Evaluation of Access to Appropriate Programmes and Services for Students with Special Needs:

**Review of EU Supported Interventions
for Students with Special Needs
under Jordan's First ERFKE Programme**

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DISCLAIMER

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations

DCU	Development Coordination Unit
EFA	Education for All
ERfKE I	First Education Reform for Knowledge Economy Programme
ERfKE II	Second Education Reform for Knowledge Economy Programme
EU	European Union
IEP	Individual Education Programme
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCHRD	National Centre for Human Resources Development
SNE	Special Needs Education
TIMSS	Trends in International Maths and Science Studies

1. Executive Summary

Although within the first programme for Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKEI) there was no particular focus or component on special needs education, the European Union (EU) specifically provided support through technical assistance in the form of a review of special education and studies on developments for gifted students and those with visual impairments, hearing loss, mild intellectual disabilities, severe intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities and counselling for special needs. Evaluations of resource rooms, and programmes for gifted students were also conducted. A policy framework and professional standards for teachers were then developed. Existing special needs programmes were benchmarked against international standards and training programmes were developed to include capacity building of staff and teachers, specialists and managers of the separate special needs programmes.

The first report produced through technical assistance to ERFKEI provided a Review of Special Education Grades 1-12, 2007 and stressed that although the development of a comprehensive system which would meet the needs of all students including those with special needs would require time, it would be necessary to develop a vision of what it should be, and a framework for systematic implementation with special needs education as an integral part of the overall implementation plan, and not something added on or extra. This is supported by raising the issue that consideration for students with special needs be included in all relevant line managers' responsibilities and not be seen as the sole responsibility of the Special Education department. The re-establishment of the Special Education Directorate within the MoE in 2010 provided a good opportunity for the Directorate to institutionalise this important co-ordination and collaborative role, whilst maintaining service delivery function. This is important not only to spread the work load, but to recognise that there is a continuum of needs and that there is no fixed cut off point that changes a student's right to education. It fosters the development of a culture of awareness and inclusion, recognising that most students' needs will be met within the regular classroom and that it is everyone within the system's responsibility to provide the necessary support to do so.

Due to lack of availability of reliable data the report provides an indication of prevalence of disability based on the U.S. Office of Education data applied to the student population in Jordan. Because these figures did not include gifted students, a figure of 2% of the student aged population was applied. This analysis suggested that there were many students in Jordan in all categories of special needs who had not been identified as such, and enrolment figures indicate most of these were by definition in school but not being provided for. In the absence of reliable data these indicators of prevalence are useful but it is important that the Ministry does not rely on this but develops systems for collecting reliable data to inform planning.

Due to lack of trained specialists such as educational psychologists, and appropriate identification tools problems with specific diagnoses persist. Although this type of specialist diagnosis is obviously very much needed, especially when a student presents particular symptoms, for the majority of students identified at pre-referral stage in regular schools and for educational planning it may be more useful to focus on the support the students require in order to participate in school. There are four broad categories that are generally used:

- Communication and interaction difficulties
- Sensory or physical impairment

- Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
- Cognitive and learning difficulties

Due to the nature of the bank of reports all being focused on special needs education of one type or another there are general commonalities and overlaps. These are therefore considered as one before examining the recommendations of each report providing the current status and comments related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Each consultancy benchmarked the programmes against international standards and developed training programmes, manuals and other resource materials. The training programmes have not been repeated due to lack of funding.

The special needs policy framework and professional standards for teachers sets out the requirements to provide a system of special needs provision to international standards. This provides for a 3 tiered approach, reflected in teacher training and providing support for students with special needs, building on what is already available through provision in regular classes, resource rooms and specialist placements. This means the majority of students identified will be provided support within the regular classes. Although placements should be made according to the severity of need, the levels of support available should also be taken into account and wherever possible students should be enabled to remain in the regular classrooms. Choices of options for adoption were provided to MoE and these have now been reviewed and a policy document developed. This requires approval from higher authorities before it can be applied and a full plan for implementation will be developed. Work towards the implementation of the policy has started in the form of:

- Committees have been formed to develop orientation training and materials for teachers in regular classes
- There is a plan to integrate the schools for hearing impaired students into special classes within regular schools
- The development of tools for identification of students with special needs in the first four grades is underway with links to pre-school
- The Higher Council for the Affairs of People with Disabilities is to coordinate the required negotiations to transfer the responsibility of students with severe intellectual disabilities from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the MoE

Recommendations (and options for continued EU support)

- The reports each identify international standards and benchmark Jordanian provision against these. Each report uses a conglomeration taken from different sources to derive standards for each type of disability and provide standards against which progress towards meeting those standards can be measured. This benchmarking may be useful when taking each type of disability in isolation, but in terms of developing a comprehensive system there are many overlaps and duplications in terms of policy, teacher training, professional and ethical practice, learning environment and so on, and does not make them practical for monitoring either. Technical assistance could be provided to develop these benchmarks into clear and accepted overall standards for special needs provision with a separate small section listing specifics for each type of provision.
- Clear eligibility criteria need to be developed to ensure students with special needs rights to certain levels of provision and support. Clear criteria should be published and disseminated specifying students' rights to support and to be provided interventions

within the regular classroom wherever possible. This needs to set out the 3 levels of provision in regular classes, resource rooms or specialist placement and when a student has a right to which placement. Criteria also need to be set specifying when an IEP is required. This would provide parents with a clearer understanding of their rights and teachers with a clearer understanding of their responsibilities.

- Develop a culture of inclusion and responsibility within the system by providing awareness and training at all levels and developing skills to provide support to teachers through specialists, supervisors, resource room teachers and principals. This needs to extend to a responsibility to meet the needs of all learners in the regular classroom wherever possible.

- Provide orientation training for all teachers in regular classrooms to include identification and awareness of special needs students

- Provide regular short training for resource room teachers to develop skills and share experience

- Develop diagnostic centres with teams of specialists providing diagnosis and itinerant support for students and their teachers in regular schools. This should include an educational psychologist, a speech and language therapist, itinerant specialist teachers of students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities and should be able to draw on the expertise of specialists from health sector such as physiotherapists as required

- Identify those teachers with qualifications in special needs education and those with specialist qualifications already within the system and ensure their skills are being used to the full.

- Develop special schools and classes as centres of excellence with specialist facilities and specialist teachers working as outreach. All special provision needs to be seen and developed as an integral part of the overall system.

