chance to learn and get a certificate at our institutions. However, let's give the chance to other refugees ... let them compete equally, with other refugees. We may find better than them, graduates from other universities who are still also refugees and eligible to benefit from UNRWA, even as employees. So, this is why. This is the principle. Not to invest in the same person twice while it can give the chance to others. It is not ... They are not given preference, and they are not being discriminated against. They are given equal opportunities. Interview, senior education representative, JFO***

#### Minimum qualification requirements in practice

According to ERS (2011), UNRWA's 2006 policy mandating bachelor's degrees for all teachers was implemented relatively quickly and successfully, with only approximately 1,700 teachers of over 20,000 across all five Fields not holding a university degree by 2010. In Jordan, all UNRWA elementary teachers who were interviewed during the NTS 2018 held at least a bachelor's degree, with 16% holding a higher diploma or above. A senior education representative at the JFO confirmed that all but two of the elementary-level teachers had bachelor's degrees, and that the two without were diploma holders who were currently completing their degree studies.

According to the NTS 2018 data, 69% of UNRWA teachers at the lower elementary cycle interviewed for the survey held a degree in education, compared with only 10% of the Grade 4 to 6 teachers interviewed. The majority of Grade 4 to 6 teachers surveyed held degrees in humanities (47%) and natural sciences (31%). Interestingly, while many interviewees, when asked if they thought it would be good for UNRWA to recruit more teachers with a pre-service teaching qualification, agreed that, yes, it would be, no one was aware of any existing or future Agency plans to do so. In fact, many, including more senior staff from the JFO, seemed surprised when interviewers mentioned the section in the Teacher Policy describing this aim, especially given the costs associated with providing pre-service teacher education, which neither the Agency nor Palestine refugees themselves are likely to be able to afford.

One education specialist confirmed that graduates from UNRWA tertiary institutes are not required to teach at UNRWA schools or given preference when it comes to

hiring because of the Agency's commitment to allowing 'equal opportunities to all candidates'. However, she mentioned that when she has participated in interview panels in the past, she tends to recommend the UNRWA graduates as they are 'extremely competent in the field of education and in their subject' and some of them are particularly vulnerable because they have no identification papers and therefore 'have very limited opportunities outside UNRWA' (interview with an education specialist). In fact, a number of interviewees recognised the high calibre of FESA graduates and graduates from other UNRWA tertiary institutions.

A teacher at a boys' school joked that there were teachers in the system who were 'Made in UNRWA', referring to teachers who had completed Grades 1 to 10 at an UNRWA school, gone on to study at FESA, and then started teaching in an UNRWA school. Teachers external to UNRWA still need to be recruited as well, particularly as FESA has a limited number of specialties, including classroom teacher (education), geography, English and Arabic. According to one group of teachers, it is still the case that FESA does not graduate sufficient numbers of potential teaching recruits to fully staff the UNRWA system in Jordan.

## Recruitment of teachers

### What the policies say

**UNRWA's recruitment process is standardised across posts, sectors and its five Fields.** According to the Universalialia review from 2010, the Agency has long recognised the importance of investing in a rigorous recruitment process in order to select the best available candidates who are willing to work, which 'manifests itself in an elaborate screening process driven by examinations and a series of interviews'.<sup>69</sup> In the Education Programme, which is UNRWA's largest programme, prospective candidates are expected to fill in an application form and submit their CV online. These applications are then screened, and candidates meeting the minimum requirements are invited for a written test. This written test used to be a manual exercise, but about five years ago the test was moved online to streamline the process through the development of a bank of multiple-choice questions.<sup>70</sup>

According to a senior education representative at the JFO, the tests are administered at computer labs that are part of their training centres over a period of about six weeks on Fridays and Saturdays, when the centres would ordinarily be closed. The candidate will list their specialisation and

then relevant questions are selected randomly from the system. Immediately after completing the test, the candidate will receive their score, and, if they pass, they will be called in for an interview.

In the JFO, the interviews are supposed to be held at the EDC, as many of the people who will be participating on the panel are based there and there are many meeting rooms. The interview panel is made up of four or five people, including an AEO, an education specialist, who is ideally an expert in the same specialisation as the applicant, an HR representative, and sometimes another coordinator, specialist, or school principal. According to one AEO interviewed, a host country representative can also be included in the panel to make sure there is no discrimination.

While the interviews are competency-based, they are typically not very technical, as technical knowledge has already been assessed in the test, according to a senior education representative at UNRWA HQ, who noted that interview questions are designed to explore attitude, behaviour, communication, ethics and problem-solving. Candidates will be asked to respond to a typical classroom scenario, for example, having to clarify a concept using the whiteboard, or teaching a mini lesson to the interview panel, which makes the EDC, as a training centre, a particularly suitable location for these interviews. The results of the interviews are reported to HR, who compile a final roster of names of individual teachers who will be contacted in the order they appear on the list, following the annual class formation exercise, which will be described in the section below.

While typically over 90% of UNRWA's teachers are hired on a fixed-term basis, **UNRWA's Education Programme has recruited some teachers to work on daily paid contracts for the whole school year.** The minimum qualification requirements and the recruitment process for daily paid teachers are the same as for fixed-term teachers, and successful applicants' names are added to a roster that UNRWA then refers to when temporary posts open up.

Interestingly, UNRWA's Teacher Policy (2013) does not specifically mention gender, likely due to the existence of an Agency-wide gender policy framework mentioned above. In addition to promoting gender equity in school enrolments, and combatting GBV, this gender policy framework also includes an HR Action Plan on Gender Parity aimed at supporting the Agency in attaining and sustaining gender parity at all levels of the UNRWA workforce.

<sup>69</sup> Universalialia Management Group (2010) <sup>70</sup> Interestingly, while they typically focus on assessment related to students, the AU was involved in the development of this online test, according to an interviewee who had previously worked there, an example of identifying and drawing on relevant expertise, even if it is from a different part of the system.

### Box 11: Recruitment of daily paid teachers as a cost-saving measure

According to a senior education representative, as the cost of a daily paid teacher comes to under 60% of the cost of a fixed-term teacher, the recruitment of daily paid teachers to fill vacant fixed-term posts has become an important measure for ensuring flexibility and cost efficiency during the annual class formation exercise (which will be discussed in more detail below)

and also an important austerity measure when UNRWA's financial situation is particularly dire.

An UNRWA HQ representative explained that, a few years ago, UNRWA tried to reduce the percentage of teachers recruited in this way and to establish consistency across the five Fields. It put into place a policy that only 7.5% of

teaching staff could be daily paid, so a number of teachers who had been on daily paid contracts were moved to fixed-term contracts. However, at the time of writing, the Agency was facing a larger funding gap than in previous years, which was compounded by the devastating impact of COVID-19, so the Fields may lift this cap and recruit more daily paid teachers again, according to this interviewee.

### Box 12: Gender Action Plan to recruit more women to senior positions within the UNRWA education system

A key component of UNRWA's Gender Action Plan is to introduce 'a series of special measures with regard to recruitment procedures that are being utilised to ensure that more female candidates are considered for and appointed to senior positions'.<sup>71</sup> In fact, this component has been welcomed as quite timely within the Education Programme, especially given the early recognition that, while there are many

opportunities for women to join the UNRWA teaching profession, as of 2010 a gender gap has been identified across all five Fields within Faculties of Education and at management level, with males outnumbering females in more senior roles within the education system (ERS 2011). As part of the implementation of this Action Plan, the Agency has set a target of 50% of senior area staff

positions (Grade 16 and above) to be held by women, building on a baseline of 26% in 2018 (ibid.). A senior education representative from the JFO described this initiative as 'a policy adopted by the Agency to promote or to encourage females, to welcome them in higher positions, which would have them on a roster for four years', and indicated that this policy is being followed in Jordan Field.

#### Recruitment in practice

According to interviewees, every year the JFO receives thousands of applications for teaching positions; in 2019, according to a senior education representative, they received over 18,000, approximately 10,000 of these took the electronic test, and those who passed the test were invited for an interview. While the majority of interviews are indeed held at the EDC, according to a senior education representative from the JFO, in 2019–2020 they opted for the Irbid area to conduct their interviews at the Irbid Area Education Office, so as not to create any additional hardships for the large number of applicants from Irbid who would have to travel far in order to get to the EDC. Instead, the interview panel would go to Irbid every morning and come back in the afternoon. This decision demonstrates that **while the JFO will follow standard procedures and practices, they are also able to remain flexible.**

One education specialist we spoke to who had participated in a number of interview panels explained that each member on the panel has one competency to target during the interview, which is agreed upon before the interviews take place, and the education specialist typically focuses on technical aspects. However, as mentioned earlier, it is important to note that the focus of these interviews is not to ascertain whether or not the candidate has the required technical knowledge or skills, as this has already been ascertained during the online test, but rather whether they have the necessary competencies. In other words, while a candidate who has prior teaching experience may be asked how they might deliver a lesson on a given topic, the education specialist will more likely ask questions to ascertain a candidate's problem-solving and planning skills, particularly if the candidate has never been a teacher.

<sup>71</sup> UNRWA (2018a, p. 9)

In general, **teachers described UNRWA's recruitment process as rigorous but fair**, and noted that the process has been streamlined since the application and written tests are now delivered online, typically taking only between two and three months from application to interview. During one focus group, teachers described UNRWA's teacher recruitment process as based on competency and skills rather than nepotism:

*What I like in the Agency is that there is no nepotism or cronyism. Recruitment is based on competences and skills. Teacher at a girls' school*

**The reliance on daily paid teachers to fill vacant fixed-term posts was identified as a major challenge**, according to a number of interviewees from Jordan Field. Their main concern was the high turnover among daily paid teachers, particularly because of the impact it had on students' learning and wellbeing, as explained by a representative from the SQUA:

*For example, we ask a school principal who gave us some information about a school ... just only in one month, this one class got about four different daily paid teachers in one subject. So each teacher came to the school, and sees the crowded classes, the big school with crowded classrooms ... he moves to a different offer. Representative from the Jordan SQUA*

As will be discussed later in this report, while daily paid teachers have contracts, they are able to leave without giving much notice, meaning that the school principal at the impacted school will need to make a request to the AEO for a new daily paid teacher to fill the now-vacant post. Interviewees noted that this situation could in fact prove costly. As noted above, teachers are not required to have pre-service teacher training because they will be trained in situ once they start, meaning that an investment is made in the daily paid teachers' capacity development, which is then lost once the teacher leaves.

When an audit of recruitment was conducted in the JFO, assessing practice against the UNRWA Human Resources Action Plan on Gender Parity, the audit did not find any non-compliance instances.<sup>72</sup> However, many interviewees, including education specialists, AEOs and senior education representatives, noted that **there is a shortage of male teachers, particularly in certain subjects and in certain areas**. A lack of gender parity within the teaching workforce appears to be a persistent problem. Further, according to the ERS (2011), fewer and fewer men are opting to pursue teaching careers and there are gender-sensitive issues when it comes to appointing female teachers to boys'

schools, which causes problems for the system as a whole. One senior education representative from the JFO hoped that these gender-sensitive issues could be overcome, and that female teachers could be assigned to teach in boys' schools, at least in the elementary cycle from Grades 1 to 6, as this would go a long way to addressing the shortage of male teachers.

**The JFO appears to have made reasonable progress when it comes to the policy of recruiting more females for senior-level positions** within the education system. In 2020, while the heads of the three SSUs and one of the deputy chiefs of education were all male, the Chief of Education, the other deputy chief and the Head of the EDC were all female. Interviewees also noted that the teachers' union, which has been quite male-dominated in the past, has been very proactive in responding to Agency guidelines to elect (sometimes with a quota) more female teachers to play an active role in the union, though this has been a relatively recent development, and it will take time to fully implement these types of gender policies.

Unfortunately, **it may prove difficult to sustain this gender balance given the significant financial constraints UNRWA continues to face**, which has resulted in the Agency taking austerity measures by imposing a hiring freeze, where any vacancy that needs to be filled has to be on an acting basis by a qualified current staff member. This austerity measure has had a direct impact on the JFO, as one of the deputy chiefs retired at the end of 2020, and has been replaced on an acting basis by the Head of the EDC. However, the only suitable candidates to serve as Head of the EDC on an acting basis are currently still on probation, so the post remains vacant, or, rather, the acting Deputy Chief is currently filling both roles. While there is significant overlap between the two positions and position functions, according to a senior education representative at the JFO, this does not seem a sustainable solution in the long run.

## Class formation and the deployment of teachers

### What the policies say

According to the ERS (2011), while service delivery is the responsibility of the Fields, they should reflect the 'parameters established by UNRWA Education policies, standards and norms coordinated by Headquarters'. Of key importance are the **annual Planning Norms and Standards**, which provide guidance on the numbers of teachers and support cadre working in the Fields to help the teachers, including education specialists, coordinators and clerks, etc., to be assigned to different schools.

<sup>72</sup> UNRWA (2018a)

In order to determine how many teachers are needed and at which schools in the five Fields, a class formation exercise is undertaken by the Chief Education Programme Coordination in collaboration with the Director's office at UNRWA HQ. With support from the HR department at HQ and the five Field Offices, they collect information on how many students, teachers and other education personnel there are in different schools and different sections in order to determine how many teachers are needed per Field, per area, per school.

