



State of Palestine
Ministry of Education

Policy for Safe and Equitable Access to Quality Education

Targeting Marginalized Areas and Groups



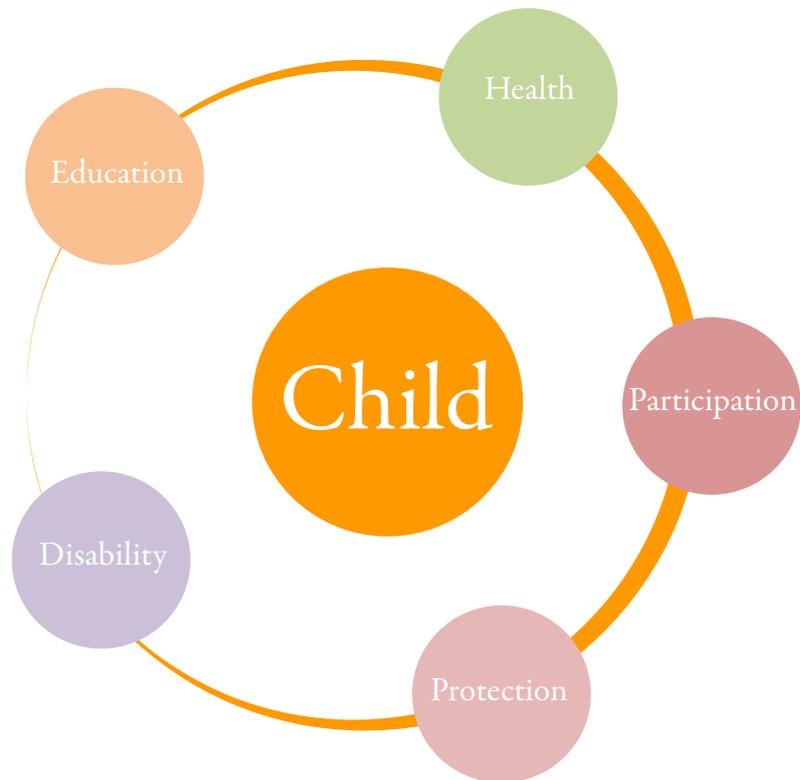
December 2012



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MOE-Palestinian Policy for Safe and Equitable Access to Quality Education–
Targeting Marginalized Areas and Groups- Palestine 2012

Note: Data included in this report is primarily based on statistics available in 2011 when the work was initiated.

Foreword

This national policy paper supports the national agenda of state-building and furthers the realization of the rights of all Palestinian children to education as an essential pillar of the State and of productive citizenship, allowing Palestinian children to fulfil their potential in every sector, through the enforcement of the right of children to safe and equitable access to quality education. We pay special attention here to groups deprived of education and learning due to geopolitical, individual, social or other reasons. This group tends to suffer from one or more forms of marginalization, putting them at a higher risk when compared to other groups of children due to continuing changes in political, economic and social conditions.

This policy has been agreed on with the participation of all stakeholders. It has been built upon the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which identified the main policy gaps and recommendations on how to resolve them. Agreement has been reached at the national level around major priorities towards realizing the rights of Palestinian children and bridging the relevant gaps through national plans and strategies in education. Hence a number of activities and programs have been developed on the basis of best practices, Palestinian national plans and the Palestinian context.

Our ability to work together to ensure quality and comprehensive education for the most marginalized groups will exemplify our national achievements as governmental, non-governmental and international organizations in a partnership, of which we are proud. Nevertheless, a lot remains to be accomplished, especially regarding the non-homogeneous Palestinian context. The Israeli occupation has resulted in stark discrepancies between different regions, imposed numerous obstacles and barriers, seen the construction of illegal settlements and has limited the authority of the State of Palestine (SP) over its own territory such as the so called Area C. Since 1967, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been displaced from their lands and numerous houses and schools in the occupied territory have been demolished, with some still under the threat of demolition. Large areas of Palestinian land have been confiscated for the establishment of illegal settlements which has resulted in over 450,000 Israeli settlers moving onto the illegally occupied land. Hundreds of children are subjected to the risk of violence by settlers and the Israeli army on daily basis.

The Old City of Hebron has been closed and many buildings confiscated, while 1500 Israeli soldiers are designated to protect 400 settlers who intimidate and attack children on their way to school, or even inside their schools, and have even been known to try and abduct children. This is in addition to the sufferings of the population in the areas adjacent to the apartheid Wall, East Jerusalem and others. These conditions are depriving children of their right to education, especially among girls and marginalized groups, which in turn has led to an increase in the number of child workers, especially in settlements and on roads, where they are exposed to extreme danger.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), will continue to offer quality educational services across the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), including all marginalized groups, irrespective of where they are. We will not cease our efforts to repopulate these areas with their original inhabitants by developing educational services within a national package of health, economic and social services.

It should be noted here that we are not only talking about needs, but also about rights. We are talking about a continuing developmental process to set a general framework for all interventions targeting marginalized groups and areas with regard to the education sector, in coordination and partnership with other Palestinian governmental and non-governmental actors. Our aim is to develop clear, specific mechanisms and procedures related to the legal, legislative, policy and service aspects, in addition to human and material resources required to achieve our goal of investing in Palestinian children and equipping them with the tools, skills and knowledge they need in order to become responsible and productive individuals in the future. This will help break the vicious cycle that results in further marginalization, and promotes a sense of belonging, cohesion and national identity.

This will be pursued by using and developing the available Palestinian resources and drawing on the existing initiatives and programs, while stressing the importance of sustainability, development and division of roles and responsibilities in a spirit of transparency and accountability. We possess the required tools and the most important one is the Palestinian people and their resilience, ambition and willingness to sacrifice in order to reach the highest obtainable levels of success. At the same time, we should continue to put faith in the abilities of our children; encourage them and help them achieve their potential.

By developing this policy paper and the associated activities emerging from our collective national responsibility towards marginalized groups and areas, we can ensure effective and sustainable actions to achieve safe and fair access to quality education services, despite the unique challenges faced by the Palestinian people. This policy will serve as the national framework to guide and employ developmental and humanitarian support in an effective manner, based on national goals and targets.

We had to be creative and non-traditional in our discussion, seeking to find different ways to address the Palestinian context in order to protect our children's inalienable right to education. The MOE also seeks to protect at-risk children and assist marginalized children and those who are deprived of education throughout the country by supporting their full access to the educational system and quality programs. All existing and potential ideas and practices were assessed, keeping in mind that in such situations, there is no single idea or a magic solution that would resolve all problems.

Finally, we extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to all those who took part in the development of the policy. Special thanks are due to Dr. Basri Saleh, Dr. Reema Al-Kilani, Mr. Saadeh Hammoudeh, Mr. Mohammad Al-Qubbaj, Mr. Tharwat Zeid, Dr. Mohammad Al-Rimawi, Mr. Mohammad Sami, Mr. Jihad Al-Dureidi, Ms. Amal Hammad, Ms. Shifa Sheikha, Ms. Rana Jaber, Mr. Munjed Suleiman, Ms. Rabiha Eliyan, Ms. Hanan Abed, Mr. Ihab Shukri, the school health staff and the staff of Directorates of Education, particularly in Qalqilia, Jericho, Hebron, South Hebron and Jerusalem Suburbs, as well as to UNICEF and Save the Children for their continuous efforts to realize children's rights in Palestine.

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Minister of Education

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Introduction

In recognition of the right of the child to education and to reaching their full potential according to articles 28 and 29 of the CRC requires:

- a. Making primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- b. Encouraging the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, making them available and accessible to every child, and taking appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- c. Making higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- d. Making educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- e. Taking measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and reduce dropout rates.

And States Parties agreement that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- a. The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- b. The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- c. The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- d. The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- e. The development of respect for the natural environment.

And according to the Palestinian Child Law (PCL) that emphasized compulsory education, non-discrimination and the need to take appropriate measures in order to reduce drop-out rates, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) adopted by the Ministry of Education (MOE), the principles of Dakar Conference on Education for All (EFA), recognized by MOE, which set out a number of guidelines and goals to be sought by the State, and MOE vision seeking to "prepare individuals proud of their religious values, nationality, country and their Arab and Islamic culture; who

contribute to the development of their society; who actively seek knowledge and creativity; who interact positively with the requirements of scientific and technological development and who are capable of competing in scientific and applied fields; who are open to other cultures and regional and international markets; who are capable of building a society based on gender equality and upholding human values and religious tolerance; and build up a higher education system which is accessible, multiple, diversified, flexible, effective, efficient, sustainable, competitive and qualitative.”¹

And in line with MOE policy outlines, which include:

- **Education for all children** in school age, female and male.
- **Focus on quality** implementation of the national strategy for teacher education, and periodical review and upgrading of general education curricula and schoolbooks.
- **Non-discrimination and gender equality.**
- **Poverty reduction** through the provision of educational services in marginalized and poorer areas, especially along the apartheid Wall, exemption of poor students from paying school fees, the opening of kindergartens in remote areas, and making extra efforts in the field of inclusive education at all educational levels.
- Linking education, particularly in the post-secondary level, to the labour market and community needs.
- Expansion of the use of information and communication technology in education at all levels and in computer-related studies.
- Engaging the **private sector** in a strategic way through policy consultations, especially in relation to higher education, vocational education, kindergartens, literacy programs and continuing education.
- **Improved partnerships.**
- Focus on **education in East Jerusalem**, particularly in relation to the provision of classrooms and schools, improving teacher salaries, encouraging donors to invest in education in East Jerusalem.

Its strategic goals are to increase school age children’s enrolment and improve the capacity of the system to retain them (access), improve the quality of teaching and learning (quality), enhance capacities in planning, management, improvement and utilization of administrative and financial systems (management).

¹ Cross-Sector Education Strategy 2011-2013, Ministry of Education.

MOE², in partnership with relevant stakeholders, assumed the development of a national policy to ensure quality and safe education for all children, especially the marginalized and vulnerable children at risk of dropping out, and to work with the different partners to overcome all obstacles that hinder the realization of this right by establishing a monitoring and accountability framework, providing the enabling legal, economic, social environment and infrastructure, and through effective communication with partners and division of roles, advocacy and lobbying at the national and international levels, raising awareness at all levels, starting from the child and family and reaching up to institutions and the government, and advancing the quality of education; in order to help children achieve their full potential, with a focus on children in marginalized areas and groups within the Palestinian political, economic and social context.

2 In 2012, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education was divided again into two separate ministries, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Higher Education.

The political situation and impact on policy development and planning process

The situation in the OPT is unique due to the presence of the Israeli military, which is a major factor in the deterioration of the political, economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people, and fragmentation of the OPT into cantons, affecting Palestinian policy development and implementation. The result is a persistent shift of focus towards responding to emergency or chronic conditions often imposed by the Israeli occupation at the expense of long-term development, which adversely affects the educational and psychological status of the Palestinian society. Major characteristics of the Palestinian situation include:

- Lack of political stability.
- Government lack of complete sovereignty over its land, natural and financial resources.
- Wide presence of military barriers and checkpoints.
- Fragmentation of the OPT.
- Israeli closure policies, especially on Gaza.
- Separation between Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- A reconciliation dialogue is taking place among the different Palestinian factions.
- The Israeli apartheid Wall.

This has resulted in severe discrepancies between the different regions and the creation of marginalized areas – such as those adjacent to the Wall, East Jerusalem and suburbs, the Old City of Hebron and South Hebron, the Jordan Valley, Gaza borders, the Seam Zone – where the government lacks any actual powers and thus local residents, especially children, cannot achieve equal, equitable and safe access to services. The prevailing situation is also preventing the SP from implementing its strategic plans and policies in an appropriate and comprehensive manner at the national level. Efforts are consumed in addressing and overcoming Israeli occupation's restrictions rather than focusing on what needs to be achieved. This is also adding extra costs for the SP and increases its dependence on external financial support, thus jeopardizing national ownership and sustainability of programs and preventing allocation of the limited available resources to national sector priorities. Moreover, this situation has caused several areas and social groups to be dependent on temporary humanitarian assistance instead of development, and the fragmentation of services among relatively small communities in order to mitigate the difficult situation and ensure access to services for all citizens, thus resulting in additional costs and reinforcing the isolation of these communities.

Impact of the political situation on Palestinian socio-economic life

Facts on the ground demonstrate that this situation has had detrimental consequences for the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people. At the economic level, the closure policy, fragmentation and SP lack of control over borders have led to a decline in economic activity and left the Palestinian market largely dependent on imports and the Israeli market. In addition, both direct and indirect costs have increased as a result of increasing transportation costs due to the need to use bypass roads and other transport means in order to overcome the difficulties created by the Israeli occupation. This has raised the cost of living beyond the income levels of the average Palestinian citizen, constrained job opportunities in the Palestinian labour market and increased overall unemployment and poverty, which is having a disproportionate effect on certain areas and social groups.