- Ensure students with disabilities have access to gifted programmes by raising awareness of the programmes and encouraging students to participate in selection process

- Ensure adequate and appropriate teaching/learning materials especially in special programmes and resource rooms. Identify resource needs and plan procurement to ensure even distribution and reduce disparity between schools

- Ensure assistive devices are provided and kept in working order

- Provide specialist equipment and use of up to date technology especially for students with sensory impairments

- Provide health screening for all students on entry to school including vision, hearing, cognitive and physical checks

- Identify the numbers of students currently out of school and the reasons why they are remaining out of school, including those that enroll and then drop out.

- Parental involvement should be encouraged and capitalised on. The development and review of individual education plans (IEPs) provides opportunities for parents to realize their child's potential and understand their difficulties. Some parents may need strategies to support their child in his/her learning. Some parents may have developed skills in providing for their child that would be useful to educators.

- The move towards increased inclusion involves developing an inclusive culture, both within schools and the wider community, and a system that ensures all children not only have equal opportunities to access quality education but also to participate in the learning process. This requires personnel at all levels in the system engaging in a continual process of change and improvement in teaching and learning, which provides support to schools to adapt and find ways to meet the needs of all learners. All children, thus, are provided not only with access to schooling within their own locality, but with appropriate learning opportunities to achieve their full potential.

2. Introduction

The National Education Strategy 2002 provided the basis for the first multi-donor Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) programme in Jordan. The ERfKE I programme was supported through an integrated plan by nine development partners, coordinated within the Ministry of Education (MoE) by the Development Coordination Unit (DCU). The revised and updated National Education Strategy of 2006 set out the vision, mission and guiding operations of the Ministry of Education for the following five to ten years and formed the principle for the second ERfKE which followed the first programme. These strategies supported the implementation of the 1999 Education Act No 3.

Much progress was made during ERfKEI with net enrolment in basic education increasing from 89%in 2000 to 96.5% in 2005/6, and transition rates to secondary education increasing from 63% to 79% in the same period[1]. In spite of the pressure increased enrolments inevitably place on schools and resources, levels of student achievement also increased with significant gains being demonstrated on international surveys, most notably a gain of almost 30 points attained on the science portion of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) between 1999 and 2007. It is expected that this momentum be continued through support to ERfKEII.

Although within ERfKE I there was no particular focus or component on special needs education, the European Union (EU) specifically provided support through technical assistance in the form of a review of special education and studies on developments for gifted students and those with visual impairments, hearing loss, mild intellectual disabilities, severe intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities and counselling for special needs. Evaluations of resource rooms, and programmes for gifted students were also conducted. A policy framework and professional standards for teachers were then developed. With the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Jordan in 2008, and the EU in 2011, there is a renewed commitment to ensure all children, including those with disabilities are provided equal opportunities to access education and to participate in the learning process.

This report reviews the EU interventions in the field of special education under ERfKEI and was completed as part of the consultancy on the Baseline Assessment of Access to Appropriate Programmes and Services for Students with Special Needs. It is recognised that gifted students and those with learning difficulties or disabilities requiring support in their learning comprise those identified as having special needs. These should be seen within the context of a general move towards providing a more inclusive system, which by definition should aim to identify and remove the barriers all learners face to participate in education. The comments and recommendations are made based on document reviews, meetings and field visits conducted during the preparation of the baseline survey as shown in Annex 1. The questionnaires used for the field work are given in Annex 2.

3. Background

Legislation in Jordan (Law 31 – 2007, Article 4 (b) 2) for special needs students directs that the country adopt inclusive education programmes between students with special needs and

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[1] The World Bank ERfKE II Programme Appraisal Document, 2009

their peers and implement these programs within the framework of educational institutions. Similarly, Article 5 (f) of the Education Act No 3, 1994 suggests similar intent for both students with disabilities and those with gifts and talents. The National Strategy for the Disabled, 2007, provided the guide for the planning of the ERfKEII sub-component on Special Needs Education, and *stresses the need to break down psychological barriers in society as a whole and in developing interventions for ERfKE II, there has been a conscious attempt to ensure that the spirit and purpose of quality improvement includes both the provision of quality programs and services for all children with special learning and developmental needs and the necessary social inclusion strategies within schools and communities.* There is recognition of the significant implications for planning especially regarding curriculum, teacher training and instruction, student assessment, resources, equipment and facilities, and parent and community involvement and interaction.

The ERfKEII sub-component 4.2 description states that *in general terms, the philosophical and conceptual frame for the extension and improvement of Special Education is based on a policy of inclusion for intellectual exceptionalities, integration for some emotional and physical disabilities to the greatest extent possible, and dedicated appropriate separate learning settings for others (severely visually impaired, hearing impaired, and extreme physical, emotional and intellectual disabilities).*

Current provision for students with special needs is made through[2]:

Type of provision	Number	Number of students being served
School for visually impaired	2	290
Schools for hearing impaired	11	858
Classes for intellectually disabled	14	98
Resource rooms for students with learning difficulties (part time support within regular school)	604	14 090
Resource rooms for gifted students (part time support within regular school)	42	1 681
Pioneer Centres for gifted students (part time classes after regular school time)	18	3 323
King Abdullah II School for Excellence	6	1 904
Accelerated grade level within regular schools		87

Since April 2006 the European Commission Delegation contribution to ERfKE I has allocated financial resources for the support of technical assistance services in the reform of Special Education in Jordan. Technical assistance services were directed towards the development of special education programmes at the Ministry of Education. Existing special needs programmes were benchmarked against international standards and training programmes were developed to include capacity building of staff and teachers, specialists and managers of the separate special needs programmes.

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[2] Figures supplied by MoE SNE Department November 2011

4.   Development of special needs programmes through ERFKEI

The first report produced through technical assistance to ERFKEI provided a Review of Special Education Grades 1-12, 2007. This was followed by detailed reports on the special education provisions, and then the development of a policy framework and professional standards for teachers. Many of the recommendations from this first report were taken forward in these documents and have therefore been considered in the analysis of those documents. It should be noted that the policy has yet to be finalised and has therefore not yet been implemented.

