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المركز الوطني لتنمية الموارد البشرية
National Center for Human Resources Development



Monitoring & Evaluation Partnership (MEP) Project*

**Relevance and Utilization of NCHRD's
ERfKE II Studies *Baseline Study*:
Stakeholders Perspectives and Involvement**

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هذا المصنف عن رأي دائرة المكتبة الوطنية أو أي جهة حكومية أخرى.

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Executive Summary

The National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD) plays an important role in conducting external evaluations for the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Jordan, and it seeks to continually improve its capacity. During ERfKE II, several important studies were conducted by NCHRD, including: 1) Early Development Instrument (EDI): Measuring Jordanian Children Readiness to Learn (2010); 2) School Rationalization Baseline Study (2011); 3) Classroom Observation Baseline Study (2011); 4) Special Education Report (2011); 4) PISA 2009 National Report (2011); and 5) the National Assessment for the Knowledge Economy (NAfKE) 2011 (2011). In order to assess the usefulness of these studies and the level of involvement of MoE and other stakeholders, the Monitoring and Evaluation Partnership Project (MEP), funded by USAID and implemented by World Education, Inc., conducted the present “information usefulness” study. The goal of the study is to gather information that will help improve the engagement, participation, and utilization of NCHRD-produced studies by key stakeholders in the production and dissemination of research and evaluation information products.

The target population for this study comprises 69 key policy decision-makers at the MoE (central and field directorate levels), program implementers (NGOs), and funders from international organizations. Findings derived from questionnaires have revealed the following:

- 1) Most MoE stakeholders at the central level did not participate in the initial discussion with NCHRD about the study topics or Terms of Reference (ToRs). Many did not believe that providing input was part of their responsibilities.
- 2) Many MoE officers had no access to the ToRs or were not contacted or asked to provide review of the ToRs and therefore did not provide comments or inputs.
- 3) Although a small number, all MoE stakeholders who received ToRs for review said that they read them and provided comments.
- 4) Most of the select Central MoE staff did not read any of the listed reports and policy briefs produced. However, we have learned that the executive summaries are more likely to be read than the full reports. This is consistent across all the study reports. For example, we find that among central MoE staff , 41.9% had read the executive summary of the PISA 2009 report and 39.5% read the full report. For “Classroom Observation”, 39.2% read the executive summary and 30.2% read the full report. For “School Rationalization”, 30.2% read the full report, 37.2% read the executive summary, and 34.9% read the policy brief. For NAfKE 2011, where 37.2% read the executive summary, a smaller percentage read the full report (32.6%). The least read reports and executive summaries were those for the Readiness to Learn and Special Education studies. However, we observe that, once again, most stakeholders preferred

to read the executive summaries instead of the full reports. Further, the overall percentage of Directorate-level MoE staff who reported reading study findings in any format (full report, executive summary, or policy brief) was small.

- 5) MoE staff and representatives from other institutions believe the reports were relevant and addressed many of the education and policy development needs in Jordan. Very similar ratings were given to these reports on Classroom Observation, Readiness to Learn, School Rationalization, Special Education, and PISA results (2.1, 2.1, 2.0, 2.0, and 2.0 respectively¹). The lowest rating was given to NAFKE 2011 (1.8). Although the report was still considered relevant, its mean score was lower than other reports as regards relevance.
- 6) For the most part, many reports were considered useful. For example, 87% of readers believed that School Rationalization was useful. In addition, 85.7% and 84.9% agreed that Readiness to Learn and Classroom Observation were valuable. Special Education, PISA 2009, and NAFKE 2011 were considered less useful (76%, 75% and 60%, respectively). Although there is no explanatory reason behind the lesser usefulness of those reports, the findings may suggest the reports need further improvement on the overall quality, relevance of presented statistics or data evidence, conclusive remarks, and policy implications.
- 7) The majority of respondents could not answer the questions related to actual incorporation of report findings and recommendation into education policies. However, among those who have responded, the majority agrees findings have been incorporated in education policies. That seems to be particularly true for PISA 2009, School Rationalization, and Readiness to Learn Reports.

Based on the results presented in this report, we would like to suggest the following recommendations:

1. Provide incentives to encourage stakeholders to be involved in the development of ToRs, reading the study reports, and planning tasks and actions accordingly. The incentives may be part of criteria for performance review and job promotion. In sum, involvement in the development of ToRs and knowledge of study findings should become part of one's professional responsibility in the MoE.
2. Provide timely training and skill enhancement in M&E in general and in specific areas (topics) to stimulate the interest in learning and improvement.

¹ Composite scores ranged from 0-3. Scores ranging from 0-0.5 suggest that respondents believed that reports were not at all relevant and responsive to the educational reality in Jordan. Scores ranging from - 0.51-1.50 suggest reports were of little relevance and not responsive to the education needs and policy development in Jordan. Scores ranging from 1.51-2.5 suggest reports were relevant and addressed many of the education and policy development needs in Jordan. Scores from 2.51-3.00 suggest reports were very relevant and most education and policy development needs were met.

3. Continue to make an effort to improve the quality of evaluation studies and produce better and more relevant reports.
4. Ensure study findings, especially policy briefs and presentations, are disseminated throughout the MoE in a systematic and consistent manner. One way to present the findings might be to carry out poster presentations on a regular basis, after each study is complete and approved by the MoE. NCHRD, in coordination with the MoE, might also conduct formal presentations to disseminate study results to Central and Directorate level MoE staff. In addition, it is necessary to utilize systematic and creative ways to share study results and recommendations with local communities and teachers. As key stakeholders, they need to become better informed about their education system and increasingly engaged in policy discussions.
5. MoE & NCHRD are required to work cooperatively to increase the awareness or establishing the culture of reading studies' reports.

The implementation of those recommendations will involve the MoE as an active participant of external evaluation studies without compromising the integrity of the results. In addition, it has the potential to dramatically increase the usefulness and relevance of study findings for policy development and the overall improvement of education in Jordan.

الملخص التنفيذي

يقوم المركز الوطني لتنمية الموارد البشرية (NCHRD) بدورٍ مهم في عملية المتابعة والتقييم لمشاريع الإصلاح التربوي التي تقوم بها وزارة التربية والتعليم، وبخاصة مشروع التطوير التربوي نحو اقتصاد المعرفة في مرحلته الثانية ERfKE II. وفي هذا السياق، فقد تم إجراء العديد من الدراسات الهامة، مثل: دراسة مدى جاهزية الأطفال في الأردن للتعليم: أداة التطور المبكر(EDI) ٢٠١٠، ودراسة ترشيح المدارس: المدارس المكتظة والمدرسة غير المستغلة ٢٠١١، والتقارير الوطني لدراسة البرنامج الدولي لتقييم الطلبة – PISA ٢٠٠٩، والدراسة الوطنية التقييمية لمهارات اقتصاد المعرفة 2011 NafKE، ودراسة الملاحظة الصفية. وبغرض تقييم مدى فائدة هذه الدراسات ومستوى مشاركة وزارة التربية والتعليم والجهات المعنية الأخرى في تخطيط وتنفيذ هذه الدراسات، ويهدف تقييم مشروع الشراكة في المتابعة والتقييم (MEP)، الممول من الوكالة الأمريكية للتنمية الدولية و تنفذه الشركة العالمية للتعليم (WEI)، جاءت هذه الدراسة بعنوان: "دراسة وجهه نظر المعنيين لمدى استجابة الدراسات التقييمية المنفذة لإطار المتابعة والتقييم المقرر، ومدى فائدتها وصلتها بالسياسات والتخطيط".

وتسعى هذه الدراسة إلى جمع المعلومات التي من شأنها أن تساعد على تحسين الشراكة بين الجهات المعنية ببرامج الإصلاح التربوي في الأردن، وكذلك تعظيم الاستفادة من نتائج الدراسات التي يُعدها المركز الوطني لتنمية الموارد البشرية NCHRD، وذلك من خلال ضمان نشرها ووصولها إلى كافة المعنيين. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من (٦٩) فرداً من أصحاب القرار وصناعه في وزارة التربية والتعليم على المستويين المركزي واللامركزي، ومنفذي البرامج (المنظمات غير الحكومية)، والممولين من المنظمات الدولية.