**The annual class formation exercise takes place in two steps: the projected class formation, and the actual class formation.** According to a senior education representative at the JFO, the planning process starts in May, when they count the number of students who sat for the test at the end of the school year. That number is considered a factor to support predictive class formation. They then look at applications for Grade 1 and for transfer, which are received during the summer, and also deduct Grade 10 graduates. The school year starts in September, and, once student numbers have had a chance to stabilise, those students are counted. The appropriate number of teachers and support staff are identified based on the Norms and Standards, and submitted to HQ, at which point it is referred to as actual formation. The results of the actual class formation are reviewed by HQ, and agreement will need to be reached between the Education Programme at JFO and at HQ, before it is endorsed by the Education Department at HQ. Once it is endorsed by HQ, the JFO should receive the number of staff members specified.

At the Field level, the Chief of Education has overall responsibility for liaising with HQ when it comes to class formation, and the AEOs are responsible for collecting the relevant data on student and staff numbers for their assigned area, which they submit to the Chief.

Following the class formation exercise, teachers may be transferred to a different school based on identified surpluses and needs, which is possible as teachers are employees of the UNRWA system rather than an individual school. Teachers are able to request a transfer, which may or may not be accommodated, depending on availability of vacant posts.

### **Class formation and teacher deployment in practice**

An AEO explained that class formation was one of her main responsibilities as an AEO, and that she is therefore responsible for studying the numbers of classrooms in each school in her area, how many teachers and support staff are needed in each school, and whether schools need to open or close certain class sections. According to a number of interviewees, it is common practice that AEOs task one of their education specialists with leading or at least

### **Box 13: The impact of COVID-19 on class formation exercises**

As was the case around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on UNRWA's teaching and learning processes, with most UNRWA teachers in Jordan working remotely last semester utilising their online learning platform to deliver lessons. The pandemic also had an impact on educational planning processes, including class formation. According to an AEO:

*We didn't do actual class formation in November because all of them are at their home. So at the beginning of this semester [February 2021], all the teachers will now be going back to their schools, and we start in this time with lower elementary, from first to third grade. And the MoE is planning to allow other students and teachers to return to their school for the tenth grade on 21 February, and for all students from fourth to ninth grade on 7 March. As you know, we follow the MoE. So, in this semester, all students and their teachers will be in their school by March 7. This is why we didn't know the class formation in November, and we are now doing class formation in the beginning of February, because of COVID-19 and the working remotely.*

supporting the class formation exercise, given their heavy workloads, even though this exercise is formally their responsibility.

As part of the class formation exercise, AEOs identify where there may be a surplus of teachers and where those teachers may be transferred according to school need, in order to achieve a balanced allocation of teachers. During a focus group, some teachers at a girls' school expressed that they were concerned about potentially being transferred to a different school following the conclusion of the class formation exercise, noting that not having a say about a potential move left them feeling stressed and insecure up until November, when the class formation exercise is complete. On the other hand, a group of highly qualified male teachers explained that they had wanted to transfer to their current school, which was well regarded in the UNRWA system, largely due to the strong leadership. One of these teachers described the school as 'paradise'. It is important to note that these transfers are more often carried out in response to needs in the educational system rather than at the request of the teachers, which, as already noted, some teachers from a girls' school reported was a source of stress for them.

## Part 2c

# Teacher training and professional development

### Pre-service teacher training

#### What the policies say

Palestine refugees are entitled to enrol in Jordanian universities and pursue a number of different subjects, including but not limited to bachelor's programmes in education/lower elementary teaching, mathematics, Arabic, English and geography. Typically, bachelor programmes in subjects other than lower elementary teaching/education focus on the pure subject matter, building content knowledge and skills only, without pedagogical training. FESA is the only pre-service teacher education provider in the UNRWA system in Jordan. FESA offers a Bachelor of Lower Elementary Teaching/Education, in addition to its non-teaching degrees in Arabic, English and geography.

FESA does not have the capacity to graduate sufficient numbers of teachers to staff all of UNRWA's schools, both in terms of classroom teachers, through its Bachelor of Education programme, and in terms of subject teachers, through its non-teaching programmes. It also does not offer degrees in natural sciences and mathematics, so prospective

subject teachers in these subjects will have to obtain their degree from a different institution.

According to the Teacher Policy, one barrier to ensuring quality 'lifelong professional learning' opportunities for teachers is that pre- and in-service training are not adequately coordinated in the UNRWA system. While one of the original aims of FESA was to upgrade the qualifications of in-service teachers, FESA is now only focused on pre-service, university education. The EDC is the primary in-service programme provider, and there are no clear links between these two entities. As most UNRWA teachers are graduates from Jordanian universities rather than FESA, the link between pre- and in-service professional training is even weaker.

As strategies to strengthen this link, the Teacher Policy proposed a 'move to take only fully qualified teachers' in the future and to create a dedicated PDCU to 'better link pre- and in-service education and pay particular attention to supporting the work of the Education Specialists at the Area Level (as they are the frontline staff working with individual teachers and schools)'.<sup>73</sup>

#### Box 14: UNRWA FESA

FESA was established in 1971 and is located in Amman, Jordan. According to an UNRWA HQ representative, there is strong alignment between UNRWA's Jordan Field and the Jordanian MoE. This alignment is evident when it comes to FESA, which is closely tied to the higher education laws in Jordan, which dictate the number and ranks of faculty members and teaching loads, etc. In fact, in 1988, in response to the provisional law of Jordan's Education Act No. 28 requiring teachers to be degree holders, FESA aimed to upgrade in-service

two-year community college diploma holders to bachelor's degree holders. While this alignment is important to ensure that Palestine refugees are better able to find employment in Jordan and the region as a whole, it has proven quite costly to sustain, according to the UNRWA HQ representative.

At the beginning of the academic year 1993–1994, FESA opened its doors to pre-service teacher trainees, with the aim of preparing them to teach at the Basic Compulsory Stage at UNRWA schools. FESA Jordan

and the Educational Science Faculty (ESF) in West Bank are the only pre-service providers in the UNRWA system, and together cater to between 1,500 and 2,000 students in total (over the four years of study). FESA became UNRWA's first institute of teacher education awarding teachers a bachelor's degree. In addition, FESA offers bachelor's degrees in geography, English and Arabic. While the Bachelor of Education/Lower Elementary Teaching includes training in pedagogy and practical experiences, the other programmes do not.

<sup>73</sup> UNRWA (2013, p. 11)

### Box 15: The PDCU

The PDCU was established as proposed by the Teacher Policy (2013) with a head (who reports to the Head of the EDC) and a number of coordinators. According to a representative from the PDCU, the unit was founded based on the principles set out in UNRWA's ERS, and its main role relates to:

**1.** the professional development of all the workers under the UNRWA umbrella, including teachers, education specialists, deputy school principals, school principals, coordinators from the different SSUs and sometimes even students

**2.** the implementation of host country curriculum and the development of complementary content from Grade 1 to Grade 10, whereby PDCU coordinators for all specialisations work together with education specialists from the JFO's four areas.

In addition to these key duties, the PDCU also holds relevant training programmes offered by UNRWA HQ, the Education Programme and the Jordanian MoE, reviews developed curricula, and conducts some research.

At present, there are approximately seven coordinators at the PDCU who are responsible for the professional development programmes, working in close collaboration with education specialists and school principals. The coordinators plan and lead training and sessions, and record attendance and evaluate the performance of training participants as relevant, according to the requirements of each training programme. They are also expected to document all training within the Staff Module of the EMIS system, under Professional Development.

#### Pre-service teacher training in practice

As mentioned earlier, most UNRWA teachers are graduates from Jordanian universities, though some are graduates from FESA/ESF (what some interviewees referred to as 'Made in UNRWA' teachers). The quality of UNRWA tertiary institutions and the calibre of both accepted applicants and graduates of these institutions were spoken about by many interviewees, from HQ level all the way through to the school level. In the words of one education specialist, who was not himself a graduate of FESA:

*The FESA graduates are wonderful, really. Maybe when I say they are brilliant or something like that, you will see that for us only ... but really, they are brilliant. They are very good. They work for themselves. I want to tell you something ... Most of our students at FESA, they have a high average Tawjihi, general secondary certificate ... Because they are poor, because they haven't enough money, because their father has died and they have no work. They come to our FESA to study to be a class teacher or something like that because it's cheap or almost free. They are intelligent, they are brilliant, because they are feeling they should be better than that. That's what they have only, so they deal with that. They are really brilliant, really. Education specialist*

In fact, some interviewees mentioned that there would be no need to privilege 'Made in UNRWA' teachers during the recruitment process, as their competence levels were so high that they would usually be among the top candidates if they did choose to apply to teach at UNRWA schools.

While interviewees did respond in the affirmative to our question about whether or not it would be desirable to recruit more teachers with pre-service training, as noted earlier they seemed surprised to learn that the Teacher Policy had listed this as an aim, as they felt this would be too costly, both for UNRWA and for the refugees themselves. An education specialist explained that as UNRWA has limited funds, the Agency would need to continue to prioritise in-service professional development for the foreseeable future, and that from her perspective, as a subject specialist, it was preferable that the candidates came in with sufficient and strong content knowledge, as they would be able to acquire the necessary pedagogical knowledge early on in their careers, citing the strength of UNRWA's training for novice teachers, which will be discussed in the following section.

#### Teacher professional development for novice teachers

##### What the policies say

Long before the 2006 policy decision requiring candidates for teaching posts to hold at least a bachelor's degree in a relevant subject, UNRWA's Education Department and Programme had recognised the importance of ensuring that novice (or newly appointed) teachers have access to a formal programme to support their professional development in the form of an EP, a one-year programme, which was to be completed within three years of starting their service, and was offered by the EDC.

## Box 16: The EDC

According to a representative from UNRWA HQ, before the UNRWA Education Department was restructured in 2010, the EDCs<sup>74</sup> acted as ‘kind of the arm of the Institute of Education in the Fields’, implementing the Institute’s professional development programmes and capacity-building opportunities for teachers, school principals and supervisors. Notably, the EDC has provided in-service teachers with a one-year EP course since the 1970s, which leads to a teaching qualification, and is now responsible for ensuring that all novice teachers are able to participate in the NAT programme. (More detailed information about the NAT is provided below.) According to a representative from the PDCU, the EDC sometimes provides support for some of the pre-service training offered by FESA, and evaluates and grades some of the student teachers’ projects.

While the EDC continues its professional development activities in Jordan Field, including overseeing the activities of the PDCU and the AU, the Institute of Education is now no longer active in its original role. Since the reform, the Institute of Education has become smaller and now exists as more of an accrediting body, responsible for digitising and uploading all programmes and information on teachers who have been accredited over the years through various Institute of Education courses, and will continue in this accrediting role in the future, according to a representative from UNRWA HQ. The professional development of teachers is now the responsibility of the Teacher Development and School Empowerment Division at UNRWA HQ.

According to a representative from the PDCU, the EP training was approximately 150 hours and focused on psychology, pedagogy and the subject or specialisation of the trainees. The psychological component focused on different stages of child development and psychological theories; the pedagogical component focused on the methods and strategies of teaching; and the subject component included in-depth training based on the speciality of the teacher. While the actual training would last for a year, this would be followed by three observation visits and one evaluation visit and submission of a research project, spread out over the following year. In order to pass the course and attain the corresponding qualification, EP participants would have to

attend a certain number of sessions, complete a successful research project, pass certain tests and exams, and score well on the observation visits. If the teacher completed the requirements successfully, he or she would get the educational qualification. Those who did not pass would have the opportunity to redo certain components of the course.

The Teacher Policy (2013) not only recognised the importance of continuing to provide the EP as long as the Agency is unable to recruit fully qualified teachers, but also proposed making improvements to the course to ensure that teachers without qualifications would have access to high-quality professional development early on in their careers:

*It is suggested that, over time, the current EP programme be modified to update its content and focus, drawing on the current EP course and also the School Based Teacher Development (SBTD) and other current developments in the field of teacher education.*<sup>75</sup>

While there seem to be no plans to increase pre-service pedagogical training opportunities in the immediate future, the Education Programme has followed through on its plans to modify its programme for newly appointed teachers through the development of the NAT programme.

An UNRWA HQ representative confirmed that a decision had been taken to revise and replace the EP course with the NAT programme, which is also a one-year teaching qualification programme, launched in 2018. The NAT programme was developed in line with UNRWA’s overall education reform, and favours a blended learning approach allowing for more reflection and self-study. In fact, according to a senior education representative from the JFO, one reason for the change was that the EP had been too focused on the theoretical at the expense of the practical:

*During the reform, and following the results of the Universalia review, they said that the EP focused in the theoretical more than the practical, so, during the reform, they worked on this. Senior education representative, JFO*

Another key change that has been made between the EP and the NAT programme is that the latter relies less on written assessments, and allows more time for more hands-on activities, experiential learning, self- and group reflection, and peer-to-peer support, in keeping with international good practice. The senior education representative from the JFO went on to explain that while the NAT programme is based on the same main principles as the EP, ‘the modality, the approach, or the way that it is being delivered is different from EP, but with the same understanding, with the same purpose, with the same objective’.