This first report stressed that although the development of a comprehensive system which would meet the needs of all students including those with special needs would require time, it would be necessary to develop a vision of what it should be, and a framework for systematic implementation. *It is important that as Jordan moves to implement its educational reforms, special education is included now as an integral part of the implementation plan rather than as "add-ons" at some future time.* This is supported by raising the issue that consideration for students with special needs be included in all relevant line manager's responsibilities and not be seen as the sole responsibility of the Special Education department.

Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)

The re-establishment of the Special Education Directorate within the MoE in 2010, provided a good opportunity for the Directorate to institutionalise this important co-ordination and collaborative role, whilst maintaining service delivery function. This is important not only to spread the work load, but to recognise that there is a continuum of needs and that there is no fixed cut off point that changes a student's right to education. It fosters the development of a culture of awareness and inclusion, recognising that most students' needs will be met within the regular classroom and that it is everyone within the system's responsibility to provide the necessary support to do so. It is important to remember that special needs education is a cross-cutting issue which impacts on all parts of the system and has particular implications in:

- legislation, regulations and policies
- system organization
- pre-service and in-service training of teachers and administrators.
- facilities
- equipment and technology,
- curriculum,
- materials and textbooks
- assessment and evaluation
- all stages of educational provision and transition from one stage to another

Due to lack of availability of reliable data the report provides an indication of prevalence of disability based on the U.S. Office of Education data applied to the student population in Jordan. Because these figures did not include gifted students, a figure of 2% of the student aged population was applied. This analysis suggested that there were many students in Jordan in all categories of special needs who had not been identified as such, and enrolment figures indicate most of these were by definition in school but not being provided for. In the absence of reliable data these indicators of prevalence are useful but it is important that the Ministry does not rely on this but develops systems for collecting reliable data to inform

planning. Due to high incidence of kinship marriage some categories such as hearing impairments will be higher than international averages.

Due to lack of trained specialists such as educational psychologists, and appropriate identification tools problems with specific diagnoses persist. Although this type of specialist diagnosis is obviously very much needed, especially when a student presents particular symptoms, for the majority of students identified at pre-referral stage in regular schools and for educational planning it may be more useful to focus on the support the students require in order to participate in school. There are four broad categories that are generally used:

- Communication and interaction difficulties
- Sensory or physical impairment
- Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
- Cognitive and learning difficulties

Due to the nature of the bank of reports all being focused on special needs education of one type or another there are general commonalities and overlaps. These are considered in the following table:

Recommendation in reports	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Restructure directorate of SNE to be able to undertake responsibilities across the range of special needs	The SNE directorate in MoE is newly established with one member of staff appointed with responsibility for each type of special needs, under departments for counselling, gifted and special needs programmes
Inter-directorate collaboration required – eg - to adapt curriculum, instruction and assessment.	Inter-directorate collaboration is critical to developing a system where special needs education is not seen as a separate issue but is seen as an integral part of the system and integrated into all areas including curriculum, examinations and assessment, teacher training. The SNE directorate needs to establish this coordination role
Establishment of a special education department within each educational directorate.	Each field directorate has the mandate to appoint a supervisor for special needs. There is now an agreement for the provision of a special needs department within each field directorate
Awareness raising programmes within schools to reduce discrimination towards disabled students	Awareness needs to be developed within the system by ensuring all training and workshops conducted at all levels reflect issues of inclusion. A sustained mass media campaign needs to be conducted to raise awareness within society a) on the rights of all children to equal opportunities to education b) to reduce stigma and discrimination against disabled children and adults The school curriculum needs to provide opportunities for awareness raising among students through 'character education' or similar
Provide study tours to Western countries (i.e., Canada, Europe, USA) to key staff at the Directorate of Special Education.	Consideration should be made to provide study tours to a mix of personnel including teachers, principals, field and central directorate, teacher trainers etc. Visits to countries that are at a similar stage of developing special needs programmes, especially those that are aiming for increased inclusion may be more beneficial than those mentioned.
Issue regulations to establish clear eligibility requirements for enrolment in special schools.	Policy framework under development There needs to be explicit regulations regarding entitlement and appropriate placement, with improved assessment identifying the degree of support required and how it will be provided,
Procedures are required to enforce legislation, regulations and policies related to the education of students with special needs	Policies and regulations are insufficient without a clear plan for implementation and procedures to enforce them. These need to be made clear by the MoE. Schools currently do not appear to consider it their responsibility to ensure all students attend.

Recommendation in reports	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Attention needs to be given to early intervention and transition services. Resource rooms should not be limited to 2nd to 6th grade only	A tool for identification of learning difficulties is being developed and aligned to the tools developed for pre-school programmes. Whilst early identification and intervention is extremely important for students with disabilities, identification of learning difficulties must take into account developmental differences in the early years. Screening for vision, hearing, physical health and cognitive ability on entry to school should be conducted in collaboration with Ministry of Health. Support should be provided based on need and not on grade level.

4.1. Report 3.3a Programme Development Visual Impairment

This report benchmarked the situation for visually impaired students in Jordan against international standards and provided 8 standards and 61 sub-standards. It stresses the importance of the inclusion of visually impaired students within regular schools and the need for appropriate support to be provided. It also highlights the importance of correct diagnosis, the recognition of low vision and the requirements of these students, and the need for a full assessment of students beyond levels of vision, as students may have other disabilities. Low academic achievement may not be an indicator of ability if a student has been in school without their visual problem being recognised. It highlights the need for early identification and found students transferring from regular school to special school frequently frustrated and suffering from low self-esteem. They may refuse to learn Braille or use a cane due to stigma from within the community.

At the time of writing of this report there was one pre-school, one elementary and one secondary school for the visually impaired. The opening of a new school in 2010 with Royal support has changed the provision drastically for the 150 students enrolled in grades 1-6. The school has been built and equipped to very high standards, with many special features and facilities and is expecting the secondary school to merge with them in the near future. Whilst this single, segregated school will provide greatly improved facilities for some students, it clearly does not have the capacity to provide for all visually impaired students in Jordan. It is also not in keeping with international standards which are for the inclusion of visually impaired students wherever possible within the mainstream school and for provision to be as close as possible to the student's home. This means where segregated settings are the chosen option special classes within the regular school should be the preferred setting to permit inclusion with regular students wherever possible and to provide access as close to home as possible.