وقد كشفت نتائج الدراسة، من خلال البيانات التي تضمنتها الاستبيانات، عن الآتي:

- (١) أشار معظم عينة الدراسة، من المعنيين على المستوى المركزي في وزارة التربية والتعليم، إلى أنهم لم يشاركوا في المناقشات الأولية مع المركز الوطني لتنمية الموارد البشرية، حول مواضيع وعناوين الدراسات أو الشروط المرجعية لها. وكان تفسيرهم لذلك بأن مواضيع الدراسات لم تكن ذات صلة مباشرة بمسؤولياتهم.
- (٢) أشار العديد من عينة الدراسة أنهم لم يطلعوا على الشروط المرجعية للدراسات المختلفة، وبالتالي فإنهم لم يقدموا أي تداخلات فيها.
- (٣) أشار عدد قليل من عينة الدراسة، من المعنيين على المستوى المركزي في وزارة التربية والتعليم، إلى أنه تم تزويدهم بالشروط المرجعية لبعض الدراسات، وقد شاركوا في وضع بعض المدخلات إلى هذه الشروط.
- (٤) أشار معظم عينة الدراسة، من المعنيين على المستوى المركزي في وزارة التربية والتعليم، إلى أنهم لم يقرئوا أي من التقارير التي تم ذكرها سلفاً، أو حتى موجز السياسات لأي منها. ومع ذلك، فقد أكدوا أن الملخصات التنفيذية هي أكثر قراءة من كامل التقارير. وهذا ينسحب على تقارير الدراسات كافة. وعلى سبيل المثال، نجد أن ما نسبته ٤١,٩٪ من موظفي الوزارة (على المستوى المركزي) قد قرئوا الملخص التنفيذي للتقرير الوطني PISA 2009 وما نسبته ٣٩,٥٪ تمكنوا من قراءة التقرير الكامل. أما فيما يتصل بدراسة الملاحظة الصفية، فقد تمكن ما نسبته ٣٩,٢٪ من قراءة الملخص التنفيذي لها، زما نستته ٣٠,٢٪ تمكنوا من قراءة التقرير الكامل. في حين أن ما نسبته ٣٧,٢٪، تمكنوا من قراءة الملخص التنفيذي لدراسة ترشيح المدارس، وما نسبته ٣٠,٢٪.

تمكنوا من قراءة التقرير الكامل، وما نسبته ٣٤,٩٪. تمكنوا من قراءة موجز السياسات. أما فيما يتصل بالدراسة الوطنية التقييمية لمهارات اقتصاد المعرفة 2011 NafKE، فقد تبين أن ٣٧,٢٪ تمكنوا من قراءة الملخص التنفيذي، ونسبة مئوية أصغر بلغت (٣٢,٦٪) تمكنوا من قراءة التقرير الكامل. وجاءت دراسة مدى جاهزية الأطفال في الأردن للتعليم: أداة التطور المبكر (EDI) ٢٠١٠، في المرتبة الأخيرة من حيث قراءة الملخص التنفيذي أو كامل التقرير. أي أنه وبشكل عام فإن الملخصات التنفيذية أكثر قراءة من كامل التقارير. ومرة أخرى، وحتى على مستوى مديريات التربية والتعليم، تظهر النتائج الرغبة الكبيرة لدى عينة الدراسة في قراءة الملخصات التنفيذية بدلا من التقارير الكاملة، أضف إلى ذلك فإن نسبة قليلة من المعنيين على مستوى مديريات التربية قرأوا أي شكل من أشكال المنشورات (التقارير الكاملة، أم الملخصات التنفيذية، أم موجز السياسات).

(٥) ترى عينة الدراسة، من موظفي وزارة التربية والتعليم وممثلين عن المؤسسات الأخرى، أن تقارير الدراسات كانت ذات صلة واستجابت للعديد من الحاجات التربوية وتطوير السياسات في الأردن. حيث جاءت تقديرات عينة الدراسة متماثلة لكافة الدراسات إلى حد ما، وكانت متوسطات تقديراتهم مدى صلة واستجابة هذه الدراسات: دراسة الملاحظة الصفية، ودراسة مدى جاهزية الأطفال في الأردن للتعليم: أداة التطور المبكر (EDI) ٢٠١٠، ودراسة ترشيد المدارس: المدارس المكتظة والمدرس غير المستغلة ٢٠١١، والتقارير الوطني لدراسة البرنامج الدولي لتقييم الطلبة – PISA ٢٠٠٩ على التوالي (١): ٢,١، ٢,١، ٢,٠، ٢,٠، ٢,٠، ٢,٠. وعلى الرغم من أن تقرير الدراسة الوطنية التقييمية لمهارات اقتصاد المعرفة 2011 NafKE جاء في المرتبة الأخيرة وبمتوسط بلغ ١,٨، إلا أن النتائج أشارت إلى صلة نتائج هذه الدراسة بسياسات التطوير التربوي.

(٦) ترى معظم عينة الدراسة أن العديد من تقارير الدراسات مفيدة. على سبيل المثال، يعتقد ٨٧٪ من عينة الدراسة أن دراسة ترشيد المدارس كانت مفيدة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يرى ٨٥,٧٪ أن دراسة الاستعداد للتعليم قيمة، وكذلك يرى ٨٤,٩٪ أن دراسة الملاحظة الصفية كانت قيمة. في حين اعتبرت دراسات التربية الخاصة، وPISA 2009، وNafKE 2011 أقل فائدة وبنسب بلغت: ٧٦٪، 75٪ و ٦٠٪ على التوالي. وعلى الرغم من عدم وجود سبب تفسيري لهذه النسب المتدنية نسبياً إلا أن النتائج قد تؤثر إلى أهمية تطوير مثل هذه التقارير بشكل عام.

(١) تراوحت المتوسطات الحسابية بين ٣٠٠، حيث أن الفئة التي تتراوح متوسطاتها بين ٥٠٠-٥٠٠، تشير إلى أن المستجيبين يعتقدون أن التقارير لم تكن ذات الصلة أو مستجيبة على الإطلاق للواقع التعليمي في الأردن. أما فئة المتوسطات التي تتراوح بين ٥١٠-١٥٠٠، تشير إلى أن التقارير كانت ذات صلة قليلة بالواقع التعليمي ولكنها لم تستجيب إلى احتياجات التعليم وتطوير السياسات في الأردن. في حين أن المتوسطات التي تتراوح بين ١٥١-٢٥٠ تشير إلى أن التقارير كانت ذات صلة بالواقع التعليمي، واستجابت للعديد من الاحتياجات التعليمية وتطوير السياسات التربوية في الأردن. وأخيراً تشير المتوسطات التي تتراوح بين ٢٥١-٣٠٠ إلى أن التقارير كانت ذات صلة كبيرة بالواقع التعليمي، وأنها استجابت لمعظم الاحتياجات التعليمية وتطوير السياسات التربوية.

(٧) لم يستطع غالبية عينة الدراسة الإجابة على الأسئلة المتعلقة بالدمج الفعلي لنتائج التقارير والتوصيات في سياسات التعليم. ومع ذلك، فمن بين أولئك الذين اجابوا، هناك نسبة كبيرة ترى أن غالبية النتائج والتوصيات قد أدرجت في سياسات التعليم. وقد ينطبق ذلك على تقارير بعض الدراسات، مثل دراسة PISA 2009، ودراسة ترشيد المدارس، ودراسة مدى جاهزية الأطفال في الأردن للتعليم.