Real GDP growth has declined from 11% in 2010/2011 to 6% in 2012.³ According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), in 2011 poverty rates reached 25.8% (extreme poverty – 12.9%) and unemployment reached 23% in the year 2012.⁴ These rates were higher in Gaza than in the West Bank. Yet there have been geographic variations within the West Bank, with northern and southern areas, particularly South Hebron and some areas of the so called Area C, suffering from worse conditions in comparison to central areas. This situation has made 40% of the OPT population and 85% of Gaza population dependent on food aid.⁵ The figures have been higher in households with children, proportional to the number of children in the family. As a result, large numbers of children have been forced to drop out from school to work or for early marriage (especially for girls). Please, see Annex 4 for more information on groups of children at risk of school dropout.

At the social level, the closure policy and territorial fragmentation have caused social divisions between the population of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as between the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. This is exacerbated by the Israeli policy of transfer and forced displacement through the demolition of houses and structures, the creation of isolated and marginalized communities separated from services, denial of building and development activities in these areas, as well as violence and attacks by settlers and the Israeli army and imposition of military barriers and checkpoints, all of which are depriving many children from their right to safe access to education. Girls and younger children are especially affected because their families fear for their safety. Other adverse consequences include classroom overcrowding and a shortage of school buildings, which has meant children are forced to study in tents or caravans. For further information, please see Annex 4.

³ IMF (2013). Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in March 2013.

⁴ PCBS (March 2013). Palestine in figures. www.pcbs.gov.ps

⁵ Ministry of Social Affairs Strategy 2011-2013.

Furthermore, the deteriorated political and economic conditions and the resulting social pressures, as well as harassment at military barriers and checkpoints by soldiers and by settlers in Area C, have created a general state of frustration, promoting and reviving some negative social practices that have been declining for some time, such as early marriage, school dropout, violence, child labour, substance abuse and smoking.

For further information on the status of education in Palestine, please see Annex 3.

Under the Fourth Geneva Convention Israel, as the occupying power, bears the responsibility for the deteriorating political, economic and social conditions resulting from the Israeli occupation. Under international humanitarian law, Israel has the obligation to respond to the basic needs of the population, respect and protect entities and establishments used in humanitarian relief actions, and facilitate the work of humanitarian actors.

This includes refraining from the obstruction of aid delivery, including establishments providing basic services. However, Israel has upheld a position that Geneva Convention does not apply to the territories it occupied in 1967.

What is needed to confront the prevailing situation?

Addressing the political situation, and its economic and social consequences, requires the SP to take a position against the Israeli occupation's policies rather than trying to bypass the Israeli-imposed obstacles. This will require advocacy and lobbying at the international, regional and local levels and work with partners to improve access to services for marginalized groups and children in remote areas, irrespective of difficulties on the ground. To this effect, efforts should seek to build partnerships and divide the roles and responsibilities (especially in areas beyond government control), facilitate children's access to services in partnership with private and NGO sectors, report on marginalized groups and develop a database on their situation in these and other areas, as well as to develop national indicators to help monitor the interventions and their impact.

Consideration should be given to the unique situation in the OPT and the lack of sovereignty and control over resources. Therefore, isolated work by the government without support and partnership with the private sector, civil society and international community, and without them assuming their national and moral obligations and investing in the development of education and health conditions in marginalized areas, given the scarcity of resources and brain drain, would not help the marginalized groups to access services and would increase their marginalization and socio-economic decline, creating a deep gap between different social segments in Palestinian society. This would undermine any progress achieved in other areas or for other groups and

increase the prevalence of crime, violence and child labour. In addition, people may leave their lands and homes to find shelter closer to services and thus these lands will become an easy target for Israeli settlement activities.

Therefore, the focus of this paper will be on matters that are under the control of the government, MOE and partners, and which require sustainable, long-term intervention in order to ensure safe and quality education for all, especially for marginalized children, and to protect them from the adverse consequences and effects through a comprehensive and long term national agenda.

This includes the development of marginalized areas in particular, and protection of children there from violence and displacement, through the civil society, the UN, the private sector and media assuming an active role in full coordination with the MOE, moving towards active intervention and development, alongside the humanitarian interventions, to ensure socio-economic growth and encourage people to stay or return to these areas. Developing safe and quality education in these areas, in terms of infrastructure, safe access and training of teachers, would be a major motivating factor to achieve this goal.

Hence there is a need to change the approach and way of thinking on how to deal with these areas and groups by:

- Raising the socio-economic status of local residents and providing them with compensation.
- Taking into consideration the fact that these areas may need different, and sometimes unique, policies to address their problems.

We should bear in mind that the PNA has managed to increase enrolment rates, especially for girls, and decrease dropout rates in the past few years. This focus on marginalized children is an integral part of MOE policy in achieving and expanding EFA goals.

Policy's features

Vision:

Through investing in the education of children, and providing them with knowledge and basic life skills, we aim to break the cycle of marginalization in order for them to become productive individuals, by the provision of the necessary resources and opportunities for all children (especially those who are at risk or deprived from education) to ensure full and equitable access to educational services, to create a mutually supporting and coherent society, and reduce the differences and negative effects of the conditions around them.

Motivate the displaced people to return to their land and support their resilience by providing comprehensive, quality services in vulnerable and marginalized areas.

Mission:

Allow all children to reach their full potential by creating an enabling legal, social and institutional environment where individuals and agencies can be held to account, and through advancing the quality of education and teaching methods, to prevent and address the factors responsible for dropout, deprivation of education and non-enrolment, and mitigate their complications and negative effects by using a comprehensive approach to school services (comprehensive schooling) with the involvement of different partners (governmental and nongovernmental agencies and local community).

Provide children, families, the school and community with the tools and mechanisms to ensure compulsory education at the central and district level, and coordinate with all partners to ensure universal coverage of all children, especially the marginalized and vulnerable ones, through early detection and intervention.

Policy Priorities

Develop mechanisms, protocols and systems to address factors that prevent children from enrolling in the education system, such as poverty, early marriage, child labour, poor academic performance, disability, learning difficulties, conflict with the law, and access (especially for marginalized and remote areas) by:

- Approving and amending the Palestinian Education Law and defining the responsibility of the MOE and partners in relation to enforcing and monitoring compulsory education.
- Providing for responsibility and accountability of the family, community, school, the private sector and UNRWA with regard to enforcing and monitoring compulsory education.
- Enhancing the quality of education to allow children to reach their full potential and apply the knowledge and skills, through the implementation of the teacher training strategy, review and evaluation of curricula, and development of innovative teaching methods and skills.
- Increasing financial allocations to the education sector (government and UNRWA); in order to provide and upgrade qualified human resources, educational resources and infrastructure in partnership with the private sector.
- Raising awareness, lobbying and advocating at the local and international levels; to enhance the level of education and access in marginalized and remote areas.

Policy Rationale

- The current educational system serves the majority of students but some groups remain excluded from. Having certain groups outside the system would create a sense of injustice and inequality, as well as socio-economic consequences as reflected in increased crime, drug abuse, smoking, and levels of poverty, which creates further burdens for the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and the Ministry of Health (MOH).
- MOE has successfully adopted several initiatives that targeted certain groups, such as girls, Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) programs, and managed to introduce international assessment programs (TIMSS). Thus there are opportunities to succeed in targeting other marginalized groups and develop means to ensure equality.
- The law in force provides for compulsory education up to the age of 15. However, the law requires MOE only to ensure a place for each child but not to ensure a child's enrolment. Nor does it indicate how marginalized or vulnerable children should be approached. MOE also does not have adequate programs or mechanisms to ensure full compliance with compulsory education, particularly in areas where it does not exercise full control (Responsibility of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), MOE, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour (MOL), MOSA, civil society organizations, private sector, international community).
- A database exists for all children in the educational system, but there is no such comprehensive national database or case management system to monitor marginalized children, ensure their enrolment in the educational system, and address reasons behind their dropout/ deprivation of education or non-enrolment.
- Multiple factors have contributed to the decline in children's academic achievement and satisfaction with the educational system. Teacher training and skill development, development of teaching methods and educational resources, and curriculum review would provide an incentive to improve achievement and satisfaction levels, as well as to achieve national goals and create productive groups of students and youth, even if partially (Responsibility of MOE, Ministry of Finance (MOF), private sector, UNRWA and civil society organizations),
- Budget allocations for the education sector are not proportional to the consistent increase in the number of students and requirements needed to improve access and quality, especially for marginalized groups (Responsibility of MOE, MOF, MOSA, international community, local community, municipalities and local councils).
- Under 40% of children are enrolled in kindergartens (KG), most of which are still providing traditional services and rote learning and fail to comply with national standards. The marginalized and needy children are the most underprivileged

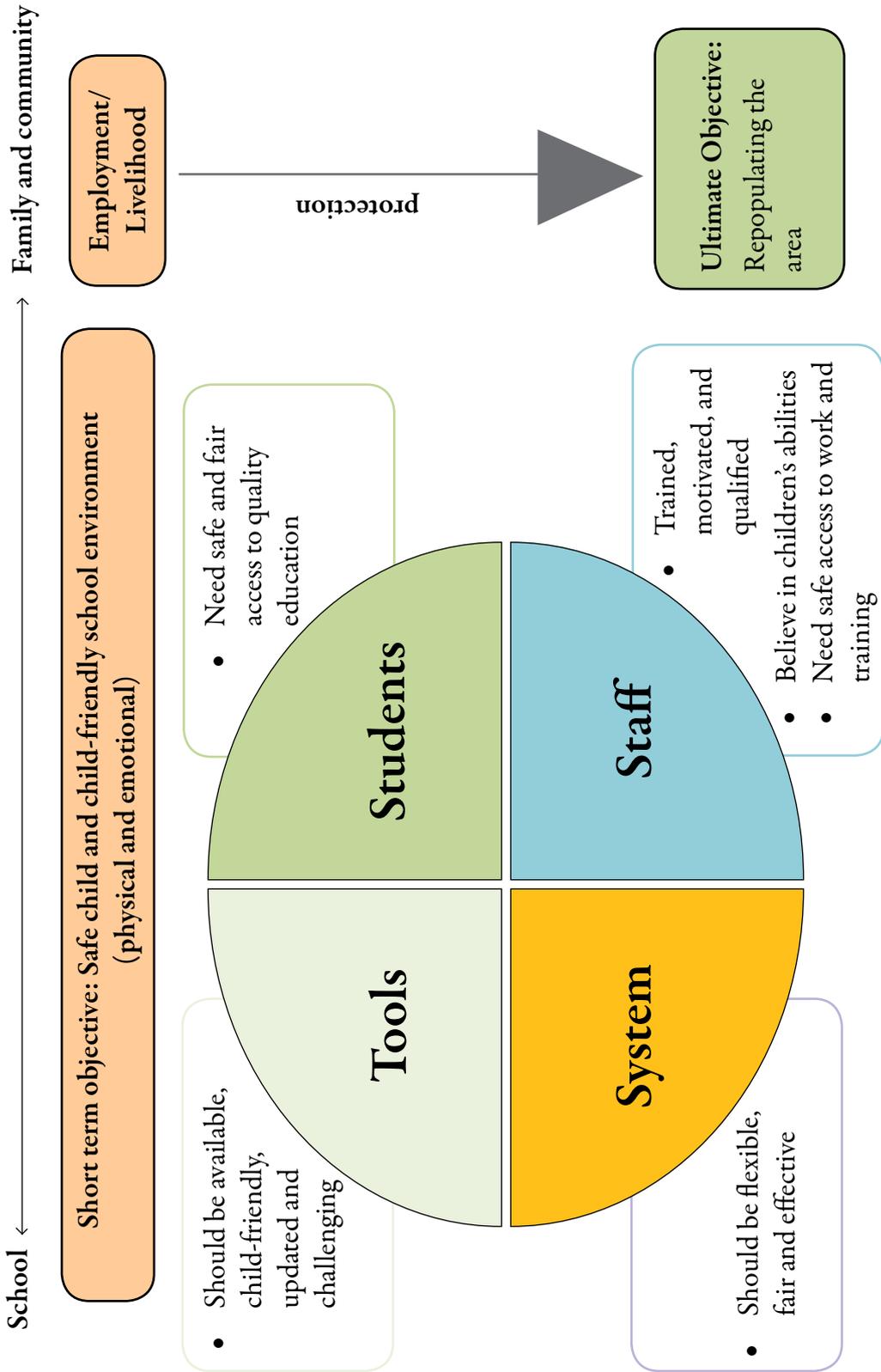
in terms of KG enrolment (Responsibility of civil society organizations, private sector, MOE, UNRWA, local community and municipal councils).