<sup>74</sup> Note that only three of the five Fields (Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon) currently have EDCs; in West Bank, the EDC merged with their Faculty of Education, according to the Teacher Policy (2013), and in Syria, the EDC is currently without a head, according to an HQ representative. <sup>75</sup> UNRWA (2013, p. 11)

## Box 17: Components of the NAT programme

The NAT programme is made up of four modules, which were described in detail by a senior education representative from the JFO as follows:

### Module 1 on Beginning Teaching:

*We consider it serves as a strong foundation for studying the programme. It takes a newly appointed teacher through the early stages of being a class teacher, helping them to think of key aspects of their role and responsibilities and also addresses, for example, how we organise the classroom, class management, interacting with the students and planning lessons to meet students' needs, and assessing students' learning.*

### Module 2 on Learners and Learning:

*It focuses on the needs of the students, on teaching styles, for example, how to meet their needs, and so on.*

### Module 3 on the Learning Environment:

*During this module we focus on this, and how to make the environment friendly to the students, how to encourage them to interact with the teaching.*

### Module 4 on Assessing Learning:

*It focuses mainly on the formative assessment because most of the time, teachers they focus on the final assessment. But during this module, we focus on formative assessment in order to catch the problems during learning quickly and try to make certain catch-up for the students or remedial activities. Also, we raise the issue of authentic assessment because most of the new trends in assessment today focus on authentic assessment because students should focus on the skills and competences rather than on pure knowledge, because knowledge is easy for the students to have it, but how do we think critically, for example, to solve problems, etc. This is important in the assessing of learning.*

Another major difference between the EP and the NAT programme according to policy is that the NAT programme is mandatory for all novice teachers, even those who already have a bachelor's degree in education/lower elementary teaching. This requirement is part of the new instructions for all the Fields because a key part of the reform is to ensure that all teachers are provided with

***a unified training, a unified understanding according to the principles, standards, the UNRWA good practices – teaching and learning practices – that should be implemented in the class. So, it's mandatory for any teacher, regardless of his or her background.***

*Senior education representative, JFO*

The NAT programme materials are available online, and include a Teacher Handbook, a Resource Booklet, Workshop Outlines, and templates for activity reflection and lesson plan reflection. There is also a Support Cadre Handbook, in keeping with UNRWA's recognition of the important role of education specialists and other education personnel in supporting teachers' professional development, which will be discussed in more detail below.

In addition to participating in the NAT programme, novice teachers are also required to go through an induction or orientation programme. However, this is a much shorter programme that is run by HR, which focuses only on the administrative aspects of working as a teacher. According to an UNRWA HQ representative, the training only takes about three to four hours and focuses on the rules and regulations governing the work of a teacher. There are also courses on gender, ethics, neutrality, etc. that are mandatory for all UNRWA staff and are part of the key requirements for UNRWA's ePER.

### Teacher professional development for novice teachers in practice

Many interviewees, including teachers, school principals, education specialists and senior education representatives, spoke highly of the EP programme, noting how it had been carefully designed to expose teachers with no education background to different theories of teaching and methods and approaches in education, and to help them build an understanding of the psychological needs of their students. According to one education specialist:

***If you ask me about the positives or the strengths of this programme, actually, for teachers who have no background in education, it sets a foundation for their experience to rely on throughout their coming experience. It's also very helpful to empower their practices in the classroom.***

However, she also noted that the programme had weaknesses, which were more evident to her since she had started working on the NAT programme. From her perspective, the EP relied too heavily on exams and grades, on rote memorisation and studying of information, and had too much of a theoretical orientation, which put too much pressure on the teachers.

While a senior education representative from the JFO described how much she had appreciated the EP programme, she went on to say that they are hopeful that the NAT programme, which has replaced the EP, will also be effective when it comes to building the capacity of newly appointed teachers. When it comes to the NAT programme, interviewees pointed out that the programme was launched in late 2018, and, because of the lack of funding and the lockdown due to COVID-19, they have only had the chance to train one cohort. None of the teachers we spoke to during focus groups had participated in the NAT programme, though many had participated in the EP. In other words, it is difficult to come to any definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of the NAT programme, though an education specialist mentioned that she had gone through the material in some depth and felt that the ‘content is very rich; it’s very interesting to read and manage’. She was also very positive about the focus on the practical side of teaching within the NAT programme materials, building on a foundation of basic and essential theories teachers should know about education in general.

Just over half of the UNRWA elementary teachers surveyed reported taking part in any general and/or administrative introduction to the school in their first regular appointment as a teacher, according to data from the NTS (2018), though there may have been some confusion around what constitutes induction, especially in the Jordanian context, where the term ‘induction’ is often used to describe aspects of teacher training. When it comes to other general courses, according to UNRWA’s website, as of December 2018 over 90% of the Agency’s staff had completed its comprehensive online ethics course.<sup>76</sup>

## In-service professional development

### What the policies say

Since the launch of the Teacher Policy in 2013, UNRWA has attempted to expand and improve the network of stakeholders supporting the professional development of teachers from coordinators at the EDC and the PDCU, to the other SSUs, to the AEOs, to the education specialists (formerly school supervisors) and right down to the school

level. The education specialists have a particularly important role to play in providing in-service professional development support for teachers, as described in the Teacher Policy:

*With the establishment of the Education Specialist role in 2011 (at a higher grade of Grade 13), the aspiration was to refocus the work of Supervisors such that priority was accorded to the core function of professional support and development of teachers at the school level. The Job Description of the Education Specialist therefore now emphasises their role as frontline providers of professional support and curriculum renewal, i.e. for teachers at the school level.<sup>77</sup>*

### Box 18: The roles and responsibilities of education specialists

Every area recruits a number of education specialists (formerly known as school supervisors) whose main responsibility is to support the professional development of teachers, particularly when it comes to subject specialisation. There are also five additional education specialists for each area: HRCRT, Guidance and Counselling, Audio-Visual Material, Library, and Health Education. While school supervisors were involved in the evaluation of teachers, education specialists focus on professional support, conducting workshops and school visits to observe teachers, particularly newly appointed teachers, and providing them with constructive advice about how to improve their teaching.

According to UNRWA norms, each education specialist (apart from the five non-subject education specialists) is responsible for approximately 150 teachers (including deputy school principals and school principals). One education specialist explained that of the 120 to 160 teachers that are assigned to them, they form a committee of 8 to 12 teachers, who will meet regularly to discuss recent issues and/or materials and communications they have received from the Department of Education or from the JFO. This committee also supports the education specialist by providing insight into the needs of teachers in the area, and sharing relevant information with those teachers.

<sup>76</sup> UNRWA (n. d.) <sup>77</sup> UNRWA (2013, p. 10)

At the school level, the ranks and responsibilities of school principals and deputy school principals were upgraded, and school principals are now provided with professional development programmes to ensure they have the necessary leadership and coaching skills to support their staff's professional growth. One such programme is the Leading for the Future (LftF) Programme for School Principals, which aims to:

- connect and engage school principals with the vision, purpose and requirements of the UNRWA education reform
- develop school principals' knowledge, understanding and practical skills essential for the successful implementation of change for students and staff in their school
- set a clear plan to monitor, review, evaluate and improve the current teaching and learning provision in each school, which will impact students' attainment levels.

Note that the Teacher Policy proposed the creation of a new teacher coordinator position (on a pilot basis) to ensure that teachers would have ready access to mentoring and peer support when needed. However, this position was scrapped due to concerns about funding and some Fields being unsure about the relevance and value of such a position, according to representatives from both HQ and the JFO.

The PDCU is responsible for supervising a number of formal in-service training programmes and for ensuring their sustainability, in particular, SBTB, HRCRT and Inclusive Education, which are compulsory for all teachers.

According to a representative from UNRWA HQ, daily paid teachers are also eligible to participate in this training, though it is important to note that this is dependent on availability of places and prioritisation:

***We are not excluding them from any opportunity for development. On the contrary, we say if you're daily paid and you're hired for a year, you are welcome to take our programme, and this will be a credit for you in the long term to continue working for UNRWA on different opportunities.***

In keeping with UNRWA's commitment to improving data and evidence-informed planning, the PDCU is required to send reports to the Chief of the JFO and HQ about the training, highlighting advantages and disadvantages to improve it in the future and to inform the development of other professional development opportunities (PDCU representative).

### Box 19: SBTB

UNRWA launched an Agency-wide SBTB<sup>78</sup> programme in 2012, which is a 9- to 12-month certificate programme developed for all elementary-level teachers (teaching Grades 1 to 6). As with many of UNRWA's programmes, it employs an in situ, blended learning approach, combining opportunities for face-to-face learning with self-learning and self-reflection. The focus areas of SBTB include:

- active learning pedagogies
- learning-focused classroom practices
- assessment for quality learning
- enhancing literacy and numeracy in teaching and learning
- engaging parents in raising students' achievement.

According to representatives from UNRWA HQ, the intended outcome of SBTB is 'to put in place a coherent approach to enhance teachers' motivation, professional development, and career progression and to support teachers in reflecting on their teaching and its impact on children's learning and wellbeing'.

### Box 20: The HRCRT education programme

UNRWA has been teaching HRCRT education in its schools since 1999. In 2012, UNRWA adopted its HRCRT policy to update and harmonise HRCRT education across all its five Fields of operation, and in 2013, the HRCRT Toolkit was developed as a practical guide to support teachers and school principals in implementing the HRCRT policy. Human rights are an integral part of the professional development of all education staff. All education specialists receive training on the HRCRT Toolkit and on their role in supporting teachers in implementing the HRCRT Toolkit. All SSU coordinators receive training on their role of training newly appointed education specialists and supporting them with regards to their role in the implementation of the HRCRT programme. All teachers and school principals receive training based on the HRCRT Toolkit. In addition to the training on how to use the HRCRT Toolkit, there are supplementary training tools for teachers, such as a training video, alongside continuous support by the education specialists.

<sup>78</sup> Note there is also a School Based Teacher Development II (SBTD II) that was launched in 2015, which targets teachers of Grades 7 to 12.

## Box 21: Inclusive Education at UNRWA

Inclusive Education at UNRWA is about ensuring that all Palestine refugee children, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, social-economic status, health and psychosocial needs, have equal opportunities to learn in UNRWA schools and be supported to develop their full potential. To empower teachers and improve their professional practices for inclusive approaches, the following key training courses on guidelines and toolkits are conducted:

- **Inclusive Education Policy and Strategy:** to embed an inclusive approach and reflect the Agency-wide commitment to inclusive education.
- **The teacher's toolkit for identifying and responding to students' diverse needs:** to assist teachers in recognising and responding to the students' diverse needs.
- **Psychosocial Support Framework:** to understand how the education system can support the psychosocial wellbeing of students.
- **The UNRWA School Health Strategy:** to promote the students' healthy development through comprehensive health services, a child-friendly, safe and healthy environment, health education and healthy nutrition in canteens.
- **Towards gender-sensitive classrooms:** to improve teachers' understanding and awareness of gender issues and how classroom practices can help address gender biases and promote gender-equitable teaching.

### In-service professional development in practice

Teachers from a boys' school visited for the research explained that having support from education specialists and SSU coordinators in addition to the actual training programmes themselves is a strong point in the UNRWA professional development system. According to the NTS (2018) data, elementary-level UNRWA teachers surveyed felt that insufficient support from education specialists and school leadership was not a major challenge to their work: 36% of survey participants responded 'Not at all' and 37% responded 'To some extent' to the question 'To what extent does the following factor pose challenges in your work as

a teacher: Insufficient support from education supervisors/ education specialists?' Only 22% responded 'Quite a bit' and 7% responded 'A lot'. To the question, 'To what extent does the following factor pose challenges in your work as a teacher: Insufficient support from school leadership?', 34% of survey participants responded 'Not at all' and 34% responded 'To some extent'. Only 23% responded 'Quite a bit' and 9% responded 'A lot'.

According to school principals and teachers, while there is always room for improvement, the quality of UNRWA's system of ongoing professional development is well known, not only within UNRWA, but also in Jordan as a whole, and in other countries in the region. In the words of an AEO:

*The strength of UNRWA in this regard is training teachers, we do not stop. Every time we have something to train our teachers. Every time there is something to train on. That's why our teachers are different to the government teachers. Always we have in-service training for our teachers.*

This statement was corroborated by data from the NTS (2018). According to the survey, participation rates in CPD activities were high among the elementary-level UNRWA teachers interviewed as part of the survey. In response to the question 'Have you had any in-service training in the past two years?' 79% answered yes and 21% no. The types of activities the UNRWA teachers surveyed participated in over the 12-month period prior to the administration of the survey are provided in table 11 (page 57).