بناء على نتائج هذه الدراسة والواردة في هذا التقرير ، يمكن اقتراح التوصيات الآتية:

- (١) توفير حوافز لتشجيع المعنيين للمشاركة في تطوير الشروط المرجعية للدراسات وقراءة تقارير الدراسات، وكذلك من يقوموا بمهام التخطيط والخطط الإجرائية ذات الصلة بنتائج الدراسات. وقد تكون الحوافز جزءاً من المعايير التي يستند إليها في متابعة الأداء وتعزيز فرص الترقية والترفيه. أي بمعنى، أن تصبح المشاركة في تطوير الشروط المرجعية للدراسات والاطلاع على نتائجها جزءاً من المسؤولية المهنية لكافة المعنيين في وزارة التربية والتعليم.
- (٢) توفير التدريب المناسب و تعزيز المهارات في المتابعة والتقييم بشكل عام وفي مجالات محددة الموضوعات لتحفيز الاهتمام في التعلم والتطوير.
- (٣) الاستمرار في بذل المزيد من الجهود لتحسين نوعية دراسات التقييم و إعداد تقارير أفضل وذات صلة بالواقع التعليمي.
- (٤) ضمان نشر نتائج الدراسات، وبخاصة موجز السياسات و العروض المتعلقة بها، وذلك لكافة المعنيين بوزارة التربية والتعليم، وبطريقة منتظمة ومتسقة. وقد يمكن تبني طريقة واحدة لعرض النتائج بحيث تكون على شكل ملصق يُعد بعد اعتماد تقرير كل دراسة من قبل وزارة التربية والتعليم، وبشكل منتظم. كما يمكن أن يقوم المركز الوطني لتنمية الموارد البشرية وبالتنسيق مع وزارة التربية والتعليم على تقديم ايجاز رسمي للمعنيين بنتائج الدراسات، وذلك على مستوى مركز الوزارة والمديريات، بالإضافة إلى ضرورة توظيف طرق منهجية خلاقة ومبتكرة لإشراك المجتمعات المحلية والمعلمين في الاطلاع على نتائج الدراسات. وأولاً وأخيراً ينبغي اطلاع كافة اصحاب المصلحة المباشرة بنتائج كل دراسة من الدراسات وإشراكهم في المناقشات خيارات السياسات المقترحة.
- (٥) ينبغي أن تعمل وزارة التربية والتعليم وبالتعاون مع المركز الوطني لتنمية الموارد البشرية لزيادة الوعي ونشر ثقافة قراءة تقارير الدراسات .

إن تنفيذ هذه التوصيات يتطلب من وزارة التربية والتعليم ان تنشط في نشر نتائج دراسات التقييم الخارجي، بالإضافة لأهمية تعظيم جدوى وأهمية نتائج الدراسات في تطوير السياسات التربوية وبالتالي تحسين التعليم بشكل عام في الأردن.

Background

The second phase of the Jordan's Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Project, also known as ERfKE II (2010-2015), aims at providing students in basic and secondary levels of education the necessary skills to participate in Jordan's knowledge economy. The success of the project depends heavily on the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of interventions implemented under the following ERfKE II components: 1) establishment of a national school-based development system; 2) monitoring and evaluation and organizational development; 3) development of teaching and learning; 4) development of special focus program development; and 5) improvement of physical learning environment.

Without high quality M&E processes and studies, it is impossible for the Ministry of Education (MoE) to judge the effectiveness of its activities and to make appropriate adjustments to interventions to ensure the achievement of ERfKE II goals. Based on that realization and the experiences of program monitoring and evaluation prior to and during ERfKE I, Jordan has sought to strengthen its internal and external M&E system. The National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD) plays an important role in conducting external evaluations, and as such, seeks to continually improve its capacity. MoE and NCHRD, under the recommendations outlined in the National M&E Framework (Hua, 2009; Venkataraman, 2010), have put in place a standardized process for reviewing terms of reference (ToR) for all studies to ensure that they contain a clear rationale, appropriate methodology, and the criteria and indicators that will determine the technical quality of the final evaluations. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the MoE and NCHRD in May 2011, detailing and formalizing institutional processes and responsibilities with regards to internal and external evaluations. A technical review process for draft reports has also been under implementation to provide relevant feedback and improve the quality and relevance of the final reports for policy makers. By some accounts, external evaluations, including those of NCHRD, have not always been used for new policy development in the Kingdom. This should be considered an essential step in using data to promote strategic and evidence-based policy decision-making at the MoE. Therefore, it is currently part of NCHRD's mandate to expand the dissemination of evaluation findings to a larger number of appropriate committees and relevant MoE staff at organized presentation sessions of evaluation results and policy briefs.

During ERfKE II, several important studies were conducted, including: 1) Early Development Instrument (EDI): Measuring Jordanian Children Readiness to Learn (2010); 2) School Rationalization Baseline Study (2011); 3) Classroom Observation Baseline Study (2011); 4) Special Education Report (2011); 4) PISA 2009 National Report (2011); and 5) the National Assessment for the Knowledge Economy (NAfKE) 2011 (2011). In order to

assess the usefulness of these studies and the level of involvement of MoE and other stakeholders, the Monitoring and Evaluation Partnership Project (MEP), funded by USAID and implemented by World Education, Inc., conducted the “information usefulness” study. The goal of the study is to gather information that will help improve the engagement, participation, and utilization of NCHRD-produced studies by key stakeholders in the production and dissemination of research and evaluation information products, such as ToRs for studies, evaluation reports, policy briefs, and the like. Based on this study’s findings, it is expected that NCHRD will review its current external M&E practices to identify ways for improvement in the whole production process of policy relevant information. That will assist the MoE in taking relevant steps for effective policy development.

Specifically, the study has focused on the following questions:

- How do stakeholders get involved in reading and providing feedback on ToRs (for evaluation studies) developed by NCHRD?
- How well do stakeholders know about various studies, study reports, and respective policy briefs that were already produced?
- How are these studies perceived by the stakeholders in terms of usefulness and relevance?
- How relevant and useful are the policy options or recommendations proposed in these studies for the MoE?
- What comments and suggestions do the stakeholders have to improve the process and/or relevance of producing the quality of evaluation studies?

Methods

Design and Target Population

This study utilizes a pre- and post-test evaluation design. Pretest data (baseline) collection was conducted during the months of September, October, and November in 2012. Post-test evaluations will be carried out in May 2014. This will allow for comparisons and assessment of changes in stakeholders’ perceptions with regard to evaluation reports produced by NCHRD over time.

The target population for this study comprises key policy decision-makers at the MoE (central and field directorate levels), program implementers (NGOs), and funders from

international organizations. The selection of respondents was done through a consultative process with the Development Coordination Unit (DCU) in the MoE, in cooperation with NCHRD researchers. Only individuals who should have had access to the studies were included on the list of potential participants. The original list comprised 105 individuals distributed among the following institutions: the MoE (central and field directorates), international agencies (USAID, Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA], World Bank, United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], and the European Union [EU]), Creative Associates (Education Reform Support Program [ERSP] Project), and local organizations (Jordan Education Initiative [JEI] and the Queen Rania Training Academy). However, only 68 participants answered the questionnaire. The distribution of intended and actual participants by organization is presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Potential and Actual Study Participants by Institution

Organization	Intended Number of Participants	Actual participants
Ministry of Education	45 (Central)	43 (Central)
	42 (Directorates)	19 (Directorates)
International Agencies	12	6
Jordanian Organizations	3	1

Instrument & Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to study participants during the pre-test. The questionnaire focused on 25 specially designed items with multiple response choices measured in a Likert Scale and two open-ended questions. Those questions were intended for measuring behaviors and perceptions in the following domains: 1) knowledge of the studies; 2) engagement in the process of producing the studies; 3) access to the study reports; and 4) relevance and usefulness of the reports to the education context in Jordan. Participants were asked to rate each completed study according to their perceptions on the aforementioned domains.

A research assistant was hired and trained to conduct the data collection and that individual contacted each selected participant individually by phone, explained the purpose of the study, requested his or her participation, and then scheduled a time to distribute and collect the questionnaires. One member of the MEP team also contacted participants from international organizations via e-mail only to request their participation.

Participants were given one week to fill out the questionnaire, although many of them completed the task in a shorter time. All respondents were informed they would remain anonymous. If a participant did not respond after one week, he or she would be contacted via phone and/or e-mail. If there was no response after the third attempt, the participant would be considered to have dropped out. All collected data was entered into a computer database and carefully validated by NCHRD personnel and MEP researchers.

Findings

Involvement in the Development of TORs

Under ERfKE II, multiple evaluation studies were carried out. Each study started with an extensive process to develop ToR to guide the evaluation implementation. The development of ToRs often involves multiple stakeholders who are potential users of the evaluation results. They are asked to provide inputs or policy questions that will be necessary to inform the purposes and scopes of studies and to help evaluators determine clear methodological and sampling guidelines.

Below we present data to show the extent to which MoE staff and stakeholders from national and international institutions have participated in the steps related to ToR development.² **Table 2**, which depicts the involvement of MoE stakeholders in the development and review of ToRs, highlights three important findings:

- 1) Most MoE stakeholders at the central level did not participate in the initial discussion with NCHRD about the study topics or ToRs. Many did not believe that providing input was part of their responsibilities.
- 2) Many MoE officers had no access to the ToRs or were not contacted or asked to provide review of the ToRs and therefore did not provide comments or inputs.
- 3) Although a small number, all MoE stakeholders who received ToRs for review said that they read them and provided comments.