- Civil society organizations, the local community and the private sector have a responsibility to protect marginalized groups and children at risk of marginalization. In addition, children themselves have the responsibility once they, their families and communities are equipped with the required tools to enrol and complete their education (either in direct conventional ways or unconventional ways in times of emergency). The local community has the highest potential to detect and follow up marginalized children and monitor the effectiveness of interventions.
- Currently, school premises are not used for community purposes and teachers are not given an active social role in society.
- Due to political and economic instability, there is a need to focus on decentralization in decision-making and budgeting and on giving municipal and local councils the responsibility to improve the educational environment in their respective areas. However, this should be done within a central policy that ensures non-discrimination in service delivery in the different regions, while at the same time allowing space for creativity, excellence and competition at the national level in order to advance the educational system.
- There is a need to promote solidarity between communities in the different regions and to reduce the sense of isolation, inequity, inequality and injustice that may adversely affect national achievements, increase the prevalence of crime and extremism and perpetuate the vicious cycle of poverty and unemployment.

Partners:

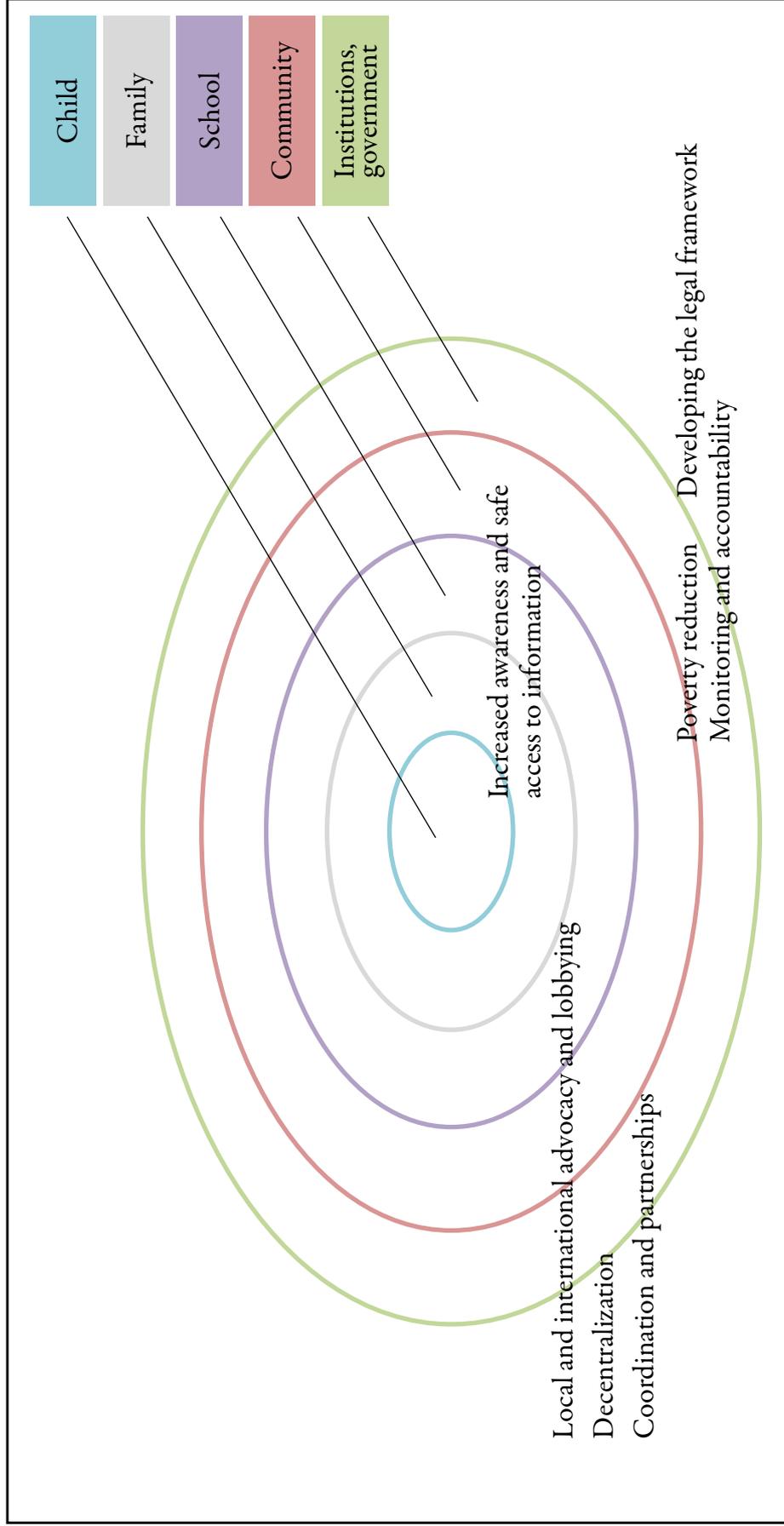
UNRWA, civil society organizations, MOSA, MOL, PCBS, the private sector, local community and municipalities, in addition to Ministry of Information.⁶

⁶ The media has an important role in mobilizing community and international support by increasing visibility of the difficulties facing construction in remote and marginalized areas. Neutral media, even including Israeli media outlets, can be used to expose the Israeli violations in these areas, for example by producing a documentary on students' conditions to be presented through media channels and in all OPT schools.

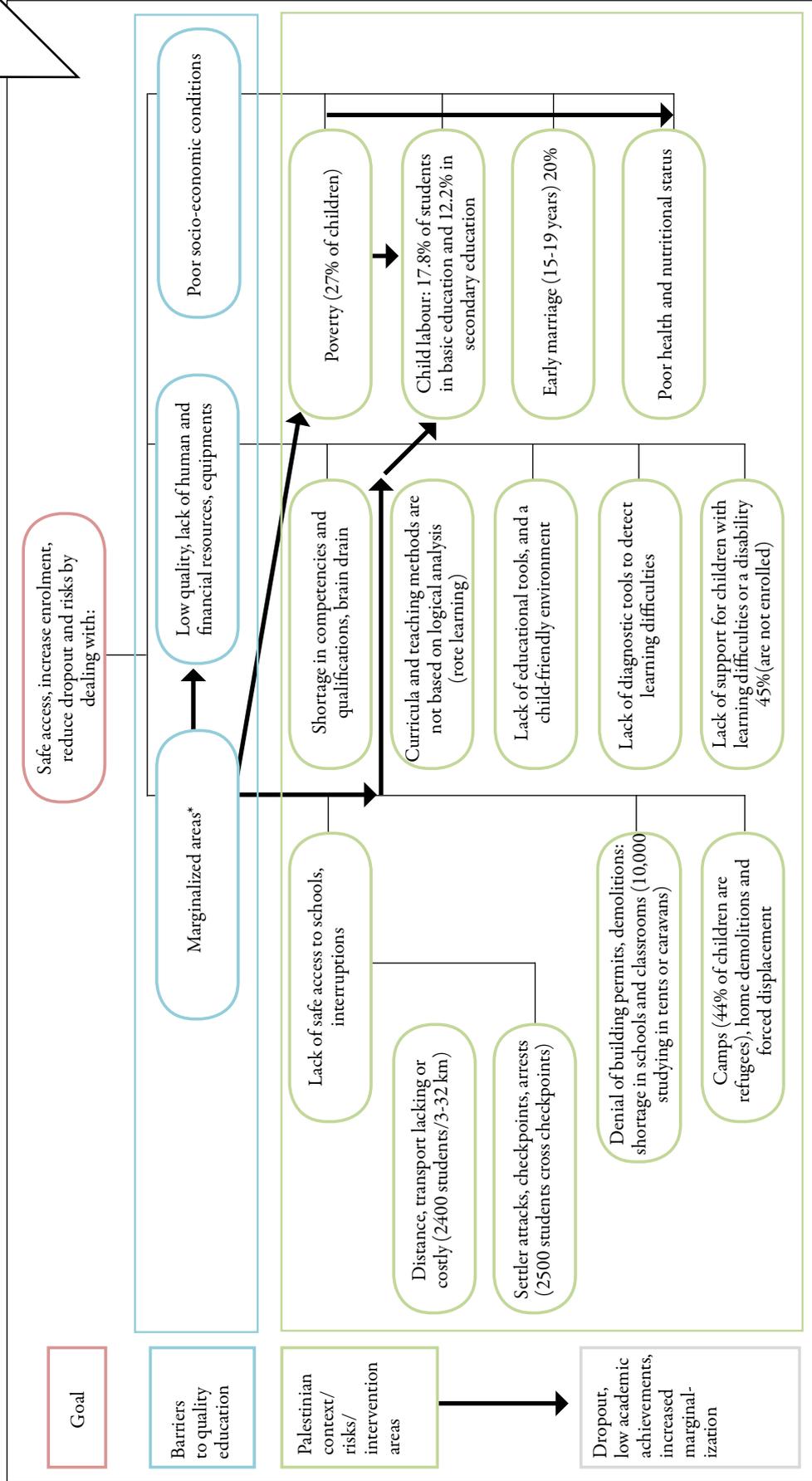


Ultimate Objective: Repopulating the area

Conceptual framework and intervention levels:

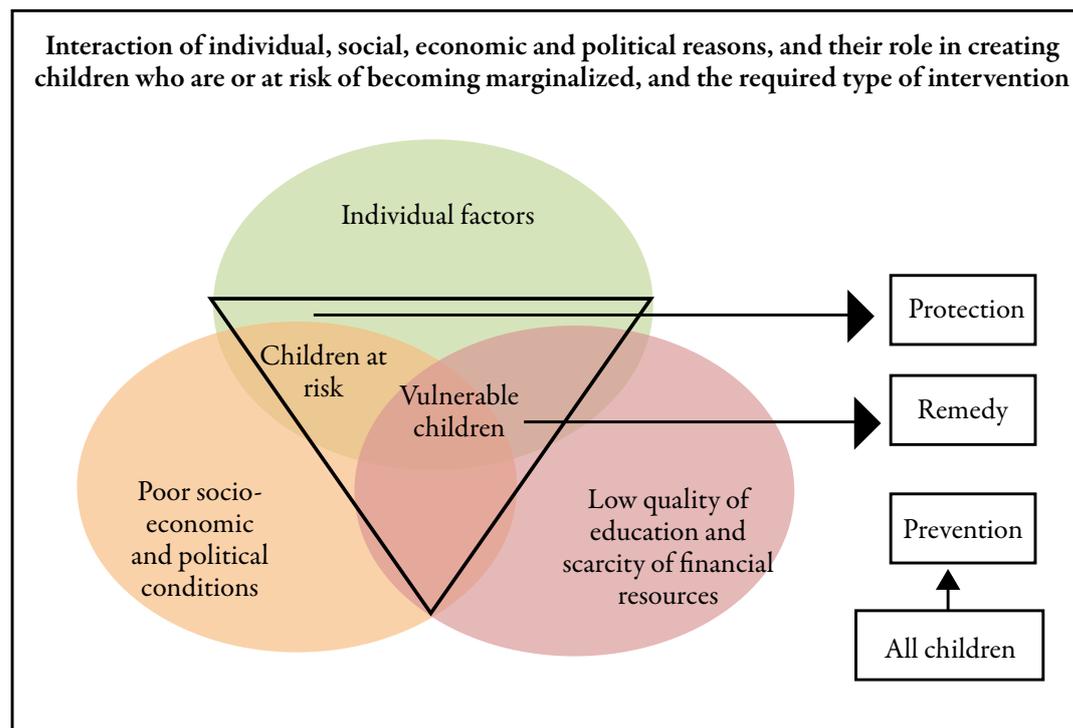


Within a sound legal framework, in addition to monitoring and accountability mechanisms: amend, adopt and enforce the Palestinian Education Law, develop mechanisms to monitor and facilitate compulsory education, enrolment, law enforcement and exemption from school fees.



* For more information on marginalized groups, see Annex 3

For statistics on violations in Area C, see MOE report on Israeli violations, Save the Children's fact sheet on the right to education in conflict areas (October 2011), and UNESCO document analyzing needs in the education sector in Area C (June 2011).



- Children in the circle of deprivation of education: Students who live in unstable communities, lacking educational services and exposed to deprivation either directly or indirectly, due to conditions imposed by the Israeli occupation (those that need remedy).
- Children at risk: Students living close to risk areas (close to settlements, military sites, the Wall, Seam Zone, checkpoints, landfills, polluted environment and poverty(those need protection)).
- All children in the SP need protection from the factors that lead to them being deprived of education, including talented children and those with a disability.