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Developing systems for organisation	Itinerant teachers to support students in regular schools	Teacher standards and policy framework currently under development. Policy framework recommends the establishment of diagnostic centres with itinerant teachers of visually impaired to support students and teacher is regular schools.
	Develop partnerships with other service providers	Links to other service providers are essential to provide multi-disciplinary approach and identify students' needs. NGOs could be identified with expertise for teacher training and provision of assistive devices and teaching/learning materials

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Information and data collection	Coordination with Higher Council, NGO, Ministries of Health and Social Welfare to create database	Diagnosis of the visually impaired is mainly a health issue and coordination could save duplication and improve information availability.
Teacher training and development	Teacher training to be provided for teachers in regular schools to minimise difficulties (students falling etc) and to present curriculum in non-visual ways.	Teacher standards will provide for orientation awareness for regular classroom teachers but additional support should be provided to those teachers who have a visually impaired student. Specialist itinerant teachers are required to provide this support to teachers for inclusion of visually impaired students in regular schools
	Specialist teachers are required with specialist training	Most teachers in special schools do not have specialist training. Teaching visually impaired is a highly specialised task and regular and 'general' special needs teachers cannot be expected to have these highly specialist skills. The implementation of the professional standards at level 3 will alleviate this problem but it is essential to develop teacher skills in the interim.
Identification and assessment of students with special needs	Clear criteria for definition of blind and low vision	Criteria and diagnosis requires collaboration with health specialists.
	Provide screening in schools and pre-schools	Screening for difficulties with vision on entry to school is simple and early identification can prevent health and educational difficulties later. This requires collaboration with health officials.
	Assessment by MDT and programme setting by specialists	The setting of education programmes requires the collaboration of a multi-disciplinary team and should include parental involvement. It is inappropriate for students with low vision to follow the same programmes as those students that are blind.
Curriculum and instruction	Ensure access to extended curriculum including sensory development, orientation, mobility, and Braille	Students should have access to same curriculum as peers with extended curriculum to provide mobility, tactile and other skills critical to independence. Newly established Royal Academy provides extended curriculum by reducing time in other subjects. Guidelines should be developed to ensure access to extended curriculum .
	Blind students in regular schools do not learn maths concepts due to lack of tactile and appropriate resources	Teaching of maths and science requires tactile resources for students to understand concepts. There is a common misconception around the world that visually impaired students cannot learn these subjects, but it is the teaching methodology that needs to be changed to enable students to learn the concepts through a tactile rather than a visual approach.
Student evaluation and examination	Testing and exams to be in suitable formats and comprehensive criteria for Tawjhee.	There is no currently no provision for exams to be taken in Braille. Students are permitted a 'reader' reads the questions and writes the answers the students tell them. Extra time is given but it is not clear whether this is sufficient. Clear criteria and eligibility need to be developed to ensure students have equal access to public exams.
	Lack of documentation of achievement in extended curriculum including Braill	Records of achievement need to be developed to demonstrate levels of learning in the extended curriculum

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Equipment and resources	Adapt environment for inclusion	Newly established Royal Academy has many features to support visually impaired students but they are not a feature in the general environment or in schools in general. Lessons could be learned from this school and adaptations made elsewhere.
	Need access to spoken software, Braille books and other instructional materials especially in Science and Maths	The Royal Academy has spoken software technology, a printer to print textbooks in Braille and is developing a library with books in Braille and large print. Such a high level facility needs to be used as a resource to support other schools.

Advances in technology such as spoken software for computers needs to be capitalised on. Resources need to be provided such as talking books, tactile resources especially for teaching maths and science. |
| | Assistive devices are required for low vision students Ensure Perkins braillers are available | In addition to large print books, magnifiers need to be provided for those students with low vision in regular and special schools. Perkins Braillers should be provided for every student learning Braille. |
| Parental involvement | Increase parent awareness and use of assistive devices | Parental involvement in developing individual education plans (IEPs) provides opportunities for them to realize their child's potential. There needs to be a requirement that all students in special programmes have an IEP. Some parents may need strategies to support their child in his/her learning and in the use of assistive devices. Some parents may have developed skills in providing for their child that would be useful to educators. |

4.2. Report 3.3b Programme Development Hearing Impaired

There are 10 schools serving hearing impaired students, including one for secondary aged students. This report benchmarked the situation for hearing impaired students in Jordan against international standards and provided 10 domains listing 108 standards. It is clear that it will take a considerable time to meet these standards.

Under this consultancy a Teacher's Guide was developed providing information about hearing loss, definitions, characteristics assessment, curriculum modifications, effective teaching processes and methodologies and guidelines for teachers, but no evidence of its current use by teachers in special or regular schools was found.

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Teacher training and development	Pre-service and in-service training needs to be developed in collaboration with universities Long term plan for training of teachers	A sign language course is available but as a general course rather than specifically for teachers. Policy framework and professional standards for teachers sets out the training for teachers at level 3. The introduction of pre-service training is also recommended. Policy framework recommends establishment of diagnostic centres with itinerant teacher of hearing impaired to support students and teachers in regular schools. Currently most teachers are not specialist and are trained to teach students with hearing impairments within the school
Identification and assessment of students with special needs	Need formal assessment and diagnostic tools Develop standardized national tools for identification and assessment of hearing impaired students	Criteria and diagnosis requires collaboration with health specialists to provide a clear indication as to student's level of hearing, including when assistive devices are used. Screening for both vision and hearing on entry to school is simple and early identification can prevent health and educational difficulties later. This requires collaboration with health officials. The setting of education programmes requires the collaboration of a multi-disciplinary team and should include parental involvement. It is inappropriate for students with some hearing to follow the same programmes as those students that are deaf.
Curriculum and instruction	Identify strategies to support students –eg – seating arrangements, reduce background noise, modify methods of communication, use of visual clues Adjust curriculum to include communication Adapt instruction process to provide programmes specifically aimed to meet students' needs	Guidelines for teachers are required, including awareness and simple strategies for support in regular schools. These are all aspects that need to be included in training programmes. Some should be in Level 1 orientation training to provide strategies for regular class teachers. Others are more specialist and need to be in level 2 training for resource room teachers and level 3 for specialists. Special schools need curriculum guidelines to ensure communication training and access to the full national curriculum. Training for specialist teachers should reflect this. Itinerant teachers trained at this level should provide advice for regular schools and resource room teachers where required.
Student evaluation and examination	Assessment – requires standard or consistent method	Criteria and eligibility need to be developed to ensure students have equal access to public exams Records of achievement need to be developed to demonstrate levels of learning in the extended curriculum
Equipment and resources	Maximise use of visual media and appropriate resources – eg-computer programmes with captions Ensure assistive devices are provided and working	Schools for deaf have very limited resources especially in visual media and are lacking in technology programmes to support hearing impaired students. Increased resources are required if schools are to use up to date technology and appropriate materials for teaching deaf students. Where students could benefit from hearing aids they need to be fitted and maintained. This can mean the student no longer has a special need requirement.
Parental involvement	Encourage parental involvement in education Develop communication skills between parents and student	Some parents may need support to communicate with their child. Some schools for deaf students train parents to use sign language. Parental involvement in developing individual education plans (IEPs) provides opportunities for them to realize their child's potential. There needs to be a requirement that all students in special programmes have an IEP. Some parents may have developed skills in providing for their child that would be useful to educators.