Teachers across schools visited as part of the research noted that because they are refugees themselves, they find it easier to understand their students, but that the additional training UNRWA provides on, for example, inclusive education and human rights and conflict resolution, have equipped them to build their own socioemotional skills and respond more effectively to their students' psychosocial support and protection needs. For example, teachers at a girls' school described how training on sexual harassment, exploitation and bullying, ethics, neutrality and human rights helped teachers to understand how to better protect themselves in addition to protecting their students and teaching them how to protect themselves. Some teachers mentioned that the inclusive education programme had helped them learn how to support students themselves, making them less dependent on education specialists. In the words of one teacher at a girls' school:

*I started to notice if the student was weak in one part – maybe not academically but it could be social troubles. We have been able to identify this based on training and help the students ourselves or refer them to a counsellor.*

**Table 11: Types of professional development UNRWA elementary-level teachers participated in during the 12 months leading up to the administration of the survey, N = 340 (Source: NTS 2018)**

During the last 12 months, did you participate in the following professional development activity:	Yes	No
Courses/workshops (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics)?	83%	17%
Reading research, books or academic articles related to teaching, teaching strategies, teaching instruction techniques, pedagogy, etc.?	71%	29%
Participating in mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching as part of a formal school arrangement?	69%	31%
Learning through peer mentorship and shadowing/observing other teachers?	81%	19%
Conducting research either individually or collaboratively on a topic of professional interest?	54%	46%
Participation in education conferences?	48%	52%
School observation visits to other schools?	40%	60%

As noted previously, according to an UNRWA HQ representative, daily paid teachers are eligible to participate in formal training opportunities. However, one AEO explained how they would have to provide daily paid teachers who had not taken the SBTD or NAT programme with shorter training to help them learn more about UNRWA and to build capacities in the area of teaching and learning. It is possible that daily paid teachers are eligible, but are not always able to participate. Speaking for this possible explanation is the fact that a number of interviewees mentioned the costs of investing in the professional development of daily paid teachers, only to have them leave. In the words of one education specialist:

***We have a big problem with them. Because, if you make a course for them, or a plan to make them qualified, after a period of time, they will leave you if they have a contract with government schools, with private schools, with Gulf schools, or any other countries' schools. So, it's a cost if you're talking about time and the efforts you put in them. It's a cost, it's a wasting cost, really.***

However, he pointed out that providing support to ensure the professional growth of Palestine refugees working as daily paid teachers is actually part of UNRWA's mandate and in keeping with UN values:

***One of the UN values or goals is that we give knowledge to everyone, and even professionalism is a knowledge. It shouldn't be closed in the cupboard. It should be given to everyone. We do that for everyone. But if someone's contract is finished I hope that she will come back, or be assigned in our organisation or in other areas, maybe. But we give them all the best we can.***

## Part 2d

# Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path

### Contracts, salaries and working conditions

#### What the policies say

Policies on contracts, salaries, benefits and leave for teachers, just as for all UNRWA staff members, are set by UNRWA HQ, specifically through the HR Department, and with reference to the host country's laws and policies, in this case, Jordan. According to a representative from UNRWA HQ, even the Director of Education is not involved in the setting of salaries or in determining contractual arrangements.

Typically, UNRWA hires teachers on fixed-term contracts, which are renewable every three years, following completion of a successful one-year probation in the teacher's first year of service, according to a senior education representative at the JFO and an AEO. The Agency also makes use of daily paid teachers, either as substitute teachers or to temporarily fill vacant posts, particularly when gaps are identified during class formation exercises or if cost-saving measures need to be implemented.

The overwhelming majority of UNRWA's workforce, including education staff, are locally recruited registered Palestine refugees who are 'paid according to a salary scale which is pegged to respective national government salary scales and lower than the UN salary scale for local employees'.<sup>79</sup> When significant changes are made to the policies and laws of the host country, UNRWA is expected to reflect these changes to the extent possible; for example, when Jordan introduced Grade 10 as a compulsory grade, UNRWA had to open Grade 10 classrooms in its schools. Therefore, when the Government of Jordan increased the salaries of teachers following a general strike in 2019, the UNRWA teachers' union (Teachers' Council) were able to put in a request to the JFO and UNRWA HQ for a salary increase, which was approved.

Both the ERS and the MTS 2016–2021 have identified the challenges of creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning in the face of dwindling financial resources. Even so, the MTS 2016–2021 wishes to mobilise resources to reduce the number of schools operating on double shifts and improve school infrastructure, recognising that this would be

#### Box 22: Contractual arrangements for daily paid teachers

According to an UNRWA HQ representative, a few years ago UNRWA introduced a policy decision to prevent an over-reliance on daily paid teachers, who were increasingly being hired as a cost-saving measure. This policy decision stated that no Field could have more than 7.5% of staff working on daily paid contracts, so at that point many daily paid teachers were moved onto fixed-term contracts. However, given UNRWA's dire financial situation and the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the Agency is once again being forced to contract more daily paid teachers. A representative from UNRWA HQ noted that it is important for the successful functioning of the education system for the Agency to continue to recruit daily paid teachers, as this allows for flexibility during class formation exercises. However, the caps on numbers of daily paid teachers are also important to help ensure stability.

While these teachers have proper contracts, which afford them certain rights, and they are technically paid the same amount per day as a fixed-term teacher, they are only entitled to be paid for the days that they work (meaning they are not paid during the weekend, the summer or when they have exceeded their allocated sick leave) and do not have access to any benefits. While their status as Palestine refugees means that they are able to access UNRWA's health services, it is important to note that these are only primary health services, whereas their fixed-term peers are able to access additional health services through their health insurance. By only paying them for days worked and by not having to provide any benefits, UNRWA saves about 42% of the cost of a fixed-term teacher, according to a senior representative from the JFO.

<sup>79</sup> UNRWA (n. d.)

an important step to improving teachers' working conditions and the overall learning environment. In keeping with UNRWA's child protection and psychosocial support policies, there are also plans to increase the availability of school counsellors, which would potentially be of value to teachers, who can at times struggle to provide adequate psychosocial support to learners.

### **Contracts, salaries and working conditions in practice**

A number of interviewees, including senior education representatives from the JFO, heads of SSUs, AEOs and education specialists, identified the over-reliance on daily paid teachers contracted on a longer-term basis as a challenge, though most emphasised that UNRWA was left with little choice but to continue this practice, given the ongoing financial constraints the Agency faces. According to a senior education representative from the JFO, while daily paid teachers do sign contracts, which are countersigned by the HR department in their area, daily paid teachers are able to leave their post at short notice with no legal implications or consequences for them, though they are expected to leave their papers in good order as a matter of courtesy. If this is done, 'his or her departure will be facilitated by us [UNRWA], no problem'.

Interestingly, while interviewees noted that there were problems with high turnover of daily paid teachers, one senior education representative from the JFO noted:

*many of them are high performers, and even abstain from being absent from different types of leave because they care about taking the wage of every day, because they take the wage of every day they report to school. So, they care about reporting to school five days a week, not to be absent for any reason, even if they feel sick because they will lose that amount of money. So, in terms of commitment to work, many of them are high performers, in fact, but unfortunately this is at policy level, and the policy is governed by financial aspects and concerns. Senior education representative, JFO*

Data from the NTS 2018 suggest that low salary was not seen as one of the bigger challenges among teachers surveyed, especially when compared with other factors, such as pupil–teacher ratios and heavy workloads. In response to the question 'To what extent does the following factor pose challenges in your work as a teacher: Low salary?', 39% of Grade 1 to 3 teachers and 46% of Grade 4 to 6 teachers respectively responded 'A lot' or 'Quite a bit'. The discrepancy between the Grade 1 to 3 teacher and the Grade 4 to 6 teacher responses could be due in part to

classroom teachers entering the profession at a higher rank than their subject teacher peers, because they have a pre-service teaching qualification (as will be discussed further in the section on career progression below).

As noted above, following the 2019 Jordanian teacher strike, salaries for Jordanian teachers were set to be increased. School principals and teachers from UNRWA schools interviewed in the research described how they had recently negotiated a salary increase for themselves with the support of their staff union, because of requirements that changes to key laws and policies in the host country have to be reflected within UNRWA.

### **Box 23: The importance of the ASU**

The ASU represents UNRWA staff across Jordan Field. It consists of three sections: General Services Section, Teachers Section and Manual Workers Section. As education is UNRWA's largest programme, the Teachers Section is the largest of the three sections. During focus groups, some teachers described how important the union is in ensuring that teachers are supported and that their problems are addressed. However, a couple of teachers noted that the union is not as effective as it should or could be. While there are specific rules and regulations to do with how teachers are elected to join the union, including distribution of representatives from different schools and areas, some teachers who participated in the research were concerned that there can be problems with corruption and nepotism in some areas, where help is only extended to friends of certain members. However, teachers did note that the union has played a part in ensuring better working conditions for teachers, including, for example, by requesting action following the Jordanian teachers' strike. Further, according to representatives from HQ interviewed for the study, the union has been proactive in attempting to address gender imbalance by ensuring more women are recruited to the union, including in leadership positions, though it acknowledged that it will take time before these changes are fully reflected in the organisational culture.

Increasing salaries given the financial constraints UNRWA faces can be challenging, but, as teachers at a boys' school visited during the research explained during a focus group, because education is the largest of UNRWA's programmes, emerging problems need to be addressed very quickly in order to minimise negative impacts on teaching and learning. However, UNRWA's increasingly dire financial circumstances and the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in salary delays for all staff, and a revisiting of the decision to increase salaries.

During focus groups at UNRWA schools, teachers mentioned that they faced a number of major challenges when it comes to providing quality education and doing their jobs well. One teacher at a boys' school noted that pupil–teacher ratios in UNRWA schools can be quite high, so it is difficult to meaningfully engage students and practise learning-centred education. According to data from the NTS (2018), the majority of elementary-level UNRWA teachers interviewed for this survey reported that high pupil–teacher ratios posed a challenge for their work, with 75% responding 'A lot' or 'Quite a bit' to the question 'To what extent does the following factor pose challenges in your work as a teacher: High number of students in the classroom?' With large numbers of students, it can be challenging to follow up with parents, particularly when parental/community engagement is low. In fact, according to the NTS (2018) data, 62% of Grade 1 to 6 UNRWA teachers surveyed stated that insufficient support from parents or community posed a challenge in their work.

Further, during focus groups, teachers mentioned that they struggled with heavy workloads, particularly in terms of paperwork associated with the administrative duties of teaching, as many teachers lack access to modern technology, for example laptops, which could help to speed up administrative work. In the words of one teacher from a boys' school:

***To talk frankly, it's normal for a teacher to work, and do paperwork, but not with 50 students, not for many hours, etc. Those of us who have taught in Gulf countries know that paperwork doesn't take as long [as it does here], they have fewer students, and are teaching less. Here, teachers work more.***

Again, the majority of elementary-level UNRWA teachers interviewed for this survey reported that heavy workloads posed a challenge for their work, with 70% of classroom teachers and 75% of subject teachers surveyed responding 'A lot' or 'Quite a bit' to the question 'To what extent does the following factor pose challenges in your work as a teacher: Heavy workload?'

Some teachers at UNRWA schools we visited pointed out that problems with infrastructure and education resource constraints made it difficult to create an enabling learning environment, which is a cause for frustration, as explained by a teacher at a boys' school:

***We don't have a fertile environment to implement these programmes. The student has the right to learn in a safe and attractive environment and healthy conditions. Unfortunately, the classes are very cold in winter and very hot in summer.***

Further, focus group participants noted that it is not uncommon for both parents in a Palestine household to be UNRWA teachers, so it can be difficult to organise childcare, a responsibility that usually falls to the mother, and there are often insufficient facilities and support mechanisms to provide day care in order to free up the teachers' time for their work.

Some teachers and school principals mentioned that deputy school principals and counsellors played a key role in the functioning of the school but there were not enough school counsellors to provide adequate psychosocial support to students. The principal of a boys' school noted that there were particular challenges associated with male students, including, for example, how to engage parents in their sons' education, or risks of bullying between students. He explained that the counsellor at the school tries to respond and solve challenges and offer support for students as best as he can, but he is the only counsellor working in four schools, meaning that he has limited time at each school. During the teachers' focus group, the counsellor also raised this issue, noting that he has 3,000 students under his supervision, which is an overwhelming number.

Several non-school stakeholders explained that these challenges were felt quite keenly by daily paid teachers, noting that they would come to the school, see the high pupil–teacher ratios and poor infrastructure and limited resources, and would want to leave almost immediately.

## Supervision and appraisal

### What the policies say

A number of stakeholders are involved in supervising and appraising teachers, including school principals at the school level, who engage in these activities on a daily basis, and education specialists who regularly visit their assigned teachers in the school. One of the key changes following UNRWA's education reform is that school supervisors were upgraded and became education

specialists, which brought with it a refocusing of their role. Where previously school supervisors would visit teachers, often unannounced, to evaluate teachers as a key part of their annual evaluation, education specialists now only play an informal role in evaluation, with the bulk of their work dedicated to professional development, as previously mentioned. The role of supervisor and the task of evaluation of teachers now falls to the school principal, who may or may not seek input from education specialists in this regard. The AEO acts as a kind of ‘second supervisor’, reviewing school principals’ comments and adding remarks as necessary.