Therefore, two parallel tracks need to be followed on the basis of the existing policies:

1. Focus on children in general, to improve quality and access to education, and prepare them to become productive members of society in order to improve the conditions of marginalized children in the future.

Advantages: In view of the limited financial and human resources, focusing on a larger proportion of children and their development will protect them from becoming vulnerable or marginalized.

Risks: This is an effective policy in the short run, but if adopted separately, it may lead to further deterioration of the conditions in the marginalized areas. In the absence of studies on the impact of non-enrolment of certain marginalized groups

in education, it would not be possible to forecast these outcomes, especially if coordination is not ensured with other partners to cover these areas and groups. In addition, this would constitute a violation of the rights of these groups.

2. Focus on the marginalized groups since they are the most affected by political and socio-economic changes.

Advantages: Logically, the targeting of these vulnerable groups would mitigate the adverse impact of their deteriorated conditions, protect them from future complications and help them become productive members of society. Although expensive in the short term, this policy is socially and economically effective in the long run.

Risks: This policy is costly in the short run. Most of these groups are living beyond government full control, but the government bears the moral responsibility for them. In view of the limited financial and human resources, this approach could be at the expense of the quality of services provided to them, as well as in other areas.

Note: Israel remains fully responsible and accountable for protecting and ensuring basic rights and needs of all Palestinian living in the OPT (Fourth Geneva Convention and the CRC).

Therefore, the best option is to implement both policies in parallel to ensure the rights of all children.

Intervention: at all levels (child, family, community, institutions, government)

Protect children in general from the risk of marginalization and dropout / non-enrolment / deprivation from education

- Child and family: Raise children's awareness and motivate their interest in education, equip them with the necessary tools to resist any negative influences in their environment (through school counselling, TV and radio, mosques and churches).
- Community: Raise community awareness and mobilize them to support the provision of an enabling environment and a supportive culture.
- Institutions and government: Develop a national database and case management systems; divide roles and build partnerships; create an enabling legal, policy and institutional environment, developmental and emergency work plans, with defined budgets, technical and specialist human resources and infrastructure.

Protect at risk children from the complications of marginalization:

- Child and family: Raise children's awareness and equip them and their families with the necessary tools to resist any negative influences in their environment (school counselling, TV and radio, mosques and churches).
- Community: Raise community awareness to report on any at-risk case, provide community assistance to prevent adverse consequences and promote volunteerism among children and youth.
- Institutions and government: Develop monitoring, follow up and accountability mechanisms, provide special funds, encourage vocational education and use school, churches and mosques as social forums.

Provide remedies for vulnerable children

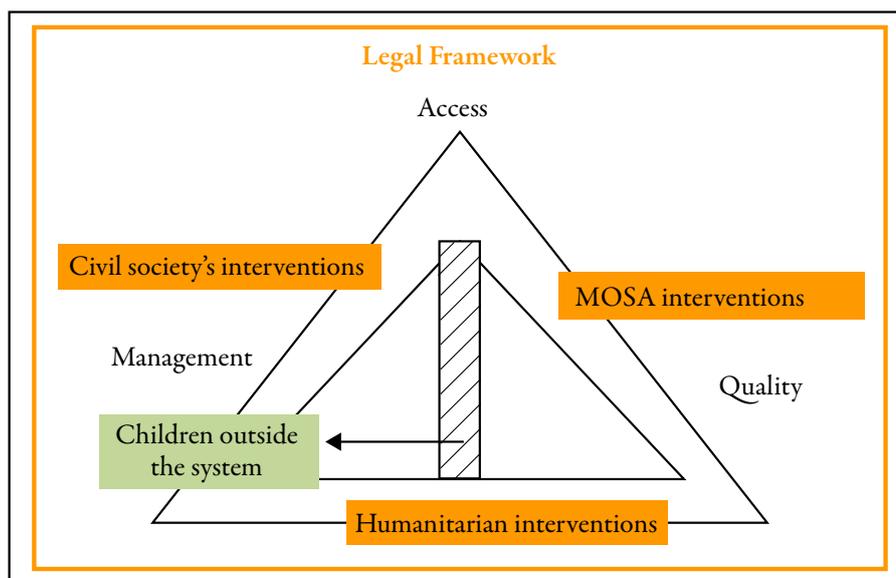
- Child and family: Raise awareness on the importance of education in escaping poverty and negative impact of school dropout on the child and the family, as well as on places where formal and informal educational services are available.
- Community: Raise awareness in order to report on any child not receiving educational services and ensure community support for interventions.
- Institutions and government: Identify marginalized children, take measures to address the causes (national regulations), and conduct annual review of cases.

Rights perspective of the policy

Often more than one form of marginalization coexist in the same group. For example, children with disabilities are often poor or not enrolled in the educational system. Also, poor children tend to be working children, living in marginalized areas, lacking access to services; all kinds of factors overlap to affect the child's access to education. Hence from a rights point of view, marginalized children, who are at risk of becoming victims of other types of marginalization, puts responsibility not only on the shoulders of the state, but also the family, society, municipalities, councils, local community, schools and NGOs to monitor and report on children who drop-out of school or are not enrolled in the educational system at all and to help them return to school (reintegrate) and address the causes for their non-enrolment; as well as to protect children at risk of dropout or non-enrolment and prevent the possible adverse effects of this situation. Such efforts will eventually reduce the socio-economic burden on the government, society and families in the future, and prevent leaving certain groups outside the educational system.

- **Identifying causes of marginalization:** Either because of geographic location, such as remote areas with limited access to services, or due to political, economic, social and health conditions (disability poverty, child labour, etc).
- **Defining marginalized children:** Children who are not exercising their right to quality services in all aspects for the above listed reasons.
- **Major marginalized areas:** East Jerusalem and suburbs, the Old City of Hebron, South Hebron, Jordan Valley and border areas, areas beyond or adjacent to the Wall and settlements, Bedouin communities, other communities such as very small or neglected villages, Gaza buffer zone.
- **Reasons for marginalization:**
 1. Centralization and misdistribution of services.
 2. Low awareness and low investment in media.
 3. Lack of a specific budget allocation by the state to invest in these groups.
 4. Limited SP ability to operate in areas beyond its control (political situation).
 5. Poor internal coordination within and between governmental agencies and NGOs.
 6. Interventions in these areas and with these groups tend to be predominantly emergency or temporary interventions (as opposed to developmental interventions).
 7. Teaching and learning methods (requiring reconsideration).
 8. Poverty and economic constraints.

The cost of integrating these groups will be high in the first phase. However, in any case and in the long run, the costs will be less than the long term costs generated by their marginalization. The gap will be reduced gradually, as well as poverty levels, and intervention will be cost-effective by the creation of an educated, creative, active and productive generation, and by helping these groups escape the vicious cycle of marginalization, as well as by reducing the prevalence of crime, substance abuse, child labour, poverty, inequality, poor health conditions, class repetition and school dropout rates.



Why do we target the marginalized groups?

The marginalized groups are most vulnerable to the affects of political, economic and social changes. Neglecting these groups will undermine the achievements of the government, which targets children in general. The targeting of children in remote and vulnerable areas is a means to resist the Israeli occupation's policy of depopulating the land, and to support people's resilience and attachment to these areas.

Marginalized children tend to be effected by a vicious cycle of poverty and further marginalization, and to be vulnerable to school dropout, early marriage, child labour, malnutrition and exploitation. Families with children comprise around 82.8% of all families, and poor families may account for around 59.3% of them. No Palestinian studies are available to determine the economic and social costs of having a percentage of marginalized children outside the educational system. Yet these costs are expected to be double the costs of their integration in the educational system and society, so that they become active members of society in the future.

Often families living in remote and/or isolated communities or those specifically and directly affected by the Israeli occupation tend to suffer, as they have to pay high transport costs and other indirect expenses to access schools. There are children who are not currently receiving MOSA assistance, and are unaware that social assistance is available to support them and their families.

Obstacles:

1. Lack of reliable information on marginalized children and case management systems.
2. Lack of adequate financial and human resources and specialized qualifications to cover all directorates, schools and priorities. A timeline with specific actions needs to be developed, according to a priority list ranked by feasibility of execution and the specific steps needed to implement each action.
3. Absence of supporting studies on the economic costs of non-integration of certain groups in education, reasons for low quality of education in Palestine, and reasons behind the prevalence of obesity, anaemia, malnutrition and the tendency to miss breakfast amongst school children.
4. Absence of a clear policy or strategy on the role of school counselling, and lack of protection for counsellors on the ground. Teachers and students need to be educated about the preventive role of counselling, and interventions in situations when a teacher suspects a problem or behavioural change in a student.
5. Teacher's low level of motivation, especially because teachers' income is not adequate to meet their needs and living costs. Some teachers, especially males, offer private lessons as a second source of income.
6. Teachers' qualifications still need to be raised in accordance with MOE strategic standards.
7. Inadequate time spent by students with their teachers reduces the effectiveness of school to educate students.
8. The double shift system reduces the time students spend in school, and impedes the implementation of both extracurricular and non-formal activities and the use of the school premises for counselling and other participatory activities.
9. School buildings are not sufficient to accommodate the population growth, particularly in Gaza and East Jerusalem. Moreover, school buildings are not prepared for emergency situations and disasters (no shelters or adequately trained personnel to handle urgent and emergency cases).
10. Low enrolment rates in preschool (KGs). Children out of preschool settings feel frustrated when they are integrated in grade 1 with classmates who have spent 1-3 years in KGs.
11. In small communities, prominent individuals can wield disproportionate influence over local committees.
12. The Israeli occupation's policies that result in school and home demolitions, poverty, geographical fragmentation, etc.
13. Lack of systematic networks within institutions and services (lack of coordination).
14. Failure to comply with MOE general policy by some institutions.

International Experiences:

There is a growing body of international evidence that the costs of education (tuition fees, compulsory uniforms, transport, textbook fees and others) represent a major obstacle to education in the developing world, especially for the poor, girls, orphans, and other disadvantaged children. Poor families spend a larger proportion of household income on education than do non-poor. Therefore, free education policies have globally contributed to providing children with equitable access to education, increasing enrolment especially among marginalized groups and bringing dropouts back to school, particularly in rural areas. Evidence also indicates that some discrepancy still exists, with some groups remaining outside the educational system, and that unofficial fees are still being collected.

Investment in girl's education has better returns than in other aspects, such as infrastructure, and contributes to improving health standards in society.

Horizontal expansion at the expense of quality will lead to increased costs, as effectiveness will be reduced by factors such as the larger number of years⁷ required to complete education, the increase in class repetition rates, and others.

Suggested interventions⁸

(For detailed information on best practices, please see Annex 2)

Points of reference;

- Targeting marginalized children, individuals and groups, wherever they are.
- Rejecting the Israeli security divisions (areas A, B and C).
- Stressing the importance of integrated work and coordination among all concerned ministries and institutions in order to avoid duplication and ensure full coverage.
- Building on existing achievements and relying on local support to ensure sustainability and collective responsibility.
- Intervening through preventive and remedial strategies.
- Ensuring a flexible system and instructions customized for set cases and areas.
- Maintaining follow up of education in remote and marginalized areas, specifying responsibilities and including these areas in national plans.
- Targeting the needy children and reaching them with assistance and services, regardless of the number of students in the school or community.

7 Implementation of Free Basic Education Policy, Raja Bentaquet Kattan, The World Bank, 2006.

8 For further information on strategies discussed with partners to ensure safe and equal access to quality education, please see Annex 1.

- Giving consideration to priorities and equitable distribution of services.
- Turning the school into an open social institution with inclusive national perspectives.
- Taking affirmative action in staff recruitment and interventions in marginalized areas, by increasing the number of counsellors, making optimal use of available personnel, seconding personnel, and coordinating with other departments and ministries.
- Investing in new graduates and human resources in general.
- Creating district level working groups to ensure access to these areas and groups.
- Providing international support and protection to ensure safe access to these areas.
- Insisting on the rejection of the principle of mobile schools and the distortion of the Palestinian curriculum and using an international flag on top of Palestinian buses.

The process of preventing child deprivation from education



Priority areas: Jordan Valley (Tayasir, Tubas), Masafer Yatta, Sousiya, East Jerusalem and suburbs, the Old City of Hebron and South Hebron.

Result: If marginalized groups are targeted in a comprehensive model of schooling and services, and end the culture of isolation and negative practices, in terms of psycho-social health, juvenile justice, children with disabilities, (by allocating budgets and providing the required human and material resources, curricula and others), it will be possible to use the lessons learned for expanding this model to include other groups and areas.