In general, where segregated provision is decided to be the best option, international practice is for special classes to be placed within regular schools to provide opportunities for students to be included in regular classes wherever possible, rather than in special separate schools. Completely segregated provision is generally only considered appropriate for very severe cases and for students with multiple disabilities. The MoE SNE Directorate has plans to move the special schools into special classes within the regular school. Inclusion of hearing impaired students in regular schools without a special class can only be successful when support services are available, both to the student and the teacher.

4.3.   Report 3.3c Programme Development Mild Intellectual Disabilities

Under this consultancy a core team of 24 resource room teachers and supervisors were provided a resource guide and trained to implement prepared guidelines for curriculum strategies and adaptations for accommodating students with mild intellectual disabilities in regular classrooms with resource room support, across content areas and grade levels. The training has not been repeated due to lack of funding.

This report benchmarked the situation for students with mild intellectual disabilities in Jordan against international standards and provided seven standards and 74 sub-standards.

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Developing systems for organisation	Establish special classes in regular schools for students with intellectual disabilities to provide for those being served in special day schools affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development.	14 classes have been established in collaboration with Swedish association for Individual Relief (SAIR) – see below under severe intellectual disabilities. Segregated provision is more appropriate for severe disabilities
	Support special education teachers and regular classroom teachers with teacher assistants. Use the peer-tutoring approach and voluntary work in schools to support students with special needs	Support assistants are used effectively in some countries to support individual or small groups of students to enable them to remain in the regular classroom. It is more appropriate to consider support assistants in terms of the level of support required for student's learning. Consideration could be given for their employment in Jordan to support students who have an IEP in the regular classroom, with guidance from the resource room teacher.
Teacher training and development	Develop an annual training plan based on needs' assessment and collaborate with national experts in implementing training	No further training has been provided on mild intellectual disabilities since this consultancy. The SNE Directorate provides various special needs in-service training but a clear plan based on identified needs is essential to develop capacity within the system according to policy implementation requirements.
	Provide opportunities for regular and special teachers to be trained together so they can work collaboratively	This would not only provide opportunities for collaboration but would help regular teachers to take responsibility for students with special needs. Issues of inclusion and strategies for teachers to differentiate and accommodate all students should be routinely incorporated into all subject based and other training for regular teachers

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Identification and assessment of students with special needs	Providing developing developmental screening to all students on school entry and providing those identified with pre-referral intervention.	This needs to be incorporated into screening for vision and hearing on entry to school. Any student identified would then be referred to medical or educational specialists, and provided with appropriate support and educational programmes.
	Identify systems for identification and diagnosis, including development of team of educational psychologists	Educational psychologists need to be trained to provide clear diagnosis and support the development of appropriate education programmes that can be implemented by teachers in the classroom.
Curriculum and instruction	Supporting teachers with curriculum guides and developing life skills curricula.	Age appropriate curricula based on life skills but with clear links to the national curriculum need to be developed and guidelines for teachers provided. The work already undertaken during this consultancy could be used as a basis
Student evaluation and examination	Alternative assessment and reporting needs to be practiced	All students should be provided with some record of achievement. If success in exams is not possible, and that is the measure of achievement for the majority, then alternative methods need to be provided for those that cannot succeed.
Equipment and resources	Resource rooms require relevant and appropriate resources to teach a wide range of students	All schools require a variety of supplementary resources if teachers are to meet the needs of students with different abilities. This applies even more to resource rooms where students may have already failed to grasp concepts in the regular classroom and require learning targets presented through new and different activities. A recognition of the different types of need that are being presented in the resource rooms needs to be met with relevant resources.

4.4. Report 3.3d Programme Development Severe Intellectual Disabilities

This consultancy produced a comprehensive curriculum guide and checklists for teachers of students with severe intellectual disabilities, and trained 22 teachers and supervisors. This training has not been continued due to lack of funding.

The Law for Disabled persons No12 1993 led to the responsibility for special education being transferred to the Ministry of Education from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Development. However, special day schools for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities were at the time of this report, and continue under the responsibility of Ministry of Social Affairs and Development. At the time of this report in 2007, the Ministry of Education had an agreement with Swedish Association for Individual Relief (SAIR) to provide 5 special classes for students with intellectual disabilities in regular public schools and this has now been increased to 14 classes. The report was limited in scope to only considering the placement of students in these special classes, and not those in the day schools under the Ministry of Social Affairs.

This report benchmarked the situation for students with severe intellectual disabilities in Jordan against international standards and provided 10 standards to work towards.

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Developing systems for organisation	The special classes are within regular schools but remain entirely separate and are not integrated.	Opportunities for integration and inclusion need to be identified. Students from the special classes could join regular students for some activities, especially social ones. Collaboration is dependent on the special teacher.
Teacher training and development	Offer on-going in-service training to teachers. Support special classroom teachers with paraprofessionals	All classes have 2 teachers and an assistant. Teacher retainment is difficult due to negative attitudes towards special teaching and workload. Teaching students with severe intellectual disabilities is highly specialised and teachers need to be trained to develop required skills and provided incentives accordingly
Identification and assessment of students with special needs	Eligibility criteria need to be fixed – not all students in the special classes have moderate or severe problems	Diagnosis and clear eligibility criteria need to be clearly set out. Diagnosis will require a multi-disciplinary approach including health and educational specialists.
Curriculum and instruction	Develop functional and age-appropriate training curricula	Teachers are frequently providing care rather than being in an educational role. The development of appropriate and age related curricula to provide targets for learning would change the focus. Appropriate methods of evaluation and assessment need to be used and records of achievement developed Consideration and training needs to be given to transition beyond school – social skills, self-esteem, health, recreation, work opportunities etc.
Parental involvement	Public education and awareness campaigns required to change attitudes	Sustained campaigns need to be conducted for the public and within the education system to raise awareness of the right of every child to an education and also to change attitudes and reduce discrimination and stigma
	Strengthen parent counselling and training	Parents require support to help their child in learning. Schools report parents are involved in developing and reviewing IEPs. Some parents may have skills to share with teachers regarding the handling of their child

4.5.   Report 3.3e Programme Development Learning Disabilities

Under this consultancy a training manual for teachers was developed and training delivered to 50 resource room teachers and supervisors. The training has not been repeated due to lack of funding.