As a result, a small number of MoE staff provided verbal or written feedback about issues related to TORs. Most of those who provided feedback believed that their feedback was incorporated into the final version of the document and most received a ToR that had been amended to their satisfaction. Most people who provided feedback on the ToRs did so through the DCU or directly through NCHRD.

² Prior to ToR preparation, NCHRD is expected to discuss relevant study topics and study strategy with MoE staff and other stakeholders. ToRs are then drafted and distributed to a group of selected stakeholders who are requested to read them and provide inputs which may be incorporated, if appropriate. If inputs are not incorporated, NCHRD is supposed provide a rationale for its decision.

Table 2: MoE Stakeholders (n=43)

Involvement in the Development and Review of TORs							
Studies	STEP 1			STEP 2			STEP 3
	<i>Involved in the initial discussion with NCHRD about studies (ToRs)</i>			<i>Received the ToRs for review and feedback</i>			<i>Feedback was incorporated into the TOR</i>
	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes
Readiness to Learn	11 (25.6%)	6 (14%)	26 (60.5%)	8 (18.6%)	13 (30.2%)	22 (51.2%)	8
School Rationalization	11 (25.6%)	6 (14%)	26 (60.5%)	10 (23.3%)	11 (25.6%)	22 (51.2%)	8
Classroom Observation	12 (27.9)	10 (23.3%)	21 (48.8%)	10 (23.3%)	15 (34.9%)	18 (41.9%)	8
Special Education	8 (18.6%)	7 (16.3)	28 (65.1)	5 (11.6%)	15 (34.9%)	23 (53.5%)	5
Assessment of KG Training	11 (25.6)	6 (14.0)	26 (60.5)	9 (20.9%)	13 (30.2%)	21 (48.8%)	9
SDDP	8 (18.6%)	13 (30.2%)	22 (51.2%)	10 (23.3%)	18 (41.9%)	15 (34.9%)	10

Similar to MoE staff, the majority of stakeholders from local and international organizations did not discuss the most relevant issues to be evaluated by the studies and most did not receive the TORs, either because their institution was not involved in funding or supervising such studies or because they were not included in the ToR distribution list (Table 3).

Table 3: Local and International Organizations (n=7)

Involvement in the Development and Review of TORs							
Studies	STEP 1			STEP 2			STEP 3
	<i>Involved in the initial discussion with NCHRD about studies (ToRs)</i>			<i>Received the ToRs for review and feedback</i>			<i>Feedback was incorporated into the TOR</i>
	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes
Readiness to Learn	2	1	4	1	6	0	1
School Rationalization	4	0	3	3	4	0	3
Classroom Observation	3	0	4	3	4	0	3
Special Education	1	1	5	1	6	0	0
Assessment of KG Teachers' Training	4	1	2	5	2	0	3
SDDP	4	0	3	4	3	0	3

Stakeholders who received ToRs said that they read them. In the majority of cases, staff who provided feedback believed that their feedback was incorporated into the ToR or they

received an amended TOR to their satisfaction. However, it is important to highlight that follow-up on amended TORs was not systematically done for all stakeholders. This needs to be improved if MoE/NCHRD sees a merit of exchanging comments from other stakeholders to keep a communication channel open.

The findings presented above raise a series of key questions about stakeholders' involvement in the development of ToRs for evaluation studies.

First, most stakeholders were not involved in the development of ToRs, but should they have been? Previous research point out that the higher the level of stakeholders' involvement in research or evaluation studies, the more likely they are to use the study findings in the end³. In this study, we found that most stakeholders did not believe they should be initially involved (as the non-applicable, N/A option, indicates). Although the precise causes for that belief are unknown (e.g. they might be "too busy," "not interested," "will not be useful," or others) many participants did not think that the initial discussion about ToRs is part of their responsibilities. Although it is true that not all study participants should have been directly involved in the development of TORs, the limited participation of MoE stakeholders in this phase may ultimately affect the utilization of the study results.

Second, should some selected stakeholders be asked to review the ToRs and provide comments and inputs even though they were not involved in the initial development of ToRs? This remains a valid question. It is understandable that no job description at the MoE may be specific enough to "tell" an officer to review ToRs and provide feedback, but the "extra" work should be everyone's responsibility when she or he is asked by the appropriate authority.

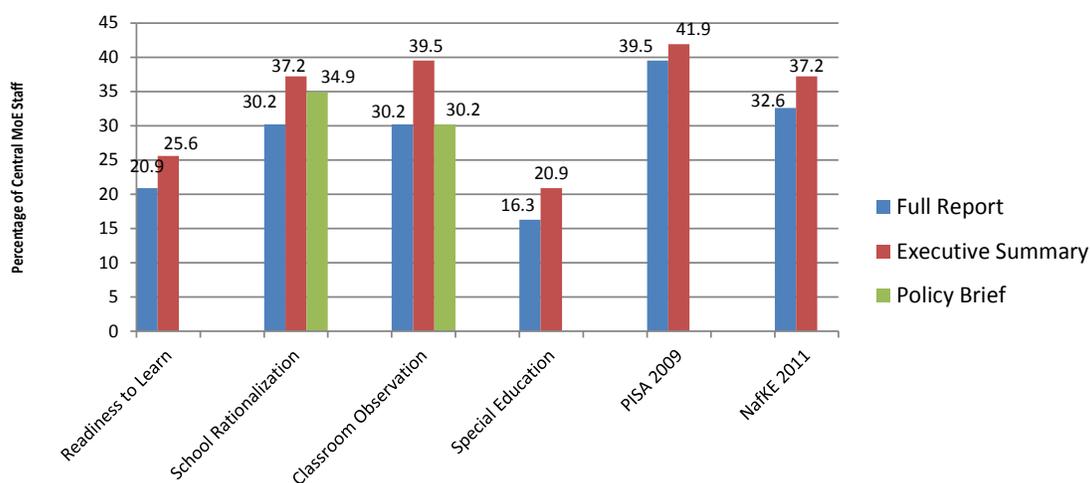
Third, how could NCHRD encourage more participation by MoE staff in the development of ToRs of the evaluation studies? This continues to be an unresolved question and may require a balanced approach. NCHRD and MoE may need and demonstrate a strong willingness and responsibility to promote active participation in the production of the relevant studies, which is the pre-condition to all other steps of the process and ultimately may influence the likelihood of the study results being utilized. It is clearly necessary to discern who should be involved in the ToR development and to potentially broaden the number of stakeholders who participate in the initial stages of that process. Moreover, and since it is a part of their responsibilities, specific departments/directorates could be approached more frequently to determine whether or not they have ideas on how to improve and/or expand the scope of the studies.

³ Christine, C., Campbell, S., Davidson, L., & Graham, W. (2011). What are the effects of interventions to improve the uptake of evidence from health research into policy in low and middle-income countries? Systematic review. Final Report to DFID.

Reading of Study Findings

Reading the findings of each study is a prerequisite for the potential utilization of that study to inform planning and decision-making activities. How well did stakeholders read the recently produced study reports and policy briefs? This study shows (**Figure 1**) that most of the select MoE staff did not read any of the listed reports and policy briefs produced as required M&E products under EFfKE II. However, we have learned that the executive summaries are more likely to be read than the full reports. This is consistent

Figure 1: Percentage of *Central MoE Staff* who Read Evaluation Reports, Executive Summaries, and/or Policy Brief (n=43)