Targets, objectives and proposed interventions

Results	Activities	budget
Target 1: An appropriate legal and policy environment is prepared to protect the right of the child to education		
<p>Objective 1.1: Activate the legal and accountability framework for compulsory education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a national legal review of the education law and other relevant laws by MOE and partners, develop executive bylaws and add provisions to ensure compulsory education and punishments for depriving a child from education, protect school counsellors, ensure free education in juvenile centres, use schools as social centres, integrate marginalized children, and mechanisms to monitor compulsory education and approve the law by the PLC / the President. 	<p>Legal analysis and reformulation: \$2000</p> <p>4 workshops/ \$500 each: \$2000</p> <p>Total: 4000\$</p>
<p>Objective 1.2: Develop policies to protect the right of marginalized children to quality education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include marginalized areas and groups in national plans as an affirmative action. Include early childhood or at least one preschool grade within compulsory education. Expand health, psychological, educational and social services to marginalized groups as an affirmative action and develop health and psychosocial referral system. Link social assistance with children's education as a pre-condition. Increase the budget for inclusive education. Adopt a policy to integrate small size schools into larger schools where possible and secure transport to ensure people will stay on their lands. Adopt a policy to establish and maintain schools in vulnerable areas through a cross-sector strategy. Implement the anti-violence policy. 	<p>Policy Development: \$3000</p> <p>6 workshops/ \$500 each: \$3000</p> <p>Total: \$6000</p> <p>Notes: The costs for adding a new class to basic education within the EC stage are within the MOE budget (infrastructure, hiring, recurrent costs, salaries, etc)</p>
Target 2: Children deprived or at risk of being deprived from education are identified and reasons for their deprivation explored		
<p>Objective 2.1: Develop a mechanism to identify and monitor children not enrolled in education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage reporting on any child denied his/her right to education for what so ever reason. Amend the statistics law to allow reporting on any child whose right to education is violated. Develop a mechanism in cooperation with the local community (municipal and village councils), MOE, MOH, MOSA and its directorates and PCBS to identify unreported cases of children denied their right to education. Develop a national database and a case management system based on child protection networks and MOSA databases on marginalized groups (orphans, children in conflict with the law, poor children and children with disabilities receiving services). Form community-based committees (municipal and village councils, ministerial departments, parents, etc) in cooperation with the Ministry to capture the numbers in their respective areas. 	<p>Hot line or information centre: \$4000 / month (\$48000 per year)</p>

<p>Objective 2.2: Identify causes and consequences of dropout and deprivation from education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the study on dropout to determine suitable intervention mechanisms as per the reasons. • Conduct retrospective investigative study into the long-term economic, social and national consequences of non-enrolment of certain groups in education. 	<p>Analytical Review: \$3000 Study costs: \$30,000 Total: \$33,000</p>
<p>Target 3: Children are protected from the risk of deprivation from education</p>		
<p>Objective 3.1: Develop intervention mechanisms and quality services to target groups of children who are deprived or at risk of being deprived from education through:</p>		
<p><u>Sub-objective 3.1.1:</u> Developing the education, health and social infrastructure in order to create a child-friendly educational environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the construction of inclusive schools, classrooms, sanitary units, resource rooms and inclusive classes. • Establish safe passage for students on main roads with sidewalks and secure transport means. • Encourage legal donation of lands for school construction upon MOE approval, and according to its standards. • Make use of lands surrounding the school and encourage the students to use it to grow plants, especially medical herbs. • Ensure support from all partners for school construction in remote and marginalized areas with limited access to services. 	<p>During the first phase (3 years): 30 schools, \$1.5 million each: \$45 million 2000 class rooms/ \$85,000 each in the West Bank and \$75,000 in Gaza: 150-170 million \$ Approximate estimate: \$200 million</p>

<p>Sub-objective 3.1.2: Raising the competence of the educational system and quality of education⁹</p>	<p>Human resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a long-term plan for human resources and the required competencies for the coming 10 years, and develop and retain the existing human resources accordingly. Reconsider school regulations and protocols to ensure they are met in all educational institutions (public, UNRWA and private). Develop policies and instructions to ensure teachers are not transferred for at least 3 years. Make use of cluster centres adopted by MOE to develop teachers' competences and abilities in order to ensure continuous professional development. Evaluate and expand the teacher training strategy to include KGs. Train teachers on how to deal with children to realize their full potential and abilities. Develop teachers with the ability to employ the educational techniques such as libraries or library corners, labs or lab corners, games and recreational activities to ensure the teaching is linked to the national or local context. Train a number of teachers on topics related to counselling, and early detection of learning difficulties and mental disability. Appoint teachers in the supportive education program. Encourage the competent bodies to provide schools in marginalized areas with material and moral incentives. Award staff in disadvantaged and marginalized areas with a special allowance to be stipulated by the law, similar to the risk allowance (in health) and Jerusalem allowance. Encourage qualified individuals from marginalized areas to work in their communities by giving them priority in recruitment and scholarships, conditional to their return to their own communities (affirmative action). Motivate interest in vocational and technical education and encourage studies and research linking educational areas with the labour market. Develop vocational education programs according to the needs of students in marginalized areas (such as focusing on agriculture in Bedouin and herding areas and villages). Increase the number of qualified teachers with skills to work both with children in general and those with special needs (talented, marginalized children). Increase the number of counsellors and special education teachers in coordination with the local community, when necessary. Train teachers, particularly in marginalized areas, to deal with children in a flexible manner to ensure appropriate teaching/learning and to recruit and train individuals from the local population to become teachers. Train and prepare classroom or level-based teachers to provide comprehensive education for grades 1-4). <p>Curricula and teaching methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and adapt the curriculum, in a comprehensive manner, to fit with the characteristics and needs of all students, including those with different forms of disability, by developing manuals, enrichment materials and tools for the application of concepts contained in the curriculum. Create special strategies to develop teachers' skills in handling educational situations to ensure equity in the distribution of educational variables for all students. Develop concepts for educational reform according to the constructional theory. Employ technology in the teaching and learning process and develop educational kits and techniques appropriate to each developmental level. 	<p>Human Resource Development Plan: \$10,000</p> <p>Developing a format for professional development and hiring policy (taking into consideration the geographic distribution and marginalized areas as positive discrimination): \$5000 Total: \$15,000</p> <p>Training of 100 principals on raising the standards and level of the educational system and quality (4 workshops/ \$800 each): \$3200</p> <p>\$10,000 to develop a training course by the teacher development centre</p> <p>60 training workshops/ \$500 each: \$30,000 for each counselling and special education topic : \$90,000</p> <p>Total: \$100,000</p> <p>At least one specialized in each district (13 persons) 10 workshops/ \$500: \$5000</p> <p>A team to review curriculum through workshops: 100 persons/ 20 days/ \$50 a day: \$100,000</p> <p>Educational package for each stage (12)/ 1000 classes during the first 3 years/ \$400: \$4,800,000</p>
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9 It should be noted that the horizontal expansion in response to the political situation and attempt to cover as much as possible of the geographic areas could have negative repercussions on the quality of education. There is a decline in the achievement rates of male students. Therefore, it is necessary to refrain from planning based on assumptions but rather rely on studies and evidence. Efforts should seek to develop a community perception on the desired quality of students according to national standards and to redeem the status of the educational profession.

<p><u>Sub-objective 3.1.3:</u> Activating the role of counselling and special education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national strategy for counselling. • Provide counselling centres and an adequate number of school counsellors, particularly in marginalized areas. • Develop preventive and remedial programs targeting families, children and teachers. • Update counselling methods and adopt modern therapy methods such as narrative and expressive therapy. • Implement extracurricular activities and summer camps. • Activate the referral system with specialised institutions in cooperation with the relevant ministries. • Train counsellors and teachers on behavioural modification mechanisms. • Follow up with the issue of discipline and violence in view of its role in school dropout rates. • Train children on how to deal with pressures and stress around them, peer pressure, and the pressures of chronic illnesses and disability. • Increase psycho-social activities, particularly in marginalized areas and groups. • Use volunteering and community based programs to serve the marginalized areas. • Develop an educational diagnosis kit in order to detect slow learners, learning difficulties and intellectual disability at an early age, and develop a procedure and follow-up manual in cooperation with the teaching and counselling staff. • Develop programs to detect and stimulate talented students and programs • Encourage peer education and promote the spirit of volunteerism. • Provide social, cultural, sports and life skills programs in the school to help create homogeneity between the school and its environment. 	<p>\$40,000 to develop the strategy</p> <p>Design programs: \$10,000 Training: 30 workshops/ \$500 each: \$15,000</p> <p>Volunteerism program: \$1000/ 30 communities: \$30,000</p> <p>\$40,000 to develop the volunteers kit</p>
<p><u>Sub-objective 3.1.4:</u> Securing transport and protection for students and school staff</p>	<p>Protect children's safe access to school by providing international support/ solidarity groups of international volunteers, civil society institutions, and UN agencies, and by providing secure transport to these areas. Protect children and teachers from search and arrest at checkpoints in coordination with the Palestinian liaison office.</p>	<p>Total: \$135,000</p> <p>10 buses – \$1 million</p>

<p>Sub-objective 3.1.5: Developing mechanisms for education of children in conflict with the law and child detainees for their reintegration in the education system</p>	<p>Implement agreements signed with regard to the education of children in conflict with the law in coordination with MOSA, child and juvenile protection centres and the police.</p>	<p>5 teachers/ \$200 per month, for 9 months: \$9000</p>
<p>Objective 3.2: Promote decentralization</p>	<p>Give a larger role and responsibility to the local community, municipalities and directorates of education in supporting and developing education, especially in remote areas; in terms of supporting the construction of schools, classrooms and resource rooms according to MOE specifications, paying salaries or transportation costs of special education teachers, and identifying marginalized groups and appropriate interventions in the relevant areas.</p>	
<p>Objective 3.3: Develop quality alternatives to school education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of local resources, new graduates and required hours of voluntary community work. • Make use of remedial and supportive education programs to assist children lagging behind in their education or those with learning difficulties. • Review the e-learning initiative and develop support programs through specialized websites and educational channels, while ensuring their dissemination in remote areas by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the infrastructure through Ministry of Communications and Telecommunications, and the private sector. • Providing a power grid. • Make use of local institutions in teaching when necessary, and coordinate with civil society institutions through MOUs to regulate work in these areas. 	<p>Materials design: \$50,000 Infrastructure development: \$200,000 Total: \$250,000</p>