One of the key aims of the Teacher Policy (2013) is that ‘There are clear and transparent mechanisms for monitoring teacher performance and school quality’.<sup>80</sup> Following recommendations from the ERS to strengthen existing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating teacher performance and to maintain quality assurance, two additional units were created at the EDC in 2015–2016, in addition to the PDCU: the SQAU and the AU. The SQAU is responsible for conducting school visits and developing quality assurance reports, including in the area of teaching, learning and assessment, and the AU is responsible for preparing final exams, analysing results through monitoring learning achievement activities and preparing remedial plans for schools to improve learning outcomes, and coordinating with the MoE to participate in international exams. In terms of appraising teachers’ performance, the PDCU evaluates their individual performance within professional development programmes and provides them with feedback; the SQAU and AU are more concerned with appraising the performance of the teaching body as a whole, giving general recommendations for improvement. In the words of a representative from the SQAU:

***we are not evaluating each teacher, we are evaluating the whole teaching and learning process in the school.***

Prior to the reform, teacher appraisal and evaluation was conducted manually. As part of the recommendation of the ERS, UNRWA’s Education Programme adopted the Agency’s ePER, which is considered ‘a key to evaluation and career progression’.<sup>81</sup> The ERS calls for ‘close coordination with HR’ to help ensure that the ePER system works effectively.

According to a representative from the PDCU, financial benefits (meritorious increments) used to be provided to ‘best performers’, but this initiative had to be stopped due to lack of funds. If a teacher is not performing well (i.e. not meeting expectations), the teacher is placed under opportunity to improve (OTI), which involves meeting with

## Box 24: UNRWA’s ePER

UNRWA’s ePER is an annual performance management system that is used for the appraisal/evaluation of all staff working in the UNRWA system, not just teachers. ePER is designed to monitor and evaluate staff member performance and not the staff member’s technical knowledge. Progress is tracked throughout the year and entered online three times a year. All teachers have a portfolio with documents about their performance to support them during the evaluation process, and the school principal uses additional tools such as classroom observation forms to assess the teachers’ performance and to develop an improvement plan with them.

The annual evaluation consists of three components:

1. self-evaluation on the part of the staff member
2. evaluation by the resident supervisor, i.e. the school principal
3. review and additional comments by the second supervisor, i.e. the AEO.

While UNRWA’s manual evaluation included a space for school supervisor’s (now education specialist’s) comments, there is no longer a check box for education specialist feedback. The evaluation has three grades: ‘best performer’, ‘fully meets expectations’, and ‘does not fully meet expectations’.

the school principal, education specialists and, if necessary, the AEO, in order to develop and implement an individual improvement plan. If the teacher fails to improve their performance following this intervention, further action may be taken, including dismissal, though UNRWA prefers to support staff members to improve their performance rather than resorting to termination.<sup>82</sup>

### Supervision and appraisal in practice

At the schools that were part of this research, teachers explained that school principals regularly visit classes, observe and evaluate teachers with the help of classroom observation tools, and give continuous feedback. Data from the NTS (2018) suggest that teachers receive

<sup>80</sup> UNRWA (2013, p. 8) <sup>81</sup> UNRWA (2013, p. 48) <sup>82</sup> Note that when it comes to ethics violations on the part of teachers, including corporal punishment, suspected cases will be reported to the appropriate office and, if proven, will result in immediate termination.

regular feedback from education specialists as well: survey respondents reported receiving frequent formal or informal feedback from education specialists, with 81% of UNRWA elementary-level teachers surveyed reporting that they received feedback at least once a year, as captured in figure 2.

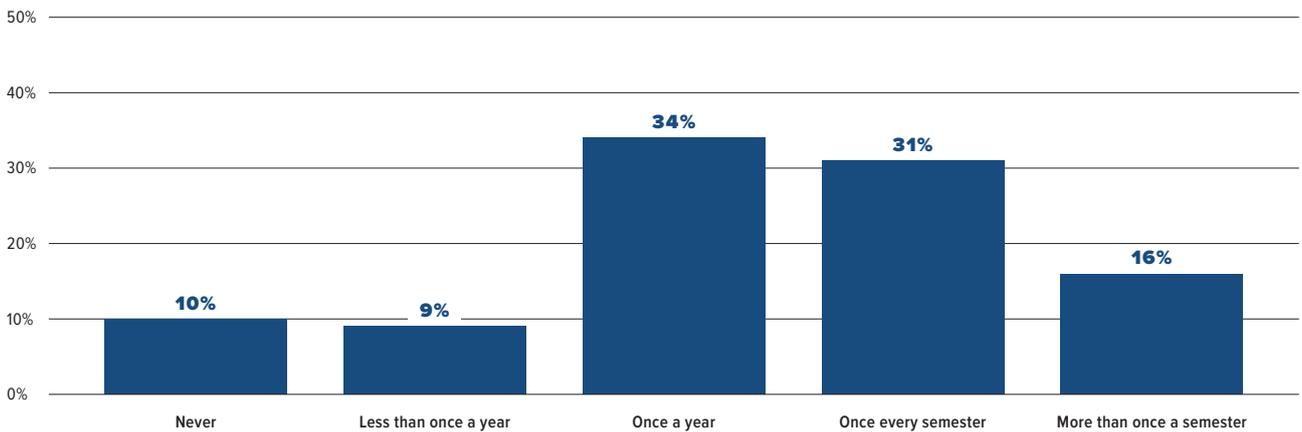
According to data from the NTS (2018), 90% of all UNRWA elementary-level teachers surveyed reported that they would receive feedback following direct observation of their classroom teaching and 81% either agreed or strongly agreed that feedback is provided to teachers based on a thorough assessment of their teaching.

Data from the NTS (2018) suggest that most UNRWA elementary-level teachers surveyed were appraised by the school principal at least once a year both formally and informally, as illustrated in figure 3.

At the schools visited during this research, school principals appeared to play a key role in supportive supervision and tended to take a diagnostic, formative approach to appraisal and evaluation, encouraging peer learning and support. The principal of a girls' school explained that she follows a 'diagnostic' approach to supervision, and appraisal that focuses on all teachers and not only on the highest and

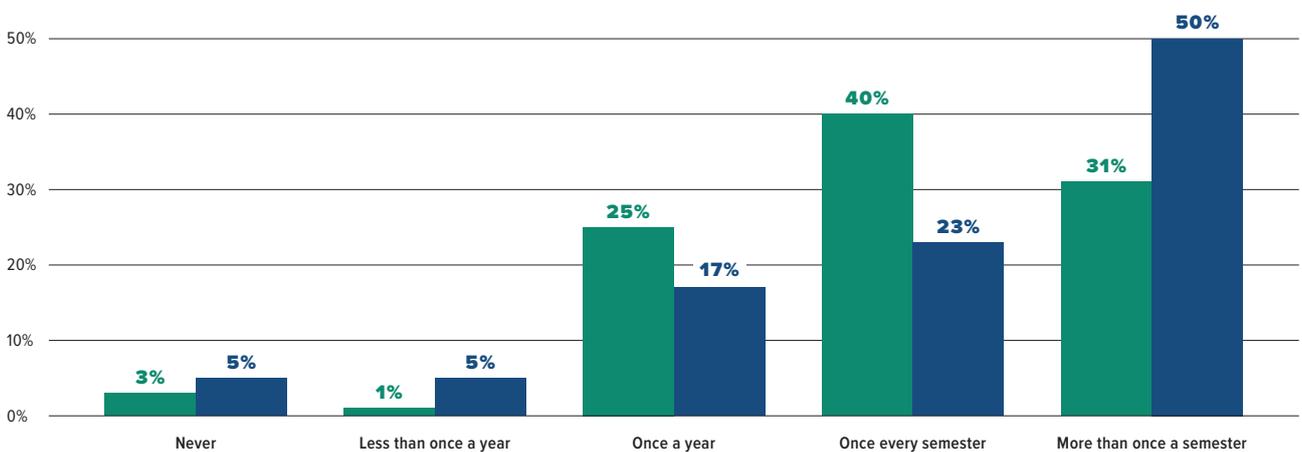
**Figure 2: Frequency of feedback provided to UNRWA elementary-level teachers by external supervisors, N = 340 (NTS 2018)**

How often do you receive feedback, whether formal or informal, from external supervisors (Education Specialists, etc.)?



**Figure 3: Frequency of formal and informal appraisal of UNRWA elementary-level teachers by school principals, N = 340 (NTS 2018)**

How frequently are you formally appraised by the principal? How frequently are you informally appraised by the principal?



lowest performers. Such an approach focuses on working with teachers to identify what they are doing well and what areas are in need of improvement.

Data from the NTS (2018) suggest that UNRWA's policy to support teachers to improve rather than terminate them is followed: 83% of UNRWA elementary-level teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that measures to remedy any weaknesses in teaching are discussed with the teacher, while only 30% agreed or strongly agreed that a teacher would be dismissed if they were consistently underperforming.

ePER was used across schools visited during the research, and teachers and school principals mentioned that they thought this was a good way to track progress and ensure accountability, which was a view that was shared by interviewees at other levels of the UNRWA system. However, one education specialist felt that it was not really fair to teachers to only have three potential evaluation grades, particularly as many school principals limit how many teachers are given the highest rating, meaning that most teachers will end up with a middle rating.

Further, senior education representatives from the JFO and staff members at UNRWA HQ noted that because ePER is in use Agency-wide, it is quite generic and does not always capture the complexities associated with the teaching profession. For example, there is no room to include formal comments from the education specialists, who work closely with the teachers and are able to evaluate their technical abilities. While some school principals and AEOs will seek feedback from education specialists to include in their evaluations, this is not an official requirement.

While interviewees from the JFO were generally quite positive about some aspects of the change in role of school supervisor to education specialist (including education specialists themselves), including that it allowed them to play a more supportive role and build stronger relationships with their assigned teachers, most felt that education specialists should play some role in evaluation, not only because they are external to the school, but also because they are technical specialists. While school principals are well positioned as resident supervisors to supervise and appraise teachers on a daily basis, senior education representatives from the JFO and education specialists explained that school principals would not be able to fully evaluate all of their teachers' technical skills because they only have one specialisation. Further, they noted that school principals' heavy workloads meant that some school principals would evaluate teachers based on their willingness to help with administration and general work at the school rather than their actual performance.

One education specialist explained the problem as follows:

*So sometimes I can see some teachers who are really incompetent to deliver their lessons, and I work with them, I support them, and I follow up their work, but I can't witness any improvement in their work. So, sometimes accountability is very crucial in this part and if I recommend to follow some measures to warn them about this, I don't have any tools to do this. We have something called OTI, but this OTI cannot be done, except by the school principal and by the area education officer. So if I witness something that is happening in the classroom and it's really destructive or it's not going the way it should be like, I do need the school principal to agree with me so that he can work on the OTI.*

## Career progression and career paths

### What the policies say

The Teacher Policy brought with it a clear, organised career structure, which explicitly articulates what is needed to progress from one grade to the next. The information provided on the different grade levels as well as what is needed to progress through these grades is captured in table 12.

Teachers with a degree but no pedagogical training are appointed at the Grade 8 level. Once they complete a one-year in-service qualification programme within three years of their appointment (previously the EP, now the NAT programme), the teacher can be promoted to Grade 9. A newly appointed teacher with pedagogical training (for example, a classroom teacher with a bachelor's degree in lower elementary teaching) is appointed directly at Grade 9.

**Table 12: Grades of different school roles according to the Teacher Policy**

School roles	Grade
Newly appointed teacher with no pre-service pedagogical training	8
Completion of EP/NAT programme	9
Newly appointed teacher with pre-service pedagogical training	9
Five years of experience	10
Ten years of experience	11
Teacher coordinator <sup>83</sup>	11
Deputy school principal	13
School principal	15

**NOTE:**

- Schools are supported by a support cadre, including education specialists (Grade 13).
- There are two major alternative career paths: admin and technical.

<sup>83</sup> Note that the teacher coordinator role was never implemented.

In order to progress to Grade 10, teachers need to gain five years of teaching experience.

Major changes outlined in the Teacher Policy include the introduction of an opportunity for teachers to progress to Grade 11, following ten years of teaching experience and sound performance, and the changing of the role of school principal and deputy school principal from Grade 12 and Grade 11 to Grade 15 and Grade 13 respectively. In other words, deputy school principals and education specialists are now at the same grade (i.e. Grade 13), and the school principal is at a higher grade (Grade 15).