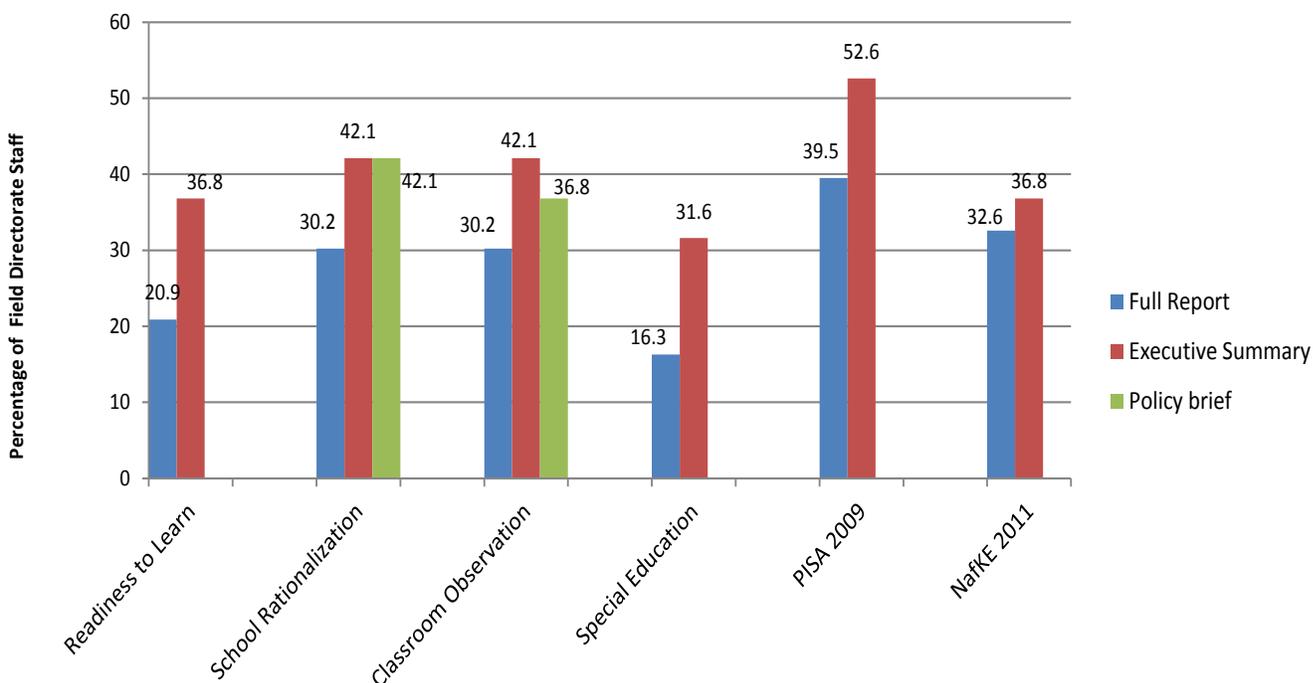
across all the study reports. For example, we find that among central MoE staff, 41.9% had read the executive summary of the PISA 2009 report and 39.5% read the full report. For “Classroom Observation”, 39.2% read the executive summary and 30.2% read the full report. For “School Rationalization”, 30.2% read the full report, 37.2% read the executive summary, and 34.9% read the policy brief. For NafKE 2011, where 37.2% read the executive summary, a smaller percentage read the full report (32.6%). The least read reports and executive summaries were those for the Readiness to Learn and Special Education studies. However, we observe that, once again, most stakeholders preferred to read the executive summaries instead of the full reports.

The lower number of people who read the policy briefs, as compared to executive summaries, might be explained by the delayed release and limited dissemination of those documents among MoE staff. The overall low number of people who read the documents related to Readiness to Learn and Special Education might indicate more awareness needs to be brought up to those topics. One important goal for the MoE and NCRHD is to increase

awareness about the importance of external evaluations and to procedure reader-friendly materials commensurate to the needs and time constraints of policy makers. It is NCHRD's plan to produce policy briefs with the intent to reach large audiences inside and outside the MoE.

Interestingly, a few representatives from field directorates had access to study results at the time of the interviews, even though no formal dissemination had been carried out at the Directorate level. The main explanation was their presence at the Central MoE office at the time the studies had been released. There is frequent turnover at the MoE level and many staff, previously based in Amman, got transferred to field directorates. While that process happens continuously, there must be concerted efforts to reach representatives who are not based in the capital. Similarly to central MoE staff, it is important to find creative ways to reach Directorates. The utilization of policy briefs and other forms of communication must be implemented accordingly to reach communities as well.

As **Figure 2** demonstrates, the overall percentage of Directorate-level MoE staff who reported reading study findings in any format (full report, executive summary, or policy brief) was small. Similar to MoE staff at the Central level, we note that people were more interested in some topics than others. The overall percentage of staff who read the executive summaries for PISA 2009 (52.6%), Classroom Observation (42.1%), and School Rationalization (42.1%) was the highest. The overall percentage of staff who read the full reports for PISA 2009 (39.5%) and School Rationalization (30.2%) was the highest. The overall percentage of staff who read the policy briefs for School Rationalization (42.1%) and Classroom Observation (36.8%) was the highest. The overall percentage of staff who read the full reports for Readiness to Learn (20.9%) and Special Education (16.3%) was the lowest. The overall percentage of staff who read the executive summaries for Readiness to Learn (36.8%) and Special Education (31.6%) was the lowest. The overall percentage of staff who read the policy briefs for Readiness to Learn (0%) and Special Education (0%) was the lowest.

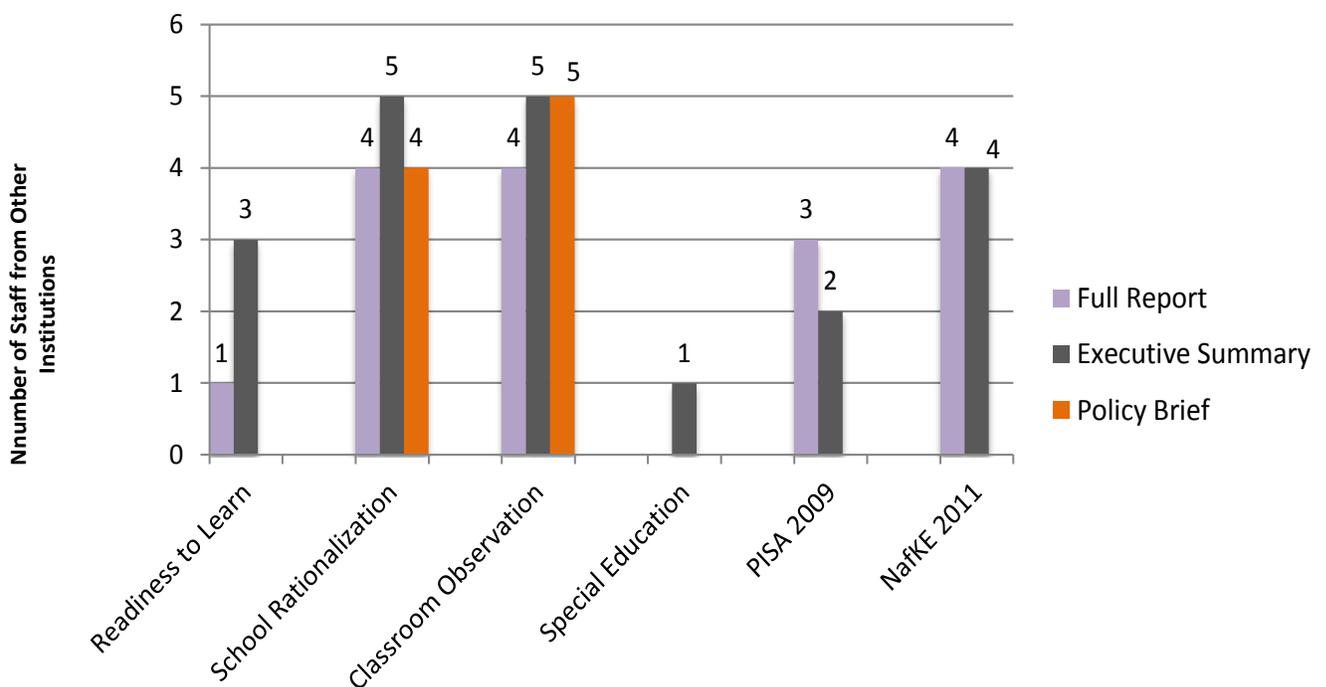


brief) was small. Similar to MoE staff at the Central level, we note that people were more interested in some topics than others. The overall percentage of staff who read the executive summaries for PISA 2009 (52.6%), Classroom Observation (42.1%), and School Rationalization (42.1%) was the highest. The overall percentage of staff who read the full reports for PISA 2009 (39.5%) and School Rationalization (30.2%) was the highest. The overall percentage of staff who read the policy briefs for School Rationalization (42.1%) and Classroom Observation (36.8%) was the highest. The overall percentage of staff who read the full reports for Readiness to Learn (20.9%) and Special Education (16.3%) was the lowest. The overall percentage of staff who read the executive summaries for Readiness to Learn (36.8%) and Special Education (31.6%) was the lowest. The overall percentage of staff who read the policy briefs for Readiness to Learn (0%) and Special Education (0%) was the lowest.