This report benchmarked the situation for students with learning disabilities in Jordan against international standards and provided 10 standards and 114 sub-standards. It stresses that without clear criteria and a system for identification of students with different types of learning disabilities there is a danger they may not be recognised and can be confused with slow learners, low achievers, and intellectual disabilities.

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Teacher training and development	Pre-service and in-service training for resource room teachers and regular teachers required	Since 2010, a one year Diploma course on learning disabilities is being provided for approximately 20 teachers per year at Jordan University. Awareness training is required for regular classroom teachers and more detailed training for resource room teachers. This should be considered in the implementation of the professional standards for level 1 and level 2 teachers.
Identification and assessment of students with special needs	Develop formal assessment tools to provide for agreed national criteria	Diagnostic tools are required to ensure learning disabilities are not confused with delayed development, slow learners, or intellectual disability, but the identification of learning disabilities requires the specialist knowledge of an educational psychologist together with a multi-disciplinary approach.
Curriculum and instruction	Resource room teachers to use national curriculum making necessary adaptations to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities Teachers to use peer teaching	All students should have access to the national curriculum. Currently resource room teachers are generally providing remedial instruction in basic skills of literacy and maths and are not sufficiently resourced or trained to identify or meet a wide diversity of learning needs. Students with learning disabilities do not form a single group, and programmes of support should be developed in collaboration with the same specialists required for identification. Resource room teachers should be involved and would implement the programme in collaboration with regular teachers. Encouraging the sharing of ideas and best practice through teacher collaboration and working together reduces isolation and stimulates practice that training alone cannot provide.
Student evaluation and examination	Provide guidelines for adapting grading systems for students with learning disabilities	Alternative assessment procedures and reporting may be required, depending on the type and severity of learning disability. Clear criteria and eligibility need to be developed to provide extra time or other requirements to ensure students have equal access to public exams.
Equipment and resources	Equip resource centres with appropriate and relevant materials	Resource rooms have no budget for equipment and resources and therefore frequently do not have appropriate resources

4.6. Report 3.3f Programme Development Gifted Students

This report focuses on the 4 programmes in place: resource centres for gifted students, King Abdullah II Schools of Excellence, Pioneer centres and acceleration to the next grade. The consultancy produced a training manual and trained 160 teachers and administrators working in gifted programmes. This training has not been continued due to lack of funding.

The report highlights the need for teacher development and incentives to encourage teachers to remain in post. It also makes comprehensive recommendations to improve selection criteria for access to all programmes and the development of an enrichment curriculum and instructional materials that are tailored to meet the needs of gifted students.

This needs to be matched by appropriate infrastructure and resources in all programmes. If resource rooms are to be relevant and challenging to gifted students their programmes need to be more structured.

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Legislation, policy	Law required to provide Board of trustees of King Abdullah II Schools autonomy to decide curriculum instructional materials, criteria for selecting students, examinations, establish qualifications of teachers, and establish school to become a model for the nation.	To ensure equal opportunity across the Kingdom there should be a standard for all the King Abdullah schools in regard to all of these issues. It is important that students have access to the same curriculum as their peers. There needs to be greater flexibility to provide for additions and enrichment.
	The acceleration program should be expanded to include early admission to first grade for all children scoring 130 IQ on an individual intelligence test, and having first grade basic skill in reading, writing, and mathematics.	Whilst early identification is important in all areas of special needs, this recommendation needs careful consideration. Wide variations in levels of development are expected in the early years and this will affect performance. There are strong arguments for students especially in the early years to remain with their peers to ensure socialisation and the development of non-academic skills. Schools need to develop strategies to provide for gifted students within the regular classroom.
Developing systems for organisation	A National Higher Committee on Gifted and Talented Education, presided by the Minister of Education, should be established and finance for programmes sourced from beyond government	King Abdullah Schools try to secure additional funds for resources from local business.
Teacher training and development	A systematic programme of teacher training and development is required to develop skills for teaching gifted students.	The SNE Directorate provides in-service training but has limited resources and there is no training plan in place to ensure all teachers are provided opportunities on a regular basis.
	Teacher selection criteria need to be adhered to.	The provision of segregated programmes for gifted students is a very costly choice, having made that choice it is critical that the students be provided the best teachers available
Identification and assessment of students with special needs	Review selection to permit the top 5% of students in 6th grade to be selected rather than based on IQ test only	Selection to King Abdullah schools is now based on top 5% of grade 6 taking exam, IQ test and interview. This has improved selection according to principals.
	A systematic and comprehensive awareness and recruitment campaign should be organized during the second semester of every year	It is important that all students and parents are aware of these programmes and the eligibility criteria
	Identify suitable IQ tests	A battery of tests has been developed and will be used from 2012. Counsellors could be trained to administer these tests

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)
Curriculum and instruction	Develop the enrichment curriculum outline and scope for grades 7-11	Guidelines for teachers would help to ensure all programmes and centres provide similar opportunities
	Develop a curriculum/activities framework for resource rooms.	Resource room programmes have been criticized for lack of focus. A framework may help to provide that focus and could provide teachers with options for enrichment activities based on the national curriculum
Student evaluation and examination	Develop assessment criteria of students' progress	All programmes require a means of assessment and record of achievement
Equipment and resources		A budget for resources is required in all programmes
Parental involvement	Community involvement	Support from local businesses and organisations could be identified, both in terms of resources and in terms of collaboration for skills development of students

4.7.   Report 3.6a Programme Development Counselling - Special Needs

This consultancy provided training for field directorate and SNE Directorate on identification and counselling of special needs students, including gifted students. The training has not been repeated due to lack of funding.