What is interesting about the improved career structure is that it provides an alternative career path for those who are more interested in a career in administration versus those who wish to continue with more technical work, as explained by a representative from UNRWA HQ:

***And also, we describe the career path for teachers – those who are interested in administration can move in their career path and apply for jobs that are higher in the system, which are administrative: like school principal, like after that even the school quality assurance coordinators, maybe they go to area education officers. And those who are interested in technical issues also they have their career path: they apply, for example, for education specialist. They apply for professional development coordinators, or assessment coordinators, or maybe later they apply for head EDC, heads of unit, technical deputy chief. So this document describes this technical and admin work.***

## Career progression and career paths in practice

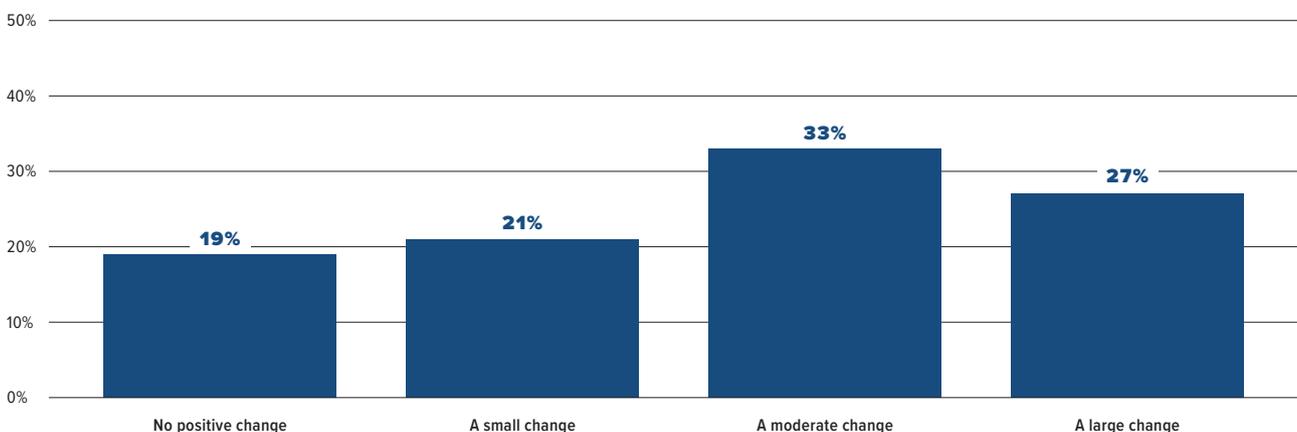
The Teacher Policy explicitly mentions the importance of ensuring that '[t]here are career progression points for teachers providing them with meaningful promotion opportunities to incentivise performance'.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, teachers from schools visited during the research appeared to have a clear idea of career progression and what was required of them in order to be promoted, with focus group participants providing an almost verbatim description of what is outlined in the Teacher Policy, noting that promotion was based on a combination of successful completion of the required professional development, as well as a number of years of service.

While in-service teacher training counts towards career progression, higher level degrees (e.g. master's or PhDs) are not directly linked to promotion according to one group of teachers in the research, reflecting what is set out in the Teacher Policy.

According to a senior education representative at UNRWA HQ, one of the most positive aspects of the Teacher Policy is that there is a clear pathway for teachers to progress to a Grade 11. This aspect was particularly important for the ASU, which had expressed concern that senior teachers would remain at a Grade 10, with no possibilities for advancement.

Data from the NTS (2018) suggest that by and large UNRWA elementary-level teachers surveyed believed that there was a likelihood of career advancement (e.g. promotion) based on feedback they have received about their teaching, as illustrated by figure 4.

**Figure 4: UNRWA elementary-level teacher perceptions of likelihood of career advancement (e.g. promotion) following feedback received, N = 340 (NTS 2018)**



<sup>84</sup> UNRWA (2013, p. 8)

## Part 2e

# Motivation and wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention

Underpinning this research is the idea that strengthening the teacher management process, specifically through interventions in the three interconnected dimensions of recruitment and deployment, teacher professional development, and job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path, will lead to improved motivation, wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention in the teaching workforce. In this section, therefore, we explore the vision that UNRWA has for the teaching profession and examine stakeholder perceptions of the current status of the profession as it relates to these concepts.

### The vision for the future of the teaching profession

The ERS (2011) describes teachers as ‘UNRWA’s single most important educational resource’ and argues that the ‘development of teachers’ capacity and their professional empowerment is the heart of the educational Reform’,<sup>85</sup> a view that is also espoused in the Teacher Policy (2013), which highlights examples of strong teacher policies, including the Palestinian Authority Teacher Policy from 2009 and the Jordanian MoE’s Teacher Policy, noting that ‘[a] fundamental premise of such policies is that teachers and teacher motivation are key to education quality and effective learning in the classroom’.<sup>86</sup> This idea was echoed by a representative from UNRWA HQ, who noted the importance of placing the teacher at the centre of the policy:

***The main, important thing is that the teacher is at the centre [of the Teacher Policy]. And it has been the focus in terms of reviewing the status and identifying what is needed to motivate teachers in their career progression.***

Ultimately, the Teacher Policy (2013) sets out a powerful vision for the future of the teaching profession, where the system is able to attract, motivate, train, evaluate and retain the strongest, most passionate candidates as teachers. The four key elements of that vision are presented in table 13, along with the corresponding dimension of teacher management that we have identified as being referred to in each key element.

### The current status of motivation and wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention

Data from the NTS 2018 revealed that ‘passion for teaching’ was the main reason survey respondents from UNRWA schools decided to go into teaching, with 47% of female teachers and 62% of male teachers indicating this response. For female teachers, the next most popular response at 39% was ‘suitable for gender’, while for male teachers at 18% it was ‘restricted options due to academic circumstances’.

Indeed, for many of the teachers and school principals interviewed for our research, teaching was a vocation, so that even when faced with a challenging situation, they felt the work they were doing was important, with one teacher noting:

***The teacher is a candle that keeps glowing the way for their students.***

Teachers and school principals across the four schools explained that a sense of moral obligation or duty and of pride to be working in an UNRWA school had been a key

**Table 13: UNRWA’s vision for the future of the teaching profession**

Key element of UNRWA’s vision for the future of the teaching profession <sup>87</sup>	Teacher management category
The most able, talented and motivated individuals seek to be recruited to teach in UNRWA schools	Recruitment and deployment
There are career progression points for teachers providing them with meaningful promotion opportunities to incentivise performance	Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path
Teachers are supported to engage in lifelong professional learning so that they are empowered to meet the needs of the UNRWA education system	Teacher professional development
There are clear and transparent mechanisms for monitoring teacher performance and school quality	Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path

<sup>85</sup> UNRWA (2011, p. 41) <sup>86</sup> UNRWA (2013, p. 1) <sup>87</sup> UNRWA (2013, p. 8)

motivating factor in their career choice. Some teachers explained that they wanted to support the children in their community and teach them about their heritage, and that this had driven them to apply for a teaching post, more so than because of monetary compensation. Teachers felt a moral obligation/duty and felt proud to be teaching in UNRWA schools and helping students. The notion of ‘giving back’ to UNRWA was quite strong, particularly for those teachers who had completed most of their education in UNRWA schools.

However, despite being highly motivated themselves, and recognising the importance of the teaching profession, some school principals and teachers interviewed for the study mentioned that the status of teachers in society has decreased over time, while others felt that the situation might be improving. Data from the NTS 2018, on the other hand, painted less of a mixed picture, with 69% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement ‘I think that the teaching profession is valued in society’.

School stakeholders noted problems with gaining respect from pupils and even parents and caregivers at times, with older teachers commenting that there had been a loss of respect for their profession. However, while some teachers struggled to engage parents and caregivers, others noted that they showed appreciation for teachers’ work. Further, according to a school principal at a boys’ school:

***If you have the willingness to teach, you will forget everything and what the society thinks in order to become a teacher.***

Across the four schools, school principals and teachers expressed confidence in the quality of UNRWA schools in comparison to other schools in the region. During a visit to a boys’ school, teachers noted that they are highly sought after in Gulf countries and in the private sector, especially to teach Tawjihi, because UNRWA teachers are well known for their high performance and competence. Teachers at this school and at a girls’ school mentioned that they would often choose to educate their children in UNRWA schools even if other opportunities were available, because they believed the quality was better in UNRWA schools, and because their children would have the opportunity to learn more about Palestine. As the principal of a girls’ school noted: ‘The UNRWA teachers are the best of the best.’

None of the schools visited had problems with teacher retention, though some teachers expressed concern about being transferred out of their school to take up a post in a different location. According to a school principal at a girls’ school, the teachers feel very close to the school, so there is no issue with teacher retention. The principal of a boys’

school explained that his school is highly regarded within the UNRWA system, and that the school therefore does not have any problems with teachers wanting to leave the school. In fact, he mentioned that there are teachers who are requesting to be transferred to this school, which teachers confirmed during a focus group discussion.

However, according to interviewees from Phase 2 of the research, there are problems with retaining daily paid teachers, especially in schools where working conditions are particularly tough, and after they have acquired a highly sought-after teaching qualification from UNRWA and are able to apply for a higher-paying job. While these stakeholders expressed disappointment at losing these teachers, most spoke with a lot of empathy and understanding, and also noted that even though they are employees, they are still Palestine refugees and should therefore be supported by the system as much as possible. As an education specialist pointed out:

***They will leave, yes. But that’s what we have. So we will deal with that. For our children, for our children at school, for our daily paid teachers. Most of them are graduated from our schools. They are our sons also. In one way or another, you should give them what you can.***

# Summary

## Part 2a: Who teaches Palestine refugees in UNRWA schools?

All UNRWA's teachers in Jordan are registered Palestine refugees. Most of these elementary-level teachers are engaged on three-year regular renewable contracts, following an initial probation period, a contracting modality that was introduced in 1995.

In addition to these fixed-term teachers, UNRWA recruits and deploys daily paid teachers, who are contracted for a period of nine months for the current school year, but are paid based on days worked and do not qualify for benefits. Though not of direct relevance for this study, UNRWA also hires daily paid teachers for short durations to work as temporary/substitute teachers.

At time of writing, there was a cap of 7.5% in the proportion of posts held by daily paid teachers engaged for the whole school year, which was put in place to mitigate an increasing reliance on daily paid staff across UNRWA's five Fields. However, interviewees mentioned that the cap may have to be revisited and lifted given UNRWA's ongoing precarious financial situation and the impact of COVID-19.

Almost all UNRWA teachers have met the minimum pre-service qualification requirement of a bachelor's degree.

There is a shortage of male teachers at the elementary level in UNRWA schools, particularly in the lower grades and in certain subjects, including Arabic, mathematics and the sciences.

## Part 2b: Recruitment and deployment

Teachers who teach at the lower elementary level (Grades 1 to 3) must hold a bachelor's degree in education or classroom teaching. In contrast, subject teachers (Grades 4 to 6) should have a bachelor's degree in their subject specialisation but pre-service pedagogical training is not required. Since 2018, all novice teachers must take the NAT programme during their first years of teaching, including those with bachelor's degrees in education or classroom teaching.

Whether they are recruited on a fixed-term basis or on a temporary basis, future UNRWA teachers have to go through a rigorous three-step recruitment process, which is standardised across the system. The process consists of an application screening, followed by a computer-based exam, followed by a panel interview. Teachers described the process as rigorous but fair.

UNRWA has its own tertiary institutions, including FESA in Jordan. In theory, UNRWA graduates are not necessarily given priority to teach in UNRWA schools. However, in practice, they often appear more qualified than other candidates.

While UNRWA has built flexibility into its recruitment system through hiring daily paid teachers to limit wastage following class formation exercises, times of increased financial instability force the Agency to hire more daily paid teachers. An over-reliance on these daily paid teachers was described as a major challenge by informants, who were concerned about high turnover rates among these teachers.

The shortage of male teachers was identified as another challenge, though the gender disparity is less pronounced in the UNRWA system than in the country as a whole. However, interviewees noted that fewer men are opting to pursue teaching careers, leading to inequity in the distribution of teachers in the system. Some interviewees suggested that appointing more female teachers to teach at boys' schools could be one strategy to address this challenge, but explained that some people do not think a strategy of appointing female teachers to boys' schools is culturally appropriate.

Every year, the JFO participates in the system-wide class formation exercise based on the annual Planning Norms and Standards, where information is collected on how many students, teachers and other education personnel there are in different schools in order to determine how many teachers are needed and where.

As part of class formation, AEOs identify where there may be a teacher surplus and where teachers may be transferred according to school need. Some teachers expressed concern about the possibility of being transferred to a different school, noting that they did not have a say.

## Part 2c: Teacher training and professional development

UNRWA has a long history of providing professional development support to teachers. The Agency's Teacher Policy emphasises the importance of providing adequate support to teachers to allow them to participate in lifelong professional learning in order to better meet the needs of the UNRWA education system.

In terms of pre-service qualifications and training, most UNRWA teachers are graduates from Jordanian universities with bachelor's degrees in a number of subjects, including but not limited to education, mathematics, Arabic, English and geography. Typically, bachelor programmes in subjects other than education focus on pure subject matter, building content knowledge and skills only, without pedagogical training.

FESA is the only pre-service teacher education provider in the UNRWA system in Jordan, offering a lower elementary teaching/education bachelor programme in addition to degrees in Arabic, English and geography, but it does not have the capacity to graduate sufficient numbers of teachers to staff all of UNRWA's schools, and graduates are neither required nor given preference to teach in UNRWA schools.

The Teacher Policy sets out a goal of recruiting more teachers with pre-service teacher training but does not outline a strategy for how this will be accomplished. Interviewees in the study agreed that while it would be good for UNRWA to recruit more teachers with a pre-service teaching qualification, they were not aware of any existing or future plans to do so, noting that it would be cost-prohibitive for both UNRWA and Palestine refugees themselves.