Rationalization (42.1%) studies were higher than the percentage of people who read Readiness to Learn (36.8%), NafKE 2011 (36.8%), and Special Education (36.8%).

Figure 3 demonstrates that not all representatives from international and national institutions had access to evaluation findings produced by NCHRD. The number of stakeholders who read the full report was, on average, smaller than the number who read the executive summaries and/or policy briefs. Classroom Observation and School Rationalization findings presented in the executive summaries were read by a larger number of stakeholders than findings presented in other reports. It is common for institutions that are not directly involved in the studies not to receive the final versions of the reports produced by NCHRD. In some instances, organizations may not even be aware that a study was completed and disseminated to the MoE.

Figure 3: Number of *Staff from Other Institutions* who Read Evaluation Reports, Executive Summary, and/or Policy Brief (n=7)



Relevance of Reports

In addition to learning about the extent to which stakeholders have read the evaluation findings in different formats, this study sought to learn the relevance of reports in reflecting the educational realities in Jordan. Relevance was measured through a composite comprised of four items: 1) the extent to which reports presented new

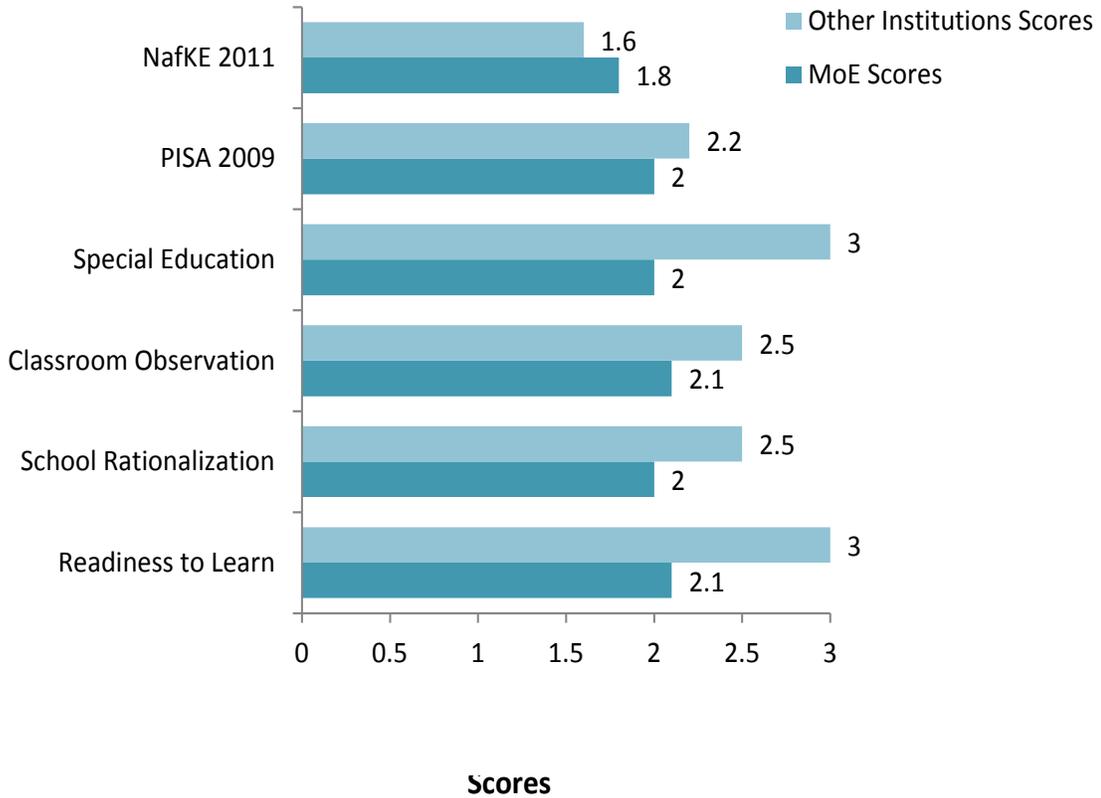
information about educational issues; 2) the extent to which findings were relevant for policy development; 3) the report's focus on the most important educational policy issues faced in Jordan; and 4) reports' responsiveness to the ERfKE II Program. Stakeholders were asked to provide their perspectives by rating each item (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree).

Composite scores ranged from 0-3. Scores ranging from 0-0.5 suggest that respondents believed that reports were not at all relevant and responsive to the educational reality in Jordan. Scores ranging from 0.51-1.50 suggest reports were of little relevance and not responsive to the education needs and policy development in Jordan. Scores ranging from 1.51-2.5 suggest reports were relevant and addressed many of the education and policy development needs in Jordan. Scores from 2.51-3.00 suggest reports were very relevant and most education and policy development needs were met.

As it is presented in **Figure 4**, MoE staff and representatives from other institutions believe the reports were relevant and addressed many of the education and policy development needs in Jordan. Very similar ratings were given to these reports on Classroom Observation, Readiness to Learn, School Rationalization, Special Education, and PISA results (2.1, 2.1, 2.0, 2.0, and 2.0 respectively). The lowest rating was given to NAFKE 2011 (1.8). Although the report was still considered relevant, its mean score was lower than other reports as regards relevance.

Overall, we observe there is small variation in opinions about the relevance of reports. Nevertheless, it is evident that personnel at non-MoE institutions rated the relevance of the reports higher than did their counterparts at the MoE, with the exception of NAFKE report. For representatives from those institutions, the most relevant reports were those for the Readiness to Learn and Special Education studies. However, we must recognize that external agencies are often funders of the studies with specific and unique interests in the issues under study and might be more involved in the evaluation process during the early stages. It is not then a surprise that they rate the relevance higher than others.

Figure 4: Relevance of reports scores according to MoE staff (central/directorate levels) and staff from other institutions.