The report recognised that school counsellors have a role to help all students realize their potential irrespective of any identified disabilities or other special needs. As counsellors form part of the team of support services it is important that their role is clearly defined and is in compliance with laws and policies.

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, sustainability)
Developing systems for organisation	Develop regional diagnostic centres with specialists in learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, Visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical disabilities, speech and language, gifted and talented	This is in keeping with policy framework currently under development and needs to be made a priority. The addition of an educational psychologist and 'general' special needs specialist should also be included
	Develop an 'umbrella' directorate of Student Support Services to include: Special Needs Education, School Educational Psychology Services and counselling .	As the SNE Directorate is newly formed this could be something to work towards. It is essential to develop collaboration and awareness to ensure consideration is given to students with special needs as routine within all directorates in MoE, especially training, curriculum and exams.
Teacher training and development	Training is required for Principals and teachers, resource room teachers and	A clear training plan needs to be developed to implement the policy and professional standards. Awareness raising on issues of inclusion needs to be incorporated into all

Key area	Recommendation in report	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, sustainability)
	diagnostic teams Training for counsellors to support students with behaviour difficulties	training for teachers, principals and field level officials Training is required for counsellors to provide effective behaviour support services in schools and communities
Identification and assessment of students with special needs	Specialists required to diagnose specific behaviour disorders Provide early screening for social skills Prepare a guide to IEP	Educational psychologists and health specialists are required to diagnose specific disorders This could be included with health and development screening on entry to school This would help to improve the quality and standard of IEPs which need to become routine in providing for students with special needs in resource rooms, special classes and special schools (levels 2 and 3)
Curriculum and instruction	Develop and introduce 'character education' curriculum for all students	This would provide students with awareness on inclusion and disability, how to make choices, address violence and bullying etc
Parental involvement	Counsellors should play an advocacy and awareness raising role for the inclusion of students with special needs	The role of counsellors needs to be clearly defined as expectations vary widely

4.8. Report 3.4a Programme Evaluation: Programmes for Gifted Students

This report in December 2009 evaluated all the programmes for gifted students. Consideration has been given to the recommendations made in the previous report on gifted students to avoid duplication. It is notable that all types of provision has been increased since this report was written.

Key Recommendations	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact)
Programmes Overall	
Provide pre and in-service training for teachers of gifted students	A training plan needs to be developed based on need
Provide labs and necessary equipment Ensure a budget for resources and operational expenses	Programmes need appropriate resources and budgets to procure them
Develop an enrichment curriculum	Teacher's guides providing ideas for enrichment activities may be more useful than a prescriptive curriculum that cannot be adapted
Encourage parental involvement	Parents need to understand the programmes are not only focused on exam results.
Every year conduct an awareness and recruitment campaign to ensure competition for places	It is critical to the success of the programme and to minimise elitism that all eligible students have an equal chance to compete for a place

Key Recommendations	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact)
Provide representative geographic coverage	This is also essential to ensure equality of opportunity. Provision of all programmes has continued to expand to provide increased coverage. Expansion needs to be monitored.
Resource rooms	
A formal nomination and selection system of students eligible for Resource Rooms' programmes needs to be developed and applied	Criteria for selection should be set and published and a system, such as a selection panel, for those eligible put in place and adhered to
A written curriculum/activities framework needs to be developed and distributed to all Resource Rooms.	Resource room programmes have been criticized for lack of focus. A framework may help to provide that focus and could provide teachers with options for enrichment activities based on the national curriculum
A review of the geographic distribution of the Resource Rooms may be needed in order to maintain equity and fairness.	Density of the school population and numbers of schools in different geographic regions also need to be taken into consideration to ensure representative distribution
An adequate budget for operating expenses of the Resource Rooms activities should be provided	It is essential that resource rooms are provided a budget and can procure resources required to deliver high quality programmes
Supervisors need to be trained on the basic issues of teaching gifted and talented students	In order to conduct an advisory role and provide quality inputs supervisors need to understand the principals of the programmes they are supervising
Pioneer centres	
The identification and selection system of students in almost every centre is different, and the emphasis is on academic talent only. Provide clear criteria for selection and placements for talents other than academic.	Eligibility criteria is in place and is being followed in those centres in the study. The Pioneer centres provide a good opportunity to nurture talents such as music, art, etc. but would rely on specialist teachers being available and students' skills being identified
King Abdullah Schools	
According to the bylaws provisional document, there is a need to plan for establishing two schools in the coming three years: one in Amman and the other in Al-Kerak.	There are currently 6 schools now in existence and 3 more are planned during ERfKE II
Provide King Abdullah II Schools vehicles for their activities or field visits.	This should be considered according to priority with the need for other resources
Acceleration Programme	
Change eligibility criteria to between 130 and 145 IQ and update test to more recent version or Wechsler and test only in maths and language	Battery of tests developed and to be implemented from 2012
Students should be tracked through developmental records held by counsellor	It is important to monitor the overall well-being and development of students working outside their peer age-group. This suggestion needs to be taken forward.

4.9. Report 3.4b Programme Evaluation: Resource Rooms for Students with Learning Difficulties

Resource rooms have continued to increase in number, with the target of providing one in every school.

Key Recommendations	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability. Impact, sustainability)
Resource room teachers should be provided salary incentives, opportunities for professional development and considered as an integral part of the school staff structure	Overall teacher career path should include and provide opportunities for resource room teachers. Recognition needs to be made of qualifications and experience and additional responsibilities.
Training should enable resource room teachers to work with the regular classroom teacher and to jointly make decisions regarding students' programmes.	The resource room teacher needs to be seen as an important resource within the school. They not only need to collaborate with regular teachers regarding programmes for students attending the resource room, but should provide advice and support to regular teachers to provide interventions for other students within the regular classroom.
Counsellors also have an important role to play in inclusion, and effective in-service training programmes need to be provided for them	Counsellors roles need to be clearly defined and systems developed to outline their role in supporting students with special needs. There needs to be collaboration with resource room and regular classroom teachers to reduce any duplication of effort and ensure students' needs are met
In many schools it is considered the sole responsibility of the resource room teacher to support students with special needs. This means not only that the capacity is exceeded but there is no support provided either pre or post-referral within the regular classroom. Some teachers refer students to resource rooms to have them removed from their classes. Procedures for eligibility and time allocations to resource rooms need to be set	Eligibility to levels of support need to be set in policy and law so that parents and educators understand what should be provided. This is set out in the 3 levels of support in the policy framework which is currently being developed but requires clear eligibility criteria. It is not desirable or economical to expect all students with special needs to be in a special programme and the majority should remain within the regular classroom. Measures need to be taken to ensure regular teachers take responsibility for students with special needs and that resource rooms are not seen as a substitute for this.
Duties of resource room teachers need to be determined clearly and monitoring and accountability measures must be developed and implemented	The adoption and implementation of the National Professional Standards will put this in place, but clear guidelines should be issued in the interim and teachers informed of expectations.
Educational services offered by resource room teachers are of low quality although teachers have higher qualifications. Teacher education programmes need to provide practical skills and methodologies	The development of the National professional Standards identified the lack of practicum in training to be a big weakness. Changes will be out in place as the standards are adopted
Resource rooms in some educational directorates are inadequately equipped	Resource rooms have no budget for resources which means it is very difficult for teachers to provide interesting and stimulating activities or to present concepts in different ways. The lack of resources was identified as a main constraint in providing services.