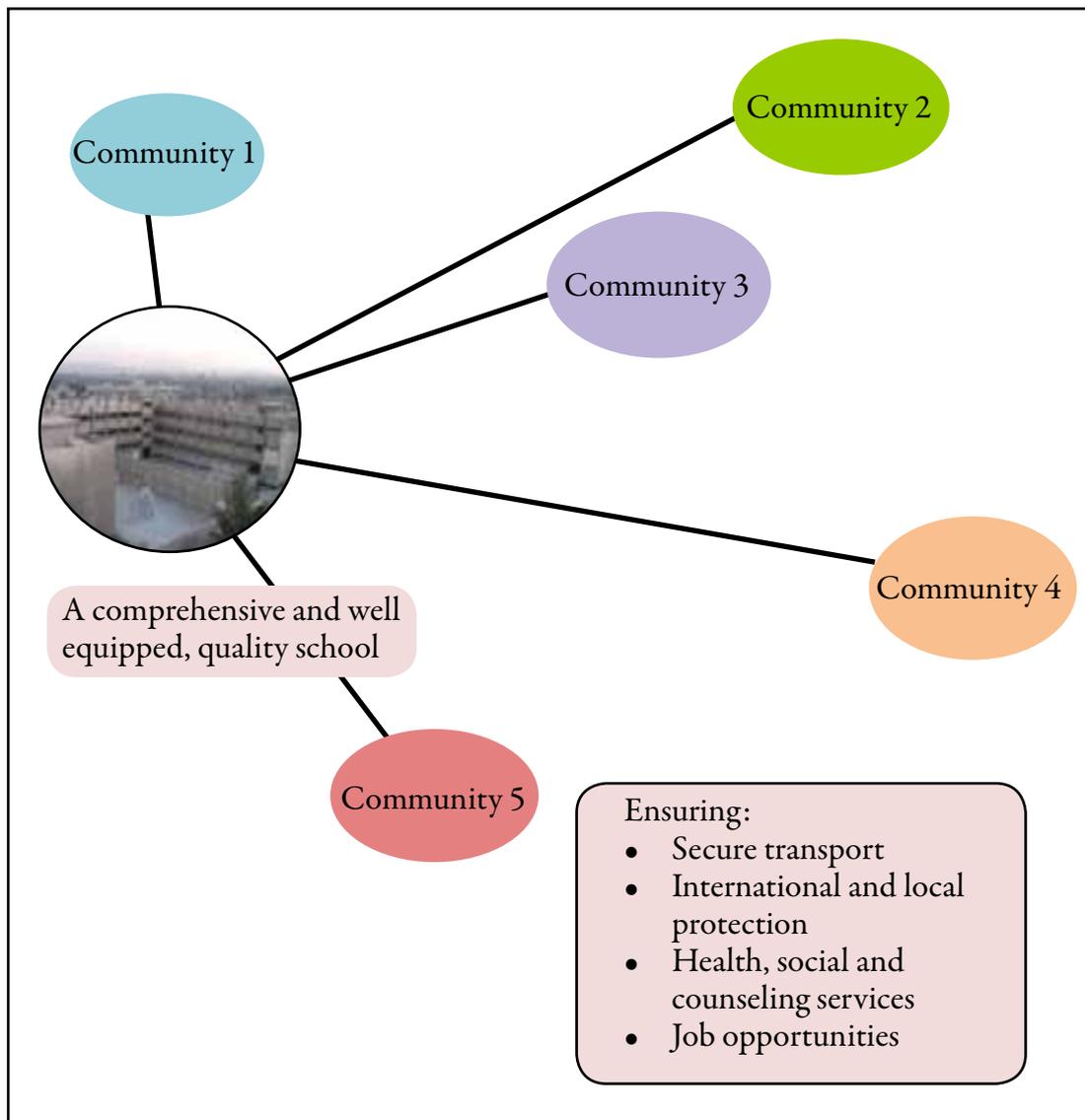
<p>Objective 3.4: Raise awareness among community members, families, children and the teaching staff on the importance of education in breaking the cycle of marginalization, the right to education, laws, places of service provision and reporting mechanisms</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue a periodic fact sheet (every 3 months) on education in marginalized areas and for marginalized groups, and expose violations against them, with focus on individual cases. Monitoring should take place in the Department of Field Follow Up, and the production of the fact sheet should be assumed by the Department of Public and International Relations. Distribution should be done through social media and students. 2. Connect schools subject to Israeli violations and violence electronically with the ministry. 3. Conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of education and early enrolment, laws and rights, targeting the marginalized groups, school principals and teachers, using public forums, mosques, churches, SMS, electricity, water and telephone bills, radio and TV aiming at raising awareness and encouraging reporting on any violation of children's rights. Socially acceptable methods should be used, such as theatre performances, drama and open days, in addition to national and international events, such as Child's Day, Disability Day, World Health Day, etc. 4. Involve and coordinate with relevant civil society institutions, such as Tamer Institute, Sharek Forum, Qattan Foundation and PYALARA, while ensuring division of roles in coordination with MOE. 5. Raise awareness on places of service provision, grievances and violations' documentation and follow up by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a list of human rights institutions, their competence and contact details. • Training school staff on documentation, providing cameras and publishing these violations on websites. • Train teachers in these areas on evacuation and first aid. 6. Develop a plan for using the school beyond school time as a community centre to host awareness raising and physical activities. This would improve children's attachment to the school, and encourage them to preserve their schools. It would also bridge the gap between school and community and between teachers and students. This should be done by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing internal instructions and policies and developing plans with the local community to implement this step gradually. • Coordinating with the municipal and local councils. • Providing a paid guard by the community or providing the school with monitoring instruments to prevent vandalism. • Raising awareness among students on preserving the school and enhancing the spirit of belonging. • Using the school on Saturdays as a short day for activities, or revisit the policy/instructions for short school days and consider extending the current school day beyond the 12:30 finish. • Activating and strengthening parent's councils and involving them in school management. • Creating mothers committees and networks to raise awareness on the rights of the child, especially children with disability. • Encouraging competition between schools and departments of education in the extracurricular use of schools. • Promoting teaching and learning as an issue of national social security. • Freeing schools from political debates, and protecting them from aggression by using neutral language in political and partisan speeches in official celebrations, and limiting them to national and educational issues. 	<p>Coordination with 1612 group</p> <p>\$500 per month/ \$6000 per year</p> <p>\$50,000</p> <p>\$30,000</p> <p>20 workshops/ \$500: \$10,000 200 cameras/ \$200: \$40,000 100 schools, 200 teachers from each school/ 8 workshops/ 25 teachers in each/ \$3000 for each workshop: \$24,000</p> <p>Develop a package of instructions and information and disseminating it: \$20,000</p> <p>Total: \$106,000</p>
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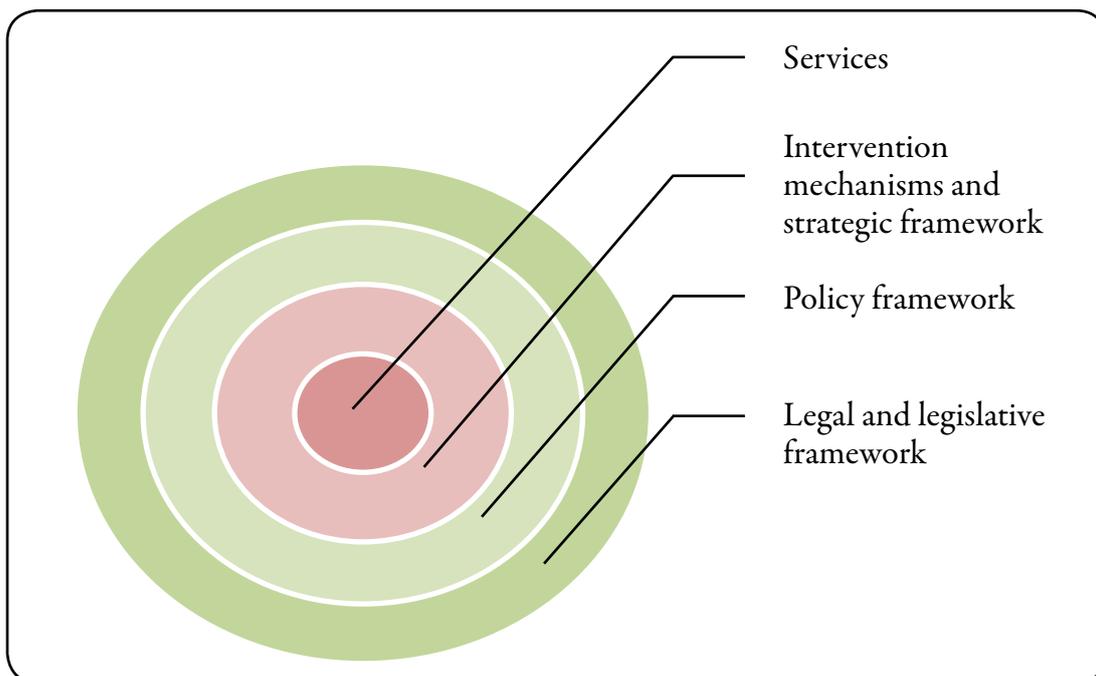
<p>Objective 3.5: Conduct international and local lobbying and advocacy to protect schools, students and school personnel from attacks by Israeli soldiers and settlers, and stop their aggressions and acts of school demolition and vandalism, and allow the construction of schools and classrooms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the Israeli violations, publish periodic reports and fact sheets and ensure media coverage. Publish reports addressing the impact of the situation on students and their performance. • Conduct periodic visits to schools in marginalized and vulnerable areas by local and international agencies. Form support groups to lobby locally and internationally for protecting children and schools. Officially, approach international bodies to protect schools, and use the clusters to raise and remedy problems in these areas. Form international protection committees and lobby for the implementation of international law (form an international legal committee). • Seek to issue a resolution by the UN and the Israeli high court to protect schools, teachers and students from Israeli attacks and settler violence, and make Israel accountable, and seek legal prosecution in such cases, while ensuring media coverage. • Resist provocations and distortion of the Palestinian curricula by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting comparative studies on the Israeli and Palestinian curricula either by local or international parties, and disseminating reports that support the Palestinian curriculum, proving it is free from incitements, while exposing the hostile image present in the Israeli curriculum, as well as the disregard of some historical events. • Lobbying and advocating on this issue by using public and international platforms and UNESCO. • Resorting to Israeli courts to cease assaults on the curriculum and attempts to change it, and to retain MOE right to print the textbooks, as well as to protect schools that refuse to collaborate with the Israeli falsifications. • Issuing a political decision and strong statement by the Prime Minister's Office and MOE on regular basis, as well as by the Office of the President and by PLO on Israeli violations. • Mobilizing Jerusalem affairs units within ministries. • Form committees consisting of the police, local community and municipal councils to protect schools. • Mobilize the private sector to support the development of marginalized areas as a national issue and social security measure. 	<p>Coordination with 1612 group and institutionalize the information</p> <p>6 training workshops for principals in area C on reporting of violations (189 ones)/ \$800for each workshop: \$4800</p> <p>Legal institutions to issue cases and take legal actions: 50,000\$</p> <p>\$6000</p> <p>Total: \$56,000</p>
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<p>Objective 3.6: Build partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and strengthen the understanding of national culture and respect of others' opinions and differences on principal basis. • Build an on-line network to identify supporting institutions and quality of service provision (national databases available at the Ministry of Planning and MOE could be used). • Involve all segments of the local community in building a common educational vision by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activating community and professional education councils. • Activating the concepts of transformational leadership. • Developing a culture of interpersonal communication and rejection of violence. • Enhancing the role of students in the school on the basis of participation, responsibility and authority. • Bridging the gap between the school with all its components (including students and teachers) and the local community. • Enhance relations with civil society institutions on the basis of shared and integrated responsibility. • Activate relations and partnerships with institutions working in the OPT. • Enhance partnership between MOE and universities in identifying fields of speciality according to needs, and to make it easier and less conditional for students from these areas. • Partner with MOLG, Ministry of Transport, local community and the private sector to provide transport means in order to help people's resilience and determination to stay on their land as a national issue. • Conduct internal and external twinning programs for schools in marginalized areas. • Coordinate with donors, international agencies, civil society institutions and community-based organizations to help the SP in reaching and covering areas where it lacks effective control. 	<p>Use AIDA forum: \$3000</p>
<p>Objective 3.7: Protect children from the adverse effects of poverty and its role in depriving them of education</p>	<p>Provide special funds to support marginalized children, especially in poor and vulnerable areas, with local and international support, and provide programs to support nutrition, school uniforms, stationery, underwear and other items targeting poor and neglected children, and schools in poor neighbourhoods, while ensuring the most needy children are included even if their number is small.</p>	<p>\$50,000 preparatory costs</p>

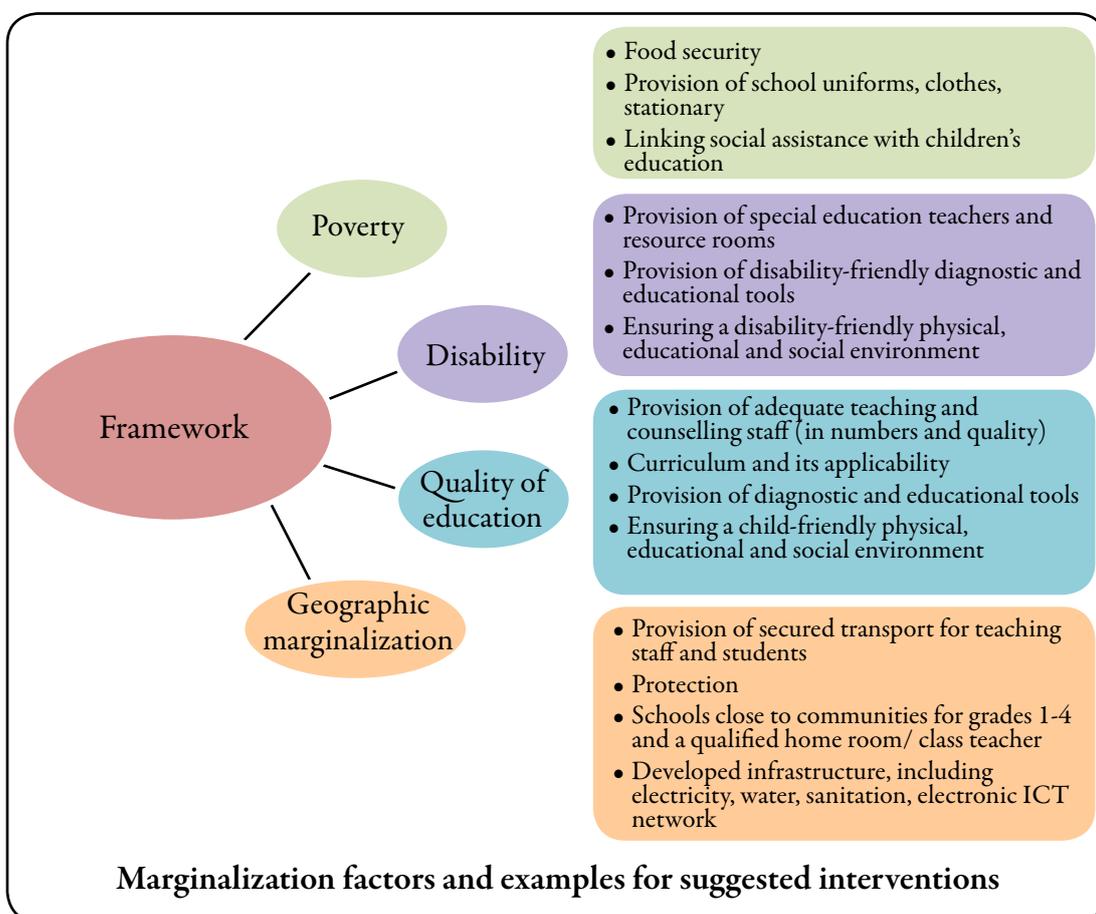
* Note: Please review the priorities of the MoE in the Public Health Policy for Palestinian Children- Palestinian child health priorities based on the child rights to health.