UNRWA considers it more cost-effective to continue to invest in training newly appointed teachers 'in situ' during their first three years of service, and recently revitalised its training offering for novice teachers through a review of its own programmes and international best practice. The result of these efforts is known as the NAT programme, which was launched in 2018 and is mandatory for all novice teachers, whether they have a Bachelor of Education or not. At the time of writing, it was too soon to come to a definitive conclusion about the NAT programme, as only one cohort had been trained by this point, but education specialists and senior education representatives were positive about the content and the emphasis on blended learning and opportunities for self-reflection.

Data from the Jordan NTS 2018 suggests that most UNRWA teachers participate in some form of CPD, particularly when it comes to formal courses and workshops. In-service training opportunities offered through UNRWA, including the SBTD programme, are perceived to be of high quality and relevance. Some of these opportunities emphasise non-cognitive learning outcomes and psychosocial support and protection, helping to equip teachers to build their own socioemotional skills and respond more effectively to their students' psychosocial support and protection needs.

Not only are teachers offered a wide range of quality in-service training opportunities, but they are also supported by the EDC, the three SSUs, and an extended network of actors at the school level and the Field level (school principals, education specialists, coordinators and AEOs). The establishment of the education specialist role in 2011 to replace school supervisors in particular was considered a key step to ensuring teachers' ongoing professional development.

## Part 2d: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path

UNRWA teachers in Jordan are paid according to a salary scale that is pegged to respective national government salary scales. Typically, UNRWA hires teachers on fixed-term contracts, which are renewable every three years.

The daily paid teachers who work with UNRWA have proper contracts and are technically paid the same amount per day as a fixed-term teacher; however, they are only entitled to be paid for the days they work and do not have access to any benefits. Further, they are only able to access primary health services through their status as Palestine refugees, whereas their fixed-term peers are able to access additional health services through their health insurance.

According to the NTS 2018, the main challenges identified by teachers in the UNRWA system were high pupil–teacher ratios, heavy workload and overall poor quality of infrastructure, rather than low salaries, which was reported by a much smaller group.

When it comes to supervision and appraisal, a formative approach to evaluation is encouraged and the process has been facilitated by introducing an electronic system to manage performance, known as the ePER.

Previously, school supervisors would visit teachers, often unannounced, as a key part of their annual evaluation. Following the reform, education specialists now only play an informal role in evaluation. The role of supervisor and the task of evaluation of teachers now falls to the school principal, who may or may not seek input from education specialists in this regard. The AEO acts as a kind of 'second supervisor', reviewing school principals' comments and adding remarks as necessary. Some stakeholders expressed concern that education specialists no longer had a formal role to play in evaluation, and felt that this function should be partially restored, not only because they are external to the school, but also because they are technical specialists.

The Teacher Policy sets out a clear, organised career structure, which is directly linked to professional development and experience and explicitly articulates what is needed to progress from one grade to the next.

## **Part 2e: Motivation and wellbeing, teaching quality, and retention**

UNRWA's ERS recognises teachers as the Agency's single most important resource and emphasises that teachers' professional empowerment and motivation are key to ensuring quality, inclusive education for all.

According to data from the NTS 2018, 'Passion for teaching' was the main reason for becoming a teacher, with 47% of female teachers and 62% of male teachers indicating this response. For female teachers, the next most popular response at 39% was 'suitable for gender', while for male teachers at 18% it was 'restricted options due to academic circumstances'.

Despite being highly motivated themselves, and recognising the importance of the teaching profession, teachers have a general perception that the status of the profession has decreased over time and that teaching is no longer valued in society.

The quality of UNRWA's teacher professional development system and teaching workforce is widely recognised, including in other countries in the region. This means that UNRWA teachers are highly sought after outside of the UNRWA system, including in the private sector and in Gulf countries, and may therefore choose to leave the Agency for these better-paying jobs, resulting in a loss on investment for UNRWA. Daily paid teachers are more likely to leave if offered the opportunity, given that they are only paid for days worked and do not qualify for benefits.

# Part 3

## Identifying promising areas and making recommendations

The third and final objective of this study was to identify promising areas for further policy development and implementation to support effective teacher management in practice.



## This final part makes a series of recommendations primarily aimed at policy and education decision-makers in the UNRWA system in Jordan. It may also appeal to a wider audience, including policy and education decision-makers in other countries, as well as stakeholders at other levels in an education system.

In line with the conceptual framework of this study, the research recognises policy implementation as a complex, dynamic process and considers sociopolitical contexts and the complex interactions between various policy actors, particularly at the local level and between levels. It explored international, regional and national policies that frame teacher management in refugee settings and presented findings on local practice, which revealed a number of gaps between policy and practice.

In this part, we aim to examine these gaps in more depth and to identify strategies to improve the management of teachers in UNRWA schools in Jordan, using the matrix below. With this in mind and based on the analysis presented here, the report puts forward strategies to:

1. sustain and build on promising policies currently reflected in promising practices
2. support the implementation of promising policies that are not systematically met in practice
3. scale up promising practices that are not reflected in policies
4. respond to policy and practice gaps.

These strategies are based on global good practices and recommendations that have emerged from our fieldwork. The recommendations aim to support the development and implementation of evidence-informed policies on effective teacher management in the UNRWA system in Jordan.

**Table 14: Summary of promising policies and practices and policy and practice gaps**

	Promising practice	Gaps in practice
<b>Promising policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNRWA follows a consistent, rigorous and transparent recruitment process for both fixed-term and daily paid teachers (1)</li> <li>• Teachers are supported to engage in lifelong professional learning at the system level and at the school level (2)</li> <li>• UNRWA offers a range of rich, practical and diverse CPD opportunities, including those oriented towards the specific needs of Palestine refugees and reflecting UN values (2)</li> <li>• A central element of UNRWA's education reform is the implementation of an incentivised career structure for teachers that is clearly linked to professional development (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNRWA hires qualified daily paid teachers as a cost-saving measure and to limit wastage following class formation exercises, but these teachers can be difficult to retain (1)</li> <li>• A shortage of male teachers persists, while initiatives to increase the proportion of females in leadership/senior-level positions have seen some success (1)</li> <li>• Despite policy efforts, coherence between pre- and in-service teacher training is lacking, according to interviewees (2)</li> <li>• UNRWA invests heavily in the professional development of its teachers, who may leave the system for better-paying jobs in the private sector or in Gulf countries, resulting in a loss on investment (2)</li> </ul>
<b>Gaps in policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a generic system, ePER is not as responsive to the needs of the education system as it could be (3)</li> <li>• The complete removal of the evaluative function of education specialists means that teachers may not be evaluated based on technical skills (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor programmes focusing purely on subject matter do not cover pedagogy or provide opportunities for practical teaching experience, resulting in a lack of preparedness among subject teachers when they first start teaching (2)</li> <li>• Working conditions can be difficult and stressful due to poor infrastructure and high pupil–teacher ratios (3)</li> </ul>

**Key categories:** (1) Recruitment and deployment; (2) Teacher training and professional development; (3) Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path

## Part 3a

# Promising areas for policy and practice

This part describes the promising policies and practices, together with the gaps in practice and in policy that have emerged during the fieldwork. Following each example, the relevant teacher management category is given in parentheses, where, Category 1 is recruitment and deployment, Category 2 is teacher training and professional development, and Category 3 is job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path.

### Promising policies and practices

#### **UNRWA follows a consistent, rigorous and transparent recruitment process for both fixed-term and daily paid teachers (Category 1)**

Whether they are recruited on a fixed-term basis or on a temporary basis, future UNRWA teachers have to go through a rigorous three-step recruitment process. The first step consists of selecting candidates based on their qualifications. After review of their application, most qualified candidates are invited to sit for an online examination. The last step consists of interviewing successful candidates in person in order to assess their competency and motivations for the role. This process applies for all positions across the five Fields, ensuring transparency and standardisation. While the JFO will follow standard procedures and practices, they are also able to remain flexible, for example when allowing candidates from the Irbid area to be interviewed at the Irbid Area Education Office, so as not to create additional hardships for the large number of applicants who would have to travel long distances to get to the EDC.

#### **Teachers are supported to engage in lifelong professional learning at the system level and at the school level (Category 2)**

UNRWA has a long history of providing professional development support to teachers. In Jordan, the EDC has provided in-service teachers with a one-year EP course since the 1970s, which leads to a teaching qualification, and is now responsible for ensuring that all novice teachers are able to participate in the NAT programme.

The Teacher Policy sought to strengthen UNRWA's professional development system further. To build coherence between pre-service and in-service training, UNRWA established the PDCU, whose role is to support the professional development of all UNRWA teachers, school principals, deputy school principals and key support staff, including education specialists and

coordinators from the SSUs, throughout their careers, and to develop and implement a curriculum for Grades 1 to 10.

Further, UNRWA established the education specialist role in 2011, with the aim of refocusing the role of school supervisors by according priority to the function of supporting teachers' professional development at the school level, rather than appraisal/evaluation. The supportive structure is further enhanced by the presence of coordinators and AEOs.

Another critical element in UNRWA schools' functioning is the role of the school principal and deputy school principal in effectively leading and managing teachers. School principals appear to play a key role in supportive supervision. They tend to take a diagnostic, formative approach to monitoring and appraisal, and encourage peer learning and support. To ensure that school principals are well prepared for this role, UNRWA delivers the Leading for the Future programme, which aims to build school principals' knowledge and skills.

#### **UNRWA offers a range of rich, practical and diverse CPD opportunities, including those oriented towards the specific needs of Palestine refugees and reflecting UN values (Category 2)**

According to the school principals and teachers interviewed, in-service training opportunities offered through UNRWA are of high quality and relevance. Data from the NTS 2018 suggest that most UNRWA teachers participate in CPD, particularly when it comes to formal courses and workshops. A number of UNRWA's in-service professional development opportunities emphasise non-cognitive learning outcomes and psychosocial support and protection, focusing, for instance, on inclusive education and human rights and conflict resolution. Such training helps to equip teachers to build their own socioemotional skills and respond more effectively to their students' psychosocial support and protection needs.

#### **A central element of UNRWA's education reform is the implementation of an incentivised career structure for teachers that is clearly linked to professional development (Category 3)**

UNRWA's ERS emphasises the central role of teachers. Such a vision has resulted in the development of the Teacher Policy, which aims to improve teachers' professionalisation

through the articulation of a costed career path that is clearly linked to qualifications, professional development and experience. The purpose of the education reform has been clearly communicated at all levels of the UNRWA system, and key stakeholders, including at the school level, were generally positive about the implementation of the ERS and the Teacher Policy to date.

## Promising policies not systematically met in practice

### **UNRWA hires qualified daily paid teachers as a cost-saving measure and to limit wastage following class formation exercises, but these teachers can be difficult to retain (Category 1)**

Given UNRWA's precarious financial situation, the Agency bases many of its decisions on principles of cost efficiency and often has to implement austerity measures, including in the education sector. While UNRWA has built flexibility into its recruitment system through hiring daily paid teachers to limit wastage following class formation exercises, times of increased financial instability force the Agency to hire more daily paid teachers, who cost less than 60% of the costs of a fixed-term teacher. UNRWA attempts to minimise impacts on education quality by recruiting teachers who are as qualified as fixed-term teachers and through the same process. However, these teachers are more likely to leave the system to find employment elsewhere, resulting in a break in learning continuity for students, and an added expense of having to replace teachers who leave.

### **A shortage of male teachers persists, while initiatives to increase the proportion of females in leadership/senior-level positions have seen some success (Category 1)**

In recent years, UNRWA has developed an Agency-wide gender policy, which aims, in part, to address gender disparities in the workforce. As is the case nationwide in Jordan, the lack of gender parity within the UNRWA teaching workforce is a persistent problem. Although there appears to be a higher proportion of male teachers in the UNRWA system than in the Jordanian MoE system, according to recent data from the JFO only 46.5% of elementary-level teachers at UNRWA schools in Jordan are male, with the gender disparity more pronounced at the Grades 1–3 level. While this gender disparity is less pronounced than in Jordan as a whole (and the broader region), interviewees noted that fewer men were opting for careers as teachers, as the status of the profession has changed over time, and that there were problems with corporal punishment at some boys' schools. Furthermore,

according to key policy documents and interviews with senior education representatives in Jordan Field, fewer and fewer men are opting to pursue teaching careers and there are gender-sensitive issues when it comes to appointing female teachers to boys' schools, which causes problems for the system as a whole.

On the other hand, initiatives to increase the proportion of women in senior-level positions have seen some success in Jordan Field, though, given the recent system-wide hiring freeze brought on by financial constraints, the long-term sustainability of these initiatives is uncertain.

### **Despite policy efforts, coherence between pre- and in-service teacher training is lacking according to interviewees (Category 2)**

Despite an emphasis on strengthening the link between pre- and in-service teacher training in the Teacher Policy, there is still no systematic coordination between pre- and in-service training institutions in practice, apart from some collaboration between FESA and the EDC when it comes to evaluation of student-teacher projects. Such a lack of coordination is more acute for teachers who received pre-service training in a Jordanian university rather than at FESA. Despite increased coordination being an aim of the Teacher Policy, due to the high costs of investing in pre-service training it has not been fully realised.