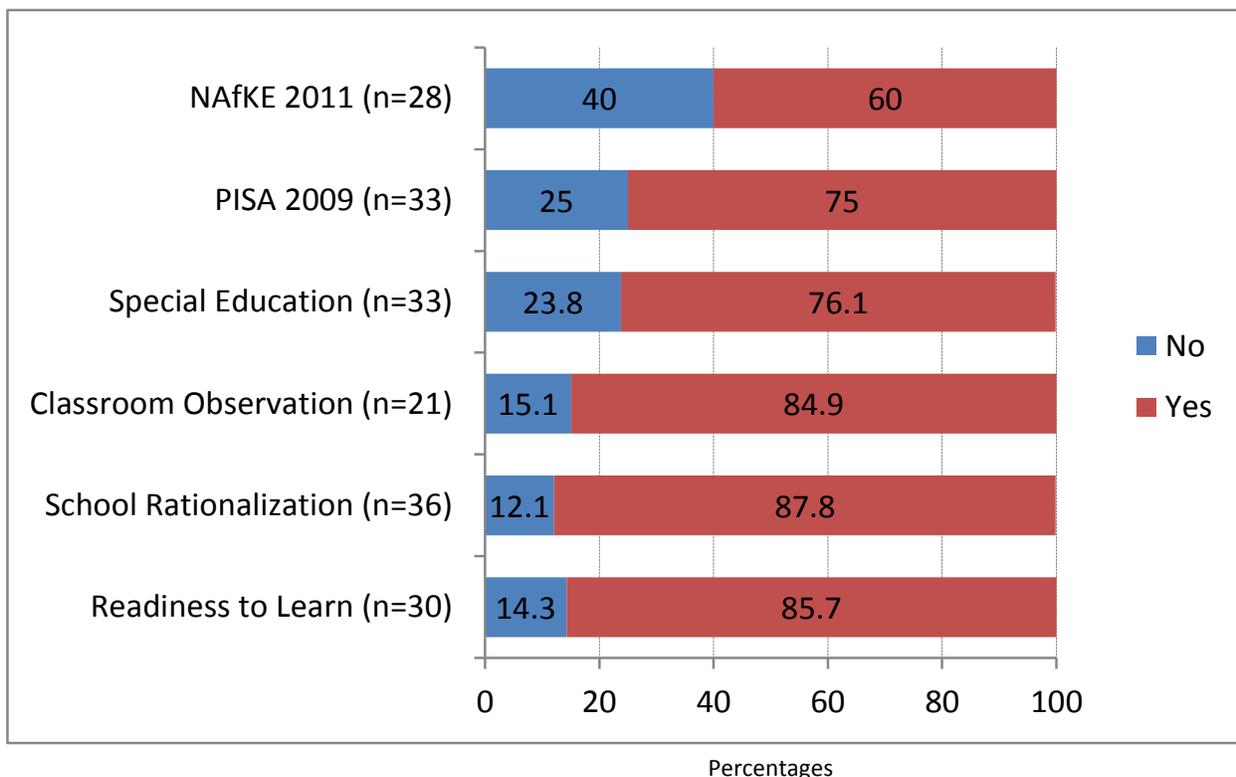
Usefulness & Utilization

Investment in carrying out evaluation studies must bring about “benefits and returns.” Those benefits and returns are the utilization of the evaluation findings for action plans and improvement strategies that will be implemented. Being involved in the design and implementation of evaluation studies and reading about the results of those evaluations are essential steps towards utilizing the newly produced information to inform the next round of policy planning and decision making. Therefore, in addition to assessing the relevance, this study measured overall usefulness and utilization of report findings by policy makers. For example, stakeholders were asked to report whether or not the findings presented in the reports were useful for the education system and decision making process.

Figure 5 below shows that, for the most part, many reports were considered useful. For example, 87% of readers believed that School Rationalization was useful. In addition, 85.7% and 84.9% agreed that Readiness to Learn and Classroom Observation were

valuable. Special Education, PISA 2009, and NAFKE 2011 were considered less useful (76%, 75% and 60%, respectively). Although there is no explanatory reason behind the lesser usefulness of those reports, the findings may suggest the reports need further improvement on the overall quality, relevance of presented statistics or data evidence, conclusive remarks, and policy implications.

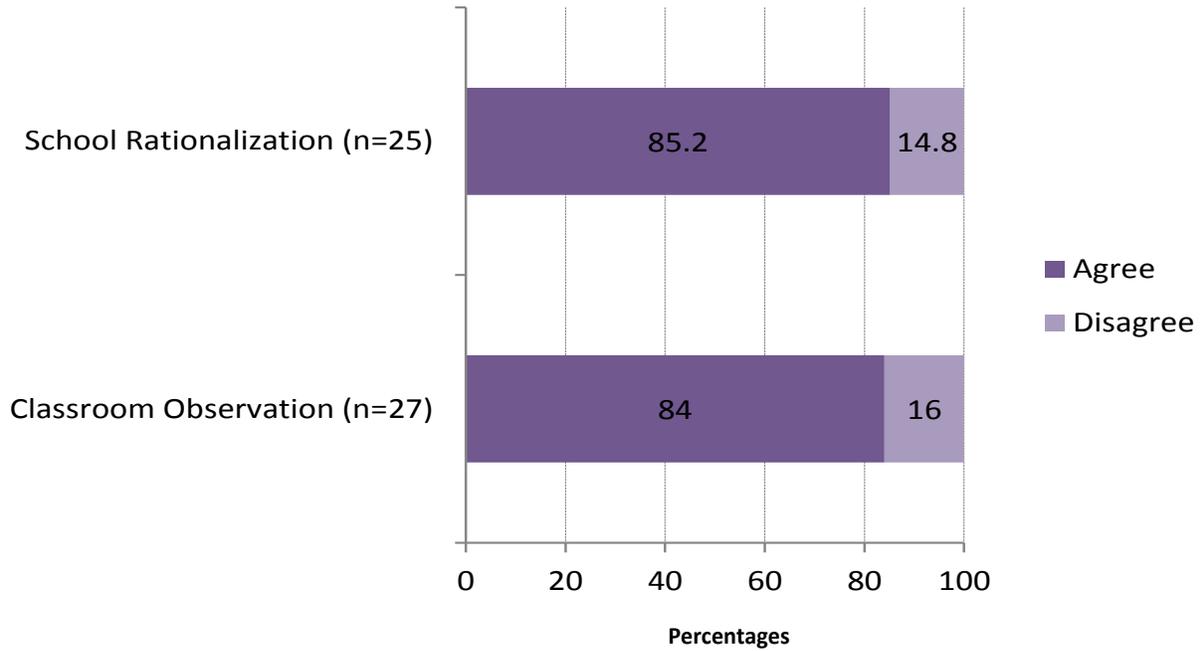
Figure 5: Were Presented Report Findings Useful in the Education Decision Making Process?



As regards the usefulness of policy briefs produced by NCHRD, it is worth mentioning that only two policy briefs have been produced so far. We observe once again that only a small number of respondents could answer that question. Among those who answered, 85.2% believe the School Rationalization Policy Brief provided useful policy recommendations. A similar percentage of respondents (84%) share a similar opinion about the Classroom Observation policy brief (**Figure 6**).

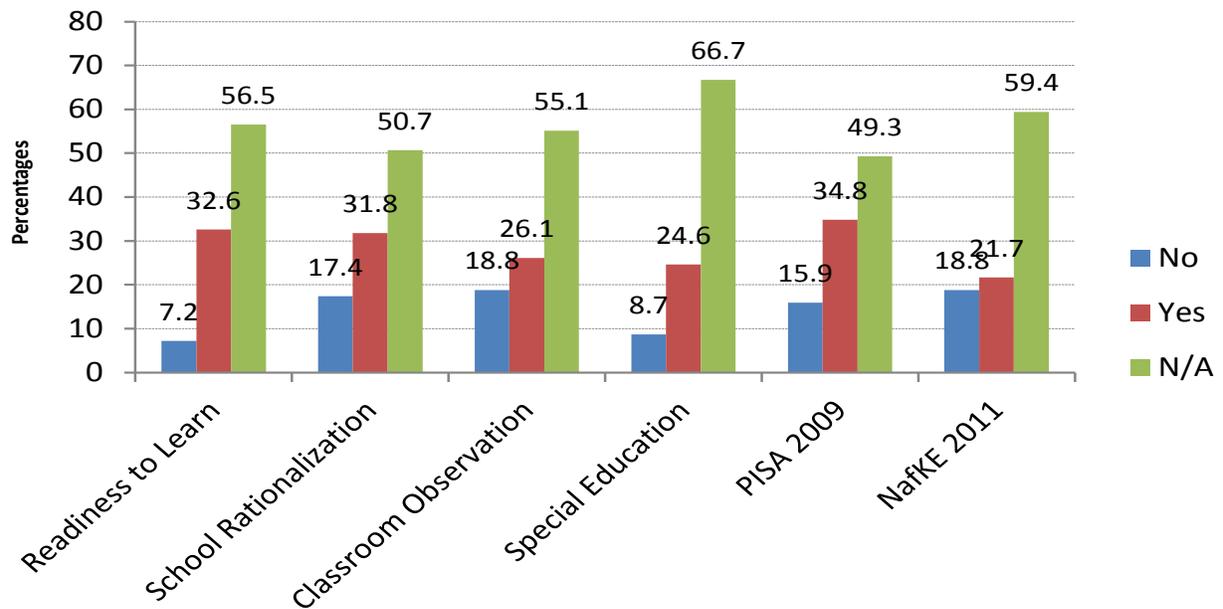
Through correlation analyses we have also learned that there is a positive correlation between participation in the development of ToRs and stakeholders' opinion about the usefulness of the evaluations. A higher level of stakeholder involvement in the early stages of ToR development is associated with positive opinions on evaluation studies' usefulness.

Figure 6: Did the Policy Briefs Make Useful Recommendations?



Similarly to the results presented above, **Figure 7** demonstrates that the majority of respondents could not answer the questions related to actual incorporation of report

Figure 7: Has the MoE actually incorporated the report findings and recommendations in their educational policies?



findings and recommendation into education policies. However, among those who have responded, the majority agrees findings have been incorporated in education policies. That seems to be particularly true for PISA 2009, School Rationalization, and Readiness to Learn Reports. To ensure the utilization of the results for policy purposes there must be proper dissemination of results at the central and field directorate levels, so education stakeholders may take report findings in consideration when developing field and national action plans.