It is possible to make use of cluster centres to ensure people in these areas are staying on their land, while also providing safe transport for students in these communities, building a comprehensive and integrated schooling system that offers quality education, or includes a number of small schools. Providing health, social and economic services will also enhance resilience. This may lead to repopulating the areas that have been abandoned by their residents because of lack of access to services. When selecting the sites, consideration should be given to protecting Palestinian lands from confiscation.





Within each framework and at all levels, efforts should address factors that threaten to deprive children from education, such as poverty, disability, geographic marginalization and quality of education.



Indicators:

Right to Education (articles 28 and 29)

Quantitative indicators

	Source	Frequency	Details
• Net and gross enrolment rates by level, gender, region (West Bank and Gaza)	• MOE • PCBS	• Annual	• Differ by time of measurement
• % of poor children out of total students, % of children with disability by type of disability, gender, age and geographic distribution	• MOE • UNRWA, private schools • MOSA • Private centres	• Annual	
• Dropout rate disaggregated by reasons; age, gender, region, level and socio-economic status	• MOE and UNRWA	• Annual	
• Enrolment rate in KGs by region, gender and socio-economic status	• MOE and UNRWA	• Annual	
• Classroom crowdedness rate (density) or students/classroom by region and level	• MOE and UNRWA	• Annual	
• % of schools with infrastructure accessible for students with special needs, % of schools with resource rooms	• MOE and UNRWA	• Annual	
• Students/sanitary unit (toilet) ratio by region, type of school and level	• MOE • MOH	• 3 years	
• Number of schools connected to official sanitation networks and availability of public water networks	• MOE • MOH • Water Authority • UNRWA	• 3 years	
• Number of children denied access to electricity because of Israeli measures, by region	• UN agencies, international organizations • UNRWA	• Annual	
• % of teachers qualified to teach children's rights			
• % of students receiving fortified meals in schools, number of health and counselling programs in schools			
• Number of qualified staff members in the inclusive education and their distribution by specialty and region	• MOE • UNRWA	• 3 years	
• Students/school counsellor ratio by region, type of school and level	• MOE • UNRWA	• 3 years	
• % of schools with canteens by directorate and region	• MOE • UNRWA	• Annual	
• Number of qualified teachers and their distribution by level, gender and region according to teacher training strategy	• MOE • UNRWA	• 3 years	
• Students/teacher ratio by region	• MOE • UNRWA	• Annual	
• Literacy rate by level	• MOE • PCBS • UNRWA	• Annual – 3 years	
• Number of studies monitoring poor academic level and its causes	• MOE • UNRWA	• 2-4 years	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of students per computer lab/science lab/library by type of school, region and gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE UNRWA Private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 years 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance by curriculum contents and approaches to the educational needs of the Palestinian society and children's rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active involvement of learners in the teaching and learning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' achievements in national standard exams in Arabic and Math for grades 4 and 10 and international tests (TIMSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of schools achieving criteria for child-friendly school by region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of children with learning difficulties, % of children with non-communicable diseases enrolled in education by gender, age and distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE UNRWA, private schools MOSA MOH Private centres National Centre for Non-Communicable Diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 years Not available 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools subjected to attacks at their infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students subjected to physical violations by the army or settlers (car accidents, arrest, shooting, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of school delay hours (wastage of educational time) for students and teachers as a result of violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevalence of psychological and behavioural problems in students in marginalized areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual 	
Qualitative indicators			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of policies, legislations and laws to promote a safe and violence-free environment for education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE UNRWA Private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency Available / not available Implementation level Implementation effectiveness and quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of plans and programs to improve the quality of education, especially in remote, poor and marginalized areas Provision of programs targeting talented children 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of expenditure on the education sector from the general budget, and % of expenditure on marginalized children and groups and inclusive education per year Provision of national rights-based policies and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE MOF MOE UNRWA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures taken to encourage regular attendance, prevent dropout and ensure free and compulsory education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE UNRWA 		

Annex 1¹⁰: Strategies to Ensure Safe and Equitable Access to Quality Education and to Prevent Dropout and Deprivation from Education

The attached activities/strategies are some ideas for ensuring universal realization of children's right to education, and helping them reach their full potential on the basis of compulsory education and non-discrimination, as well as to support measures to reduce dropout and encourage regular school attendance according to the CRC, the PCL, MDGs, and Dakar Conference principles for EFA adopted by MoE. Nevertheless, there are some general strategies that need to be comprehensively addressed at a national level in order to ensure the optimal implementation of the attached activities and obtain the best possible results.

General national strategies to be addressed in parallel:

- Poverty reduction.
- Development of a database, detailed and comprehensive national indicators, and a monitoring system for the marginalized groups of children in order to ensure their cases are followed up by all relevant sectors.
- Comprehensive national planning.
- Economic development, especially in marginalized areas.

General indicators:

- Political, economic and social situation.
- Movement and access restrictions (particularly due to individual, geographic, economic or social characteristics).
- Family income.

Partners:

- UNRWA, UNESCO.
- Civil society organizations, (Tamer, Qattan).
- Ministries (of Health, Labour, Finance, Social Affairs, Communications, Transport, etc).
- The private sector.

¹⁰ This paper was discussed before the separation of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) into the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE)

- Save the Children and UNICEF.
- MOE directorates and departments (school health, counselling, inclusive education, planning, finance, projects, field follow up, etc).

Marginalized groups/children: Children distanced from service centres, such as poor children, children with disability, orphans, children in conflict with the law (juveniles), children in marginalized areas such as East Jerusalem and its suburbs, Bedouin areas, areas close to the Wall, Seam Zone, the Old City of Hebron, South Hebron and others.

Priority: To develop mechanisms, protocols and systems to address the factors that prevent children from enrolment in school, such as poverty, early marriage, child labour, disability and learning difficulties, conflict with the law, orphaned children and access (areas close to the Wall, Jordan Valley, East Jerusalem and suburbs, South Hebron, the Old City of Hebron, Bedouin areas and others).¹¹

¹¹ Marginalized groups and areas.

Strategy 1: Identify children at risk of or vulnerable to dropout and protect them from the effects of poverty and poor economic, social and political conditions.

Rationale: - So far there is no comprehensive national system or database on marginalized groups.

- Poverty is a cause of school dropout, child labour, early marriage, malnutrition and low academic achievement.
- Unstable political situation leads to deterioration in the economic and social conditions in general, and the marginalization of certain groups which affects their ability to access essential services.

How to intervene?	Target groups (where?)	Roles and responsibilities (who?)	Budget	Situation
1.1 Develop a mechanism to monitor with school age children who are not enrolled in education		MoE Ministry of Interior		
1.2 Conduct studies: Study on how to reach children outside the education system and reintegrate them Study on long-term economic consequences of non-enrolment of certain groups in education				
1.3 Establish a national database and case management system for at-risk children, whether because of their geographic area, economic situation or individual factors (identify cases at risk of dropout and address the reasons)	Area C, areas close to the Wall, East Jerusalem, Bedouin areas, the Old City of Hebron, etc. Poor children, orphans, children in conflict with the law	MOEHE in cooperation with MOSA, PCBS and civil society institutions		MOSA has a list of registered marginalized individuals (poverty, disability, orphans, juveniles)

<p>1.4 Develop a package of comprehensive and integrated educational services for marginalized areas and groups</p>					
<p>1.5 Enhance the basic infrastructure: School buildings Classrooms Water and sewage networks Clean drinking water Fences Healthy canteens Sanitary units, with specific units allocated for persons with a disability Corridors, ramps Resource rooms</p>	<p>In Area C in particular Set the number, areas and budget Train school principals on needs assessment in their schools according to specific criteria Providesupportforimplementation in cooperation with civil society institutions. international agencies, UN agencies and donors Offer a larger role and responsibility to local councils</p>				<p>A paper on Area C needs, in terms of infrastructure development, school buildings, classrooms and equipment is available</p>
<p>1.6 Protect children in marginalized areas through: Lobbying and advocacy to end attacks by settlers and the army against schools, students and teachers, stop vandalism and demolitions and lobby for granting building permits and facilitating passage for students and teachers. Local and international media coverage of violations</p>	<p>A UN resolution and a ruling by the Israeli high court to protect children in schools, hold Israel accountable for any attacks and prosecute perpetrators Issue and disseminate daily fact sheets including work plans Create lobbying groups from international NGOs and donors Use the cluster groups as a means to apply practical pressures Organize field visits by international NGOs and donors</p>		<p>MOE, UN, local and international NGOs, donors</p>		
<p>1.7 Protect children from the adverse effects of poverty and marginalization by:</p>					

<p>1.8 Abolishing school fees, especially in marginalized areas (specify number)</p> <p>Raising awareness of the public and decision-makers on the importance of education in breaking the poverty cycle and improving the socio-economic status</p> <p>Supporting the provision of transport, breakfast and school uniform for poor children in marginalized areas (specify number)</p>	<p>Coordinate with municipalities so that they assume their roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Coordinate with ministries of transport and local government and the private sector in securing safe transport for students in these areas</p> <p>Please, see the item on “awareness raising” (Please see strategy 4).</p> <p>MOU with the private sector and MOF (specify number, areas and budget)</p>	<p>MOE</p> <p>MOF</p> <p>Municipalities</p> <p>Coordination with Directorates of Education and Social Affairs in each district</p> <p>The private sector and civil society</p>	
<p>1.9 Provide special funds to support marginalized students, particularly in Area C, and children not meeting eligibility criteria to be enrolled in MOSA lists</p>	<p>Transform temporary humanitarian assistance to developmental assistance to ensure sustainability</p>		
<p>1.10 Develop alternatives to school education in marginalized areas and use technology to compensate for interruptions</p>	<p>Review, upgrade and scale up the e-learning initiative</p>	<p>MOE</p> <p>Ministry of Communications</p> <p>The private sector and civil society</p> <p>MOE</p>	
<p>1.11 Activate the role of school counselling and develop an appropriate strategy to this effect</p>	<p>Managing peer pressure</p> <p>Managing the political, economic and social conditions</p> <p>Domestic violence and the Israeli occupation’s violence</p> <p>Disability and chronic diseases</p> <p>Hotline</p> <p>Community awareness</p>		
<p>1.12 Develop mechanisms to report on children deprived of educational services</p>			

Strategy 2: Protect children's right to education by developing a legal (approve the education law, develop executive bylaws, specific roles and monitor implementation), institutional and service frameworks.

Rationale: Without having a proper legal framework in place, it will be difficult to focus on the rights of marginalized groups, specify roles and hold the responsible parties accountable.

2.1 Amend the education law with partners, divide roles and review relevant laws to avoid conflicting provisions			MOE, PLC, academics, educators, civil society		
2.2 Expand social services offered to students from marginalized groups in a sustainable manner through cooperation with the private sector			MOE, MOSA		
2.3 Make social service provision conditional to children's education and offer grants to excellent students			MOE, MOSA		
2.4 Increase budget allocation to inclusive education			MOE, MOF		
2.5 Adopt a policy to merge small schools into the closest larger school and secure transport, if needed, in order to reduce cost and ensure protection, particularly in Area C					
2.6 Establish the National Council for Early Childhood and develop a strategy to expand programs and services			MOE and partners		
2.7 Monitor schooling of children in juvenile centres, rehabilitate and reintegrate them in the education system	Develop a work plan		MOE, MOSA		
2.8 Develop a mechanism to regularly evaluate education in marginalized areas and for marginalized groups, specify responsibilities and ensure accountability for inadequate performance					

Strategy 3: Improve the quality of education and access to information to help children reach their full potential and acquire skills for development and practical application.

Rationale: Low quality of education is a reason for dropout and low academic achievement.