### **UNRWA invests heavily in the professional development of its teachers, who may leave the system for better-paying jobs in the private sector or in Gulf countries, resulting in a loss on investment (Category 2)**

The quality of UNRWA's teacher professional development system is widely recognised, including in other countries in the region. UNRWA maintains the quality of the system through ongoing investment in formal training programmes, including the Bachelor of Education at FESA, the NAT programme for novice teachers, SBTD and a range of other opportunities, as well as in professional support staff. Many of these opportunities are made available to daily paid teachers on annual contracts to ensure quality standards are upheld across schools. Unfortunately, this means that UNRWA teachers are highly sought after outside the UNRWA system, including in the private sector and in Gulf countries, and may therefore choose to leave the Agency for these better-paying jobs, resulting in a loss on investment for UNRWA. Daily paid teachers are more likely to leave if given the opportunity, given that they are only paid for days worked and do not qualify for benefits.

## Promising practices not based on/ reflected in policy

### **As a generic system, ePER is not as responsive to the needs of the education system as it could be (Category 3)**

While the ERS highlights the importance of collaborating with HR to ensure the success of ePER, there still seems to be a gap in the policy when it comes to ensuring that the system is responsive to the needs of the education system. It was noted that ePER is in use Agency-wide, it is quite generic and does not always capture the complexities associated with the teaching profession. As one example, an education specialist noted that having only three potential evaluation grades for teachers is unfair, particularly as there are limits to how many teachers are given the highest rating, meaning that most teachers will end up with a middle rating, whether they are doing quite well or are on the borderline of underperforming. As another example, there is no room to include formal comments from the education specialists, who work closely with the teachers and are able to evaluate their technical abilities. While some school principals and AEOs will seek feedback from education specialists to include in their evaluations, this is not an official requirement.

### **The complete removal of the evaluative function of education specialists means that teachers may not be evaluated based on technical skills (Category 3)**

Since the education reform, the role of supervision and the task of evaluating teachers is the responsibility of the school principal, who may or may not seek input from education specialists. While interviewees noted that the change in role for education specialists allowed them to play a more supportive role and build stronger relationships with their assigned teachers, most felt that education specialists should play some role in evaluation, not only because they are external to the school, but also because they are technical specialists. While school principals are well-positioned as resident supervisors to supervise and appraise teachers on a daily basis, it was noted that school principals are only specialists in one area, so will need to seek the advice of technical specialists. Some interviewees expressed concern that school principals' heavy workloads meant that some would evaluate teachers based on their willingness to help with administration and general work at the school rather than their actual performance.

## Gaps in both policy and practice

### **Bachelor's programmes focusing purely on subject matter do not cover pedagogy or provide opportunities for practical teaching experience, resulting in a lack of preparedness among subject teachers when they first start teaching (Category 2)**

FESA offers four different bachelor programmes: one in education/lower elementary teaching, and three subject-oriented (geography, English and Arabic). The former offers pedagogic content and practical experiences, whilst the latter three only focus on subject matter. That subject graduates enter the profession at a grade lower than education graduates and are only moved to the same grade upon completion of the NAT programme (which both types of graduates have to take) reflects that they are less prepared to teach than their peers with a degree in education/lower elementary teaching. The situation is the same for prospective UNRWA subject teachers attending Jordanian universities.

### **Working conditions can be difficult and stressful due to poor infrastructure and high pupil–teacher ratios (Category 3)**

Some teachers mentioned that poor infrastructure, resource constraints and a lack of adequate support mechanisms, including childcare, led to difficult and stressful working conditions. Pupil–teacher ratios in UNRWA schools can be quite high, with some teachers reporting pupil–teacher ratios of 50:1, meaning that it is difficult to meaningfully engage students and practice learning-centred education. With large numbers of students, it can be challenging to follow up with parents, particularly when parental/community engagement is low. There is also a lot of paperwork associated with the administrative duties of teaching, as many teachers lack access to modern technology.

## Part 3b

# Strengthening teacher management in the UNRWA system in Jordan

This final section builds on the promising policies and practices and policy and practice gaps identified previously and sets out a series of preliminary recommendations aimed at:

- sustaining promising policies that are reflected in practice
- ensuring promising policies are more systematically reflected in practice
- building policy around promising practices
- addressing areas where there are both policy and practice gaps.

The teacher management dimension targeted by each recommendation is included.

These recommendations will support the further development of research-informed policy guidance for UNRWA and its partners.

### Sustaining promising policies that are reflected in practice

**Recommendation: Regularly review elements of the established teacher recruitment process to ensure the system remains up to date and responsive to the context**

#### Target dimension: Recruitment and deployment

While stakeholders described the recruitment process as rigorous, transparent and fair, some senior staff also acknowledged the importance of taking the context into account, for example when interviews for Irbid-based candidates took place at the Irbid area office to ensure these candidates did not encounter additional hardships in attempting to access the EDC. It will be important to ensure that the system continues to be responsive in this way, particularly when it comes to the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19. Further, the question bank for the online assessment will need to be reviewed and updated with the support of the AU on a regular basis.

**Recommendation: Maintain support for education specialists, SSU coordinators and school principals, and regularly review elements of the professional development system to ensure efficiency and effectiveness**

#### Target dimension: Teacher professional development

The education support staff remain critical to ensuring UNRWA's ongoing success when it comes to the professional development of teachers. While the EDC, SSUs and AEOs are facing staff shortages, it will be important to continue to prioritise these staff in education budgets and consider redistributing roles and responsibilities to ensure equitable coverage across Jordan Field.

**Recommendation: Continue to offer the NAT, SBTD, Inclusive Education, HRCRT and other programmes, and revise and update these programmes on a regular basis to ensure they are responsive to the needs of teachers and learners**

#### Target dimension: Teacher professional development

One reason for the quality of UNRWA's professional development programmes is that they are regularly reviewed and updated based on implementation experiences and evidence of good practice from around the world. It is recommended that these programmes continue to be offered and this practice of reviewing and revising programmes continues. Given that the NAT programme is relatively new and has faced some challenges in implementation due to financial constraints and COVID-19, it is also recommended that a formal evaluation of the programme be conducted in due course. It may be worth conducting this evaluation as a joint initiative together with the Jordanian MoE, which also has a programme for novice teachers known as the Induction Programme for Newly Appointed Teachers.

**Recommendation: Conduct an independent review of the implementation of the new career structure for teachers to date to determine if adjustments need to be made for the Jordanian context**

**Target dimension: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path**

While the updated career structure for teachers and other education personnel outlined in the Teacher Policy secured buy-in from the staff union and has been relatively well received by teachers and school principals alike, it is recommended that an independent review be conducted to determine if the career structure is working as it is intended in the Jordanian context. There are still some tensions around the ranks, roles and responsibilities of education specialists, coordinators, and school principals and deputy school principals, which would be worth investigating further.

## Ensuring promising policies are more systematically translated into practice

**Recommendation: Explore possibilities for increasing compensation and/or expanding access to benefits for daily paid teachers on annual contracts through alternative means**

**Target dimension: Recruitment and deployment**

As has been noted throughout this report, UNRWA faces financial constraints that have been compounded by recent geopolitical events and the COVID-19 pandemic. While it will be important to continue to hire daily paid teachers to limit wastage following class formation exercises, it is recommended that UNRWA explores alternative means to increase compensation and/or expand access to benefits for daily paid teachers on annual contracts to limit high turnover of these teachers and ensure learning continuity for students. Possible approaches include working with HR and health services to develop a limited add-on medical benefits package for these teachers, targeted appeals to donors to cover teacher costs to ensure the 7.5% cap is not exceeded, and in-kind contributions from the community to support daily paid teachers' daily needs.

**Recommendation: As part of the annual gender action plan, explore opportunities for collaborating with the Jordanian MoE and other partners to address the root causes of the shortage of male teachers**

**Target dimension: Recruitment and deployment**

While not as pronounced as in the Jordanian public school system, the UNRWA education system faces a male teacher shortage, particularly at the early years level and in certain subjects. It is recommended that the Education Programme works together with other key national partners, including

the MoE in Jordan, universities, teacher organisations and representatives from other government entities to set up a gender task team to develop a gender action plan to address the shortage of male teachers by, for example, running a campaign to change the 'image' of teaching for male candidates to try to tackle some of the stereotypes associated with being a teacher in Jordan, and to ensure that women entering the profession are doing so because that reflects their career plans, and not because they do not believe they have any other choice.

**Recommendation: Review the relationship between FESA, EDC and the PDCU and explore possibilities for collaborating with the Jordanian MoE, the QRTA and other partners to improve coherence between pre- and in-service teacher education**

**Target dimension: Teacher professional development**

Despite efforts to improve coordination between pre- and in-service teacher education through the establishment of the PDCU, there is still work to be done to strengthen coherence, particularly as the aim to recruit more fully qualified teachers from the Teacher Policy has proven cost-prohibitive. It is recommended that the EDC, FESA and the PDCU work together to build and strengthen reciprocal relationships, and that these entities coordinate with Jordanian universities, the QRTA and other professional development providers in Jordan on a strategy to strengthen the link between pre- and in-service education.

**Recommendation: Investigate possibilities for cost- and knowledge-sharing with governments and other partners in CPD provision to minimise investment loss**

**Target dimension: Teacher professional development**

The 2017–2018 review of UNRWA conducted by MOPAN found that the Agency attempts to maintain self-reliance as much as possible to avoid dependency on partners and ensure continuity of services for Palestine, but that it would benefit from leveraging its wealth of experience and expertise to build and sustain effective partnerships to better support Palestine refugees in the face of increasing financial constraints. Given that the quality of UNRWA's professional development for teachers is recognised in Jordan and the region as a whole, and that there is already strong alignment between UNRWA's JFO and the Jordanian MoE and education system as a whole, it seems that there is fertile ground to explore opportunities to engage in cost-, knowledge- and human resource sharing between UNRWA's Education Programme and the Government of Jordan and other national and international partners. Leveraging UNRWA's experience and expertise in this way will be particularly important moving forward, especially following the major reduction in funding with the loss of key donors in 2018, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Building policy around promising practices

**Recommendation: Work with HR to include education-specific sections in the ePER system**

**Target dimension: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path**

While ePER is in use Agency-wide to support the evaluation of staff members, and stakeholders report that there are many positive aspects to a standardised system that allows for the evaluation of all staff members on equal terms, according to some interviewees it would be helpful to include some sections that are specific to working within the education sector, and to allow for a more nuanced assessment of teachers scoring a middle rating. In fact, the ERS does highlight the importance of collaborating with HR to ensure the success of ePER, and it is recommended that the system be updated to include sections specific to the teaching profession, including a space for comments from education specialists, and potentially a way to distinguish between teachers who are doing well and those who are on the borderline of underperforming. The AU and SQUA may be able to support with this process, given the expertise of the SSU coordinators in assessing the quality of teaching and learning.

**Recommendation: Ensure that the evaluation of teachers is formative by reviewing, clarifying and formalising the roles and responsibilities of education specialists and school principals in supervision and appraisal**

**Target dimension: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path**

While the shift in the education specialist role (previously school supervisors) from a focus on evaluation of teachers to supporting the professional development of teachers has been welcomed by many stakeholders at multiple levels of the system, concerns linger about ensuring that the evaluation of teachers is formative and fair, particularly when it comes to assessing the technical skills of teachers in certain subjects. It is recommended that school principals and deputy school principals work together with education specialists and AEOs to develop an evaluation strategy for the teachers at their respective schools based on the experience and expertise of these key stakeholders. Further, while the primary responsibility for teacher evaluation resides with the principal, it is recommended that the perspective of education specialists is included as a sub-component of teacher evaluations.

## Addressing areas where there are gaps in both policy and practice

**Recommendation: Expand opportunities to participate in teaching practicum for all prospective subject teachers during their bachelor's programmes**

**Target dimension: Teacher professional development**

Increasing the opportunities for practical teaching experience at the bachelor level for prospective subject teachers could be an effective way to ensure that prospective teachers are equipped with the skills and confidence to enter the classroom ready to teach, even as expanding pre-service teacher education remains cost-prohibitive. At FESA, this could involve allowing Arabic, English and geography students interested in teaching careers to participate in some of the practicum activities from the Bachelor of Education programme. For prospective subject teachers at Jordanian universities, it is recommended that UNRWA works with the Jordanian MoE and partners to see if the Field Teacher programme for subject teachers can be reinstated, or reorganising the NAT programme schedule to allow university students to participate in relevant elements of the programme before they start teaching.

**Recommendation: Explore possibilities for resource-sharing between schools and facilitate in-kind donation opportunities for local and global partners to improve working conditions for teachers**

**Target dimension: Job conditions, supervision and appraisal, and career path**

To increase teachers' wellbeing and motivation, it is recommended that the overall quality of the working environment is improved. While this has been on UNRWA's agenda for many years, it has been difficult to realise, given the ongoing financial constraints. It would therefore be worth exploring 'zero-cost' or low-cost initiatives such as resource-sharing between schools, including childcare facilities, community-based infrastructure development, or the facilitation of opportunities for local and global partners to make in-kind donations targeting teachers, such as the provision of laptops and tablets.

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