Open-ended Answers by Stakeholders

In addition to answering close-ended questions about the usefulness and relevance of NCHRD reports, study participants answered open-ended questions on general perceptions about the value of the studies conducted with regard to: 1) helping the MoE achieve ERfKE II goals; 2) being useful to improve the quality of their work; and 3) being consistent with the MoE strategic plan. Further, they were asked to provide suggestions on how to improve the process and/or quality of TORs and studies. Participants' answers can be categorized as 1) complete (response was elaborated beyond a simple yes/no); 2) short answer (yes/no or agree/disagree); and 3) no answer (the question was left blank). As presented in **Table 4**, most participants provided complete answers to close-ended questions. Overall, summary of participants' answers is presented below.

Table 4: Number of Study Participants Who Answered

Questions	Type of Answers Provided		
	Complete Answers	Short Answers (Yes/No)	No answer
1) What are your general perceptions about the value of the studies conducted with regard to:			
a. Helping the MoE achieve ERfKE II goals	44 (64%)	6 (9%)	19 (28%)
b. Being useful to improve the quality of your work	43 (62%)	5 (7%)	21 (30%)
c. Being consistent with the MoE strategic plan	38 (55%)	10 (14%)	21 (30%)
2) Do you have any suggestions to improve the process and/or quality of TORs and studies?	43 (62%)	0	26 (38%)

Helping the MoE Achieve ERfKE II goals

Many participants expressed positive views on the usefulness of the studies in helping the MoE achieve ERfKE II goals (n=38). According to respondents, studies were useful in the development and revision of programs implemented by the MoE, as they increase awareness of a programs' strengths and weaknesses and assist in setting priorities for implementation. As one central MoE participant pointed out:

"[the studies have assisted the MoE in...] finding out how far the ministry has gone in achieving ERfKE II goals, identifying the obstacles that slow down the process, finding solutions to overcome those obstacles, and setting priorities in implementation" (Central MoE Office Staff, October 2012, Usefulness Questionnaire).

However, some participants were not as positive (n=12) and pointed out that a gap exists between the usefulness of the results and actions taken by the MoE. Actual implementation of policy recommendations highlighted in the reports does not actually happen and study results are usually forgotten. Further, some study participants mentioned policy recommendations were not all relevant and tended to be too general. According to participants there is need to develop creative policies that can be implemented by the MoE. Policies should be followed by the creation of a workplan and a follow-up system.

"The studies show the strengths and weaknesses but the recommendations are very general and don't offer creative development ideas to advise for the needed changes."

"In my opinion the studies carried out at the National Center were not able to direct policies at the ministry and also were not able to give the ministry any procedures to be used by the ministry as specific interventions that can assist us in achieving the goals of the educational development program." (Central MoE Office Staff, October 2012, Usefulness Questionnaire)

Consistency with MoE Strategic Plan

Most participants believe the studies are consistent and aligned with the MoE Strategic Plan (n=39). However, study plans should be revised to address priority areas (n=2). For few participants (n= 7) the alignment with the strategic plan at the MoE was not evident. As a result, there is no coordination in implementation of school-based improvement, such as teacher training, curriculum revision, and better student evaluations.

“There should be better coordination with the MoE strategic plan... to concentrate on specific study priorities, for preparing studies, and suggesting programs to address [the needs]. (Central MoE Staff, October 2012, Questionnaire).

“The studies are determined by the Ministry of Education and they are aligned with the ERfKE components and activities. However, the studies plan should be revised to ensure the priority areas are being studied and the most essential and relevant policies considered.” (International Organization Staff, November 2013, Questionnaire).

Usefulness in Improving the Quality of Their Work

Many participants mentioned that the studies helped them to shape their views about education issues in Jordan, understand the reality in the field, and learn the necessary steps to make educational improvements (n=42). More specifically, they cited improvement in awareness of early childhood and quality of KG teachers. Respondents also mentioned that knowledge about the School Rationalization and Classroom Observation studies helped them manage the programs related to those topics. Study participants viewed the reports as a way to improve the quality of their work and to help the partnership between local community and school and directorate.

“The studies provide systematic evidence on a selected set of policy issues and reform areas in Jordanian education. Thus, they definitely contribute to improving the quality of my work... They inform policy dialogue in Jordan and, as a result, the work that [my institution] does.” (International Organization Staff, October 2013, Questionnaire).

“The study gave some results that reflect the actual level of learning in the field and some actual needs and weakness points which need to be focused on in [my] future work plans.” (MoE Staff, October 2013, Questionnaire).

The last open-ended section of the questionnaire focused on suggestions to improve the process and/or quality of ToRs and studies. The table below presents the most common suggestions by stakeholder.

Institution	Suggestions
Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Involve stakeholders in developing ToRs and determining MoE's actual needs. ✓ Compile studies results and develop a framework for education measures to be adopted. ✓ Share studies results with a larger audience. ✓ Carry out studies at the early stages of program implementation. ✓ Discuss recommendations and results with involved parties, including program managers. ✓ Provide procedural solutions (how to implement change). ✓ Formulate indicators that are clear, concise, and accurate. ✓ Enhance the level of coordination between stakeholders. ✓ Discuss study design goals, results, and recommendations in a clearer way. ✓ Ensure management discusses study findings with experts from different units of MoE (e.g., curricula, exams, research, and training). ✓ Adhere to the ToR. ✓ ToRs are good, but need to concentrate on policy, while the statistics of the study could be part of the appendix. ✓ Focus more on quality and not quantity.
Other Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ MoE and NCHRD need to collaborate more frequently. ✓ Follow-up to ensure MoE understands the findings, policy implications, and implementation plan. ✓ Share ToR with stakeholders. ✓ NCHRD should be more transparent. ✓ Share tools with MoE. ✓ Provide technical assistance to MoE. ✓ Share final version of studies with all key stakeholders (for example, post reports on MoE and NCHRD websites and inform stakeholders about it).
Directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build partnership with the community. ✓ Studies should be disseminated to all directorates and relevant personnel.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study identified the perceptions of several education stakeholders with regards to the relevance and usefulness of ERfKE II studies developed by NCHRD. In addition, it examined their level of involvement in discussing pertinent topics to be investigated by those studies, in providing feedback during the development of ToRs, and in reading and giving inputs on the reports produced. The overall results highlighted the limited involvement of MoE staff in all stages associated with the evaluation process, from the conceptualization stage to the access to the final reports and policy briefs, which led to generally limited utilization of the evaluation results.

Interestingly, many stakeholders openly suggested there should be more participation, better access to the studies, and more utilization of the produced results. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether those same stakeholders would be ready and available to fully participate in those processes, if the opportunities arise. The following questions may guide us in taking concrete steps to improve the current situation and maximize stakeholders' participation:

1. Are MoE staff too busy to be involved in the studies?;
2. Do they consider their involvement an unnecessary burden?;
3. Are the study topics interesting to them?;
4. Is there a lack of incentives for getting MoE staff involved?; and
5. Do they realize the value of those studies?

Based on the results presented in this report, we would like to suggest the following recommendations:

1. Provide incentives to encourage stakeholders to be involved in the development of ToRs, reading the study reports, and planning tasks and actions accordingly. The incentives may be part of criteria for performance review and job promotion. In sum, involvement in the development of ToRs and knowledge of study findings should become part of one's professional responsibility in the MoE.
2. Provide timely training and skill enhancement in M&E in general and in specific areas (topics) to stimulate the interest in learning and improvement.
3. Continue to make an effort to improve the quality of evaluation studies and produce better and more relevant reports.
4. Ensure study findings, especially policy briefs and presentations, are disseminated throughout the MoE in a systematic and consistent manner. One way to present the findings might be to carry out poster presentations on a regular basis, after each study is complete and approved by the MoE. NCHRD, in coordination with the MoE,

might also conduct formal presentations to disseminate study results to Central and Directorate level MoE staff. In addition, it is necessary to utilize systematic and creative ways to share study results and recommendations with local communities and teachers. As key stakeholders, they need to become better informed about their education system and increasingly engaged in policy discussions.

5. MoE & NCHRD are required to work cooperatively to increase the awareness or establishing the culture of reading studies' reports.

The implementation of those recommendations will involve the MoE as an active participant of external evaluation studies without compromising the integrity of the results. In addition, it has the potential to dramatically increase the usefulness and relevance of study findings for policy development and the overall improvement of education in Jordan.