Key Recommendations	Current Status/ Comments (related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability. Impact, sustainability)
There is a wide range of difficulties being presented and there is a need for clear diagnosis and setting of learning targets by specialists if required as some students gain little benefit from being in the programme	The lack of specialists for educational assessment and diagnosis means some students are not being provided appropriate programmes of learning. Students with intellectual disabilities and those with learning disabilities require specific on-going support programmes, rather than 'remedial' or 'recovery' programmes .
School regulations need to be changed to enable teachers to adapt the general education curriculum and testing methods to suit learners needs	Teachers need to be given responsibility to provide appropriate learning programmes for all students. Just as a variety of learning activities should be used within the classroom for all students, so too should a variety of assessment techniques be employed to ensure all learning styles are provided for. This is even more important for those students with special needs.

4.10. Special Needs Policy Framework and Professional Standards for Teachers

The special needs policy framework and professional standards for teachers sets out the requirements to provide a system of special needs provision to international standards. This provides for a 3 tiered approach, reflected in teacher training and providing support for students with special needs, building on what is already available through provision in regular classes, resource rooms and specialist placements. This means the majority of students identified will be provided support within the regular classes. Although placements should be made according to the severity of need, the levels of support available should also be taken into account and wherever possible students should be enabled to remain in the regular classrooms. Choices of options for adoption were provided to MoE and these have now been reviewed and a policy document developed. This requires approval from higher authorities and eventually the Prime Minister before it can be applied. On approval of the policy a full plan for implementation will be developed, but work towards the implementation of the policy has started in the form of:

- Committees have been formed to develop orientation training and materials for teachers in regular classes
- There is a plan to integrate the schools for hearing impaired into special classes within regular schools
- The development of tools for identification of students with special needs in the first four grades is underway with links to pre-school
- The Higher Council for People with Disabilities is to coordinate the required negotiations to transfer the responsibility of students with severe intellectual disabilities from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the MoE

5. Recommendations (and options for EU support)

- The reports each identify international standards and benchmark Jordanian provision against these. Each report uses a conglomeration taken from different sources to derive standards for each type of disability and provide standards against which progress

towards meeting those standards can be measured. This benchmarking may be useful when taking each type of disability in isolation, but in terms of developing a comprehensive system there are many overlaps and duplications in terms of policy, teacher training, professional and ethical practice, learning environment and so on, and does not make them practical for monitoring either. Technical assistance could be provided to develop these benchmarks into clear and accepted overall standards for special needs provision with a separate small section listing specifics for each type of provision.

- Clear eligibility criteria need to be developed to ensure students with special needs rights to certain levels of provision and support. Clear criteria should be published and disseminated specifying students' rights to support and to be provided interventions within the regular classroom wherever possible. This needs to set out the 3 levels of provision in regular classes, resource rooms or specialist placement and when a student has a right to which placement. Criteria also need to be set specifying when an IEP is required. This would provide parents with a clearer understanding of their rights and teachers with a clearer understanding of their responsibilities.

- Develop a culture of inclusion and responsibility within the system by providing awareness and training at all levels and developing skills to provide support to teachers through specialists, supervisors, resource room teachers and principals. This needs to extend to a responsibility to meet the needs of all learners in the regular classroom wherever possible.

- Provide orientation training for all teachers in regular classrooms to include identification and awareness of special needs students

- Provide regular short training for resource room teachers to develop skills and share experience

- Develop diagnostic centres with teams of specialists providing diagnosis and itinerant support for students and their teachers in regular schools. This should include an educational psychologist, a speech and language therapist, itinerant specialist teachers of students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities and should be able to draw on the expertise of specialists from health sector such as physiotherapists as required

- Identify those teachers with qualifications in special needs education and those with specialist qualifications already within the system and ensure their skills are being used to the full.

- Develop special schools and classes as centers of excellence with specialist facilities and specialist teachers working as outreach. All special provision needs to be seen and developed as an integral part of the overall system.

- Ensure students with disabilities have access to gifted programmes by raising awareness of the programmes and encouraging students to participate in selection process

- Ensure adequate and appropriate teaching/learning materials especially in special programmes and resource rooms. Identify resource needs and plan procurement to ensure even distribution and reduce disparity between schools

- Ensure assistive devices are provided and kept in working order

- Provide specialist equipment and use of up to date technology especially for students with sensory impairments

- Provide health screening for all students on entry to school including vision, hearing, cognitive and physical checks

- Identify the numbers of students currently out of school and the reasons why they are remaining out of school, including those that enroll and then drop out.

- Parental involvement should be encouraged and capitalised on. The development and review of individual education plans (IEPs) provides opportunities for parents to realize their child's potential and understand their difficulties. Some parents may need strategies to support their child in his/her learning. Some parents may have developed skills in providing for their child that would be useful to educators.

- The move towards increased inclusion involves developing an inclusive culture, both within schools and the wider community, and a system that ensures all children not only have equal opportunities to access quality education but also to participate in the learning process. This requires personnel at all levels in the system engaging in a continual process of change and improvement in teaching and learning, which provides support to schools to adapt and find ways to meet the needs of all learners. All children, thus, are provided not only with access to schooling within their own locality, but with appropriate learning opportunities to achieve their full potential. *Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the needs of all learners through increased participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children*[3]

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[3] Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All UNESCO, 2005