<p>3.1 Develop a long-term plan for the required human resources for the coming 10 years and specify competencies according to modern educational methodologies</p>	<p>Specify numbers, competencies and areas Conduct workshops with the different stakeholders</p>	<p>MOE, UNRWA, the private sector, universities</p>		
<p>3.2 Provide schools, particularly in marginalized areas, with: Libraries and library corners (for persons with visual disabilities as well) Science and computer labs / talking computer Printers, photocopiers, monitors Resource rooms</p>		<p>Tamer institute, Birzeit University (Continuing Education and Media Centre)</p>		
<p>3.3 Review the school curriculum to make it more aligned with logical analysis, research and activities, rights-based and inclusive of health and counselling aspects</p>	<p>Periodic review, every 3 years for example</p>	<p>MOE, MOH, academics</p>		
<p>3.4 Develop a strategy for holding extracurricular activities, especially after school (up to 3:00-3:30 PM)</p>				
<p>3.5 Provide the required educational tools, child- and disability-friendly facilities and locally made learning materials</p>	<p>Develop interactive websites Develop educational and applied CDs</p>	<p>MOE, academics, educators, MOH, private sector, civil society</p>		
<p>3.6 Provide diagnostic tools for early detection and management of learning difficulties</p>		<p>MOE, specialists, donors</p>		

3.7 Evaluate the teacher training strategy, identify gaps and expand the strategy to include pre-school	Train teachers on diverse methods to help the students reach their full potential, consider individual differences, stimulate and encourage their potential	MOE		
3.8 Train teachers on how to deal with children, especially from marginalized groups and those with special needs to stimulate their potential and detect any problem at an early stage	During job interview of teachers, focus on psychological and personal aspects, in addition to the academic ones			
3.9 Enhance vocational education to suit the needs in the market and raise awareness on its importance	Develop a work plan	MOE, private sector, MOL		
3.10 Develop programs to stimulate talented students and encourage student's participation in voluntary work	Develop a policy and work plan for early detection of talents, develop criteria and methods to ensure care and development (labs, equipment, libraries, clubs, classrooms, etc)	MOE, private sector, Nayzak, Young Scientists Forum, UCMAS		
3.11 Develop libraries and programs to encourage research and reading at home		MOE, public libraries and the private sector		
3.12 Develop and activate peer support programs (excelling students assisting weaker peers)	Develop the idea of educational centres inside the school			
3.13 Create a safe national website to allow students access to information and facilitate interaction among students		MOE Ministry of Communications The private sector UNRWA		

<p>3.14 Develop an educational diagnostic toolkit (academic, cognitive, tests) to detect slow learning, learning difficulties, mild intellectual disability at an early stage and draft a procedures manual for developing individual follow up plan in cooperation with school teachers, particularly arts and physical education teachers</p>	<p>Adapt international, Arab and local models to suit the Palestinian context</p> <p>Provide and train the required personnel</p> <p>Specify the required competencies for the upcoming 3-5 years and coordinate with Palestinian and Arab universities</p>				
<p>Strategy 4: Protect the right of the child to education, especially among marginalized groups, through awareness raising.</p> <p>Rationale: Providing children, families, and the local and international community with the required knowledge to make sound decisions regarding education.</p>					
<p>4.1 Issue a periodic fact sheet on education in marginalized areas and for marginalized groups, in order to mobilize local and national support and advocate improving the quality of their education and exposing violations against them</p>	<p>See Strategy 5</p>		<p>MOE, local and international NGOs, UNRWA</p>		
<p>4.2 Awareness raising campaigns in marginalized areas on the importance of education and children's right to education, especially for children with disabilities, girls, etc, using mosques, churches, media, etc</p>			<p>MOE Media</p>		

4.3 Raise community awareness to report any violations of children's rights to education	Awareness campaigns, use of SMS, telephone, electricity and water bills Use of mosques, churches, media, social forums Complaints box Hotline				
4.4 Develop a plan to use school premises for extracurricular activities in after school hours and use school buildings as community institutions for awareness raising and discussion sessions					
Strategy 5: Protect the rights of the child to education through lobbying, advocacy and partnership Rationale: To confront the Israeli policies of marginalizing and fragmenting the areas and to ensure access to quality services for all areas and social groups.					
5.1 Sign MOUs with various partners to divide roles and ensure students' safe access to schools, especially in marginalized areas	Municipalities in particular, the private sector, MOLG, Ministry of Transport, local and international NGOs				
5.2 Protect the Palestinian curriculum from Israeli attacks and incitement	Mobilize support to the Palestinian curriculum and expose the aims of the Israeli occupation in incitement				
5.3 Activate partnership with the private sector in the e-learning initiative and evaluate it	Role of the private sector				
5.4 Provide secure and paid transport in marginalized areas and ensure that transport is accessible for persons with disabilities	Role of the private sector, MOLG, Ministry of Transport, local and international NGOs			Partnership with the private sector and local and international NGOs	
5.5 Develop twinning programs between schools in marginalized areas and schools in other countries					

5.6 Encourage the local community to donate land to be used for schools in marginalized areas			Village councils, municipalities		
5.7 Build partnership with local community in educational programs, such as reclaiming lands in or around the school, planting organic crops and medical herbs, recycling, environmental health, lobbying groups					
5.8 Campaigns to free the education sector from political debates, protect schools from vandalism and violence and protect the Palestinian curriculum and history	Form local and international committees				
Strategy 6: Decentralization					
Rationale: To confront the Israeli policies of fragmentation and give directorates the freedom to respond appropriately to the specific situation at the local level.					
6.1 Provide district-level directorates with powers and tools to support education in their respective areas within a comprehensive framework defined by the Ministry	Develop a strategy for decentralized planning and financing Give a larger role to municipal and local councils in identifying marginalized groups in need of assistance and follow up				
6.2 Give a larger role to municipal and local councils in the education process, development of school infrastructure and identification and protection of marginalized groups in their areas	Please, see 5.1				

Annex 2: Best Practices

At the level of laws and legislations

- MOE and stakeholders, including PLC education committee, should review the Draft Palestinian Education Law and develop bylaws, regulations and policies to execute the law, to be ready for endorsement as soon as the PLC is back in session. Particular attention should be given to MOE in enforcing and monitoring school attendance, supervisory and regulatory responsibilities for all schools in Palestine, clear prohibition on the use of corporal punishment and MOE role in teacher training.
- MOE should play a strategic role in reviewing and recommending amendments to existing laws that require harmonization and/or incorporation of articles to support children's access to quality education. This includes the PCL, disability law, social protection system and proposed law, children in conflict with the law and public health law.
- Focus on equality, values, morals, the importance of supportive services (such as counselling and school health), the importance of early childhood, monitoring and evaluation, monitoring and documentation of violence and child abuse and taking strict actions.
- The need to specify clear mechanisms and responsibilities according to the law in monitoring school age children who are not enrolled in the educational system, reducing dropout and encouraging regular attendance.
- Approving a special allowance for teachers working in marginalized and dangerous areas.

At the level of planning, policy, services, prioritization, and creation of an enabling school environment

- MOE should continue to involve other stakeholders in the planning, monitoring and evaluation process by incorporating students, parents and local community in a strategic, formal and institutionalized partnership. Parents, students, the local community and UNRWA should be included in the planning process and in providing more effective support to certain activities.
- MOE should establish the National Council for Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED), and prepare a national ECED strategy and policy paper that works towards expanding programs and services for parents and young children to enhance their development, education, and reaching their potential during the early years, as a means of enhancing development in later years. This requires greater allocation of resources to this sector.

- MOE should ensure an adequate number of qualified counsellors (one counsellor/school at minimum) and that the counsellors are afforded the necessary training, tools and authority to implement a preventative based counselling program that is fully integrated into the national social protection system. This also includes expanding career counselling programs and initiatives, implementing an awareness raising program for students on selected social and psychological issues that can enhance their academic performance, mental health and wellbeing.
- MOE should conduct an analysis of all school aged children with disabilities (in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and MOSA), and develop a comprehensive plan that would support the gradual integration of these students into the education system and prevention of dropout and/or seek alternative forms of education that could be provided by the family and/or community. A 5% increase in number of children with disability enrolled in schools should be achieved over the next five years. Detection of students with learning difficulties should be enhanced through the development and use of diagnostic tools in order to intervene at an early age.
- MOE and its different partners should work together to ensure that more extracurricular activities are offered to children to enrich their cultural experiences, develop their art, music and physical development and appreciation, and help them achieve their full potential.
- The local community should assume responsibility in identifying marginalized children or those not enrolled in the educational system for whatsoever reason and help them reintegrate, as well as support the relevant infrastructure. The private sector should also support MOE in school health, provision of school uniforms and textbooks, supporting transport, IT and infrastructure, establishing a hotline or a free line and SMS system to report any group with no access to educational services, especially in marginalized and/or remote areas.
- Giving priority to constructing public schools in remote and unsafe areas as long as there is no political cost attached to this, or alternatively, providing secure transport to the nearest school or combining a number of close schools with limited numbers of students in one safe and healthy school, equipped with the required educational tools (in coordination with and involvement of local and international NGOs in the provision of funding and ensuring safe access to these areas).
- MOE should seek (along with relevant stakeholders) a solution for schools that do not meet the required safety and security specifications to protect children from environmental and traffic hazards. In addition, a stimulating learning environment should be ensured by providing heating and cooling, as well as a comprehensive schooling environment, including a computer lab equipped with adequate

computers and internet connection, science lab and a library with technical resources, while ensuring optimal use of these assets in practical applications.

- Using school buildings in extracurricular activities, counselling and community awareness, in after school hours and school holidays with the participation of interested teachers, which would enhance respect and appreciation of teachers. In remote areas, focus should be made on programs implemented by the local community and include other means of education, such as mobile schools¹², distance learning, and active use of modern ICT, especially in remote and marginalized areas.
- Assess the cost-effectiveness of horizontal expansion in school construction in order to overcome the closures and limited access in some areas at the expense of investing these resources in improving quality, as well as assess the effectiveness and impact of current programs.
- Focus on the education of children in conflict with the law within institutions, and on rehabilitating and reintegrating them in schools.
- Continue to expand the teacher training program and upgrade and accredit the teaching profession through the teacher training strategy. The program should include training and accreditation of pre-school teachers.
- All teachers should hold a belief in the ability of all children to learn and improve their performances, so that they are helped in readying for their future life. There should be an enlightened approach regarding the development of skills, knowledge, stimulation and career development. Children's rights should be incorporated into teacher training and the school curriculum.
- Successful students can be supported to help their peers and guide younger children. The importance of education should be promoted among these students.
- Develop local, low cost and child-friendly educational materials and upgrade vocational education as a means to improve achievement and reduce dropout.
- Continue efforts to adapt vocational education to market needs and to persons with disabilities.
- Focus on talented and excelling children and use methods to enhance children's abilities.
- Raise awareness among Palestinian students of their importance in national development and their role as citizens and in international forums.

¹² This idea of mobile schools is totally refused by the MOE

- Balance the length of the curriculum between theory and practical application. Develop programs encouraging children to read at school and home and to use libraries.
- Focus on research and inquiry-based learning as opposed to rote learning. Allocate adequate time in the curriculum for scientific and applied experiments and research, and the use of computer and science labs and libraries.
- Ensure equity for marginalized groups/ individuals according to criteria in admission to universities and scholarships.
- Support and encourage exchange visits and interactive meetings of students in marginalized areas with peers in other areas and encourage twinning with other schools.
- Support the implementation of programs involving the local community on one hand, and assisting in the learning process on the other, such as reclaiming lands in or around the school, planting organic crops, recycling, environmental health, etc.
- Make use of the existing buildings in the area in the provision of education.
- Develop a standard database owned by MOE on Area C schools to be used by all stakeholders, and ensure education is adapted and harmonized with the rights-based approach, and free of the effects of the political context.
- Increase focus and support to marginalized areas and raise the level of services from the SP and partners in the education sector, in terms of infrastructure, teaching, health, psychosocial health of children, training and equipment needed for working in these areas.
- Increase support to Area C and access to the widest possible segment of children nationwide to protect them from the effects of the Israeli occupation.

Financing and budgeting

- MOE should investigate with MOF the possibility of applying the same procedures in primary and secondary education (grades 1-12), or offering free secondary education according to resources available, and as part of the amendments to the PCL. The Ministry should continue with its policy of guaranteeing all children the right to education and supporting those facing financial difficulties.
- MOE should review all conditions that impede students from enrolling, cause dropout or prevent them from continuing their education, and develop an assistance and awareness program to support marginalized students in continuing their education. This is particularly relevant for students living in deep poverty, in Area C, along the Wall, in East Jerusalem, near settlements, and in the Gaza buffer zone who may face additional costs and impediments in accessing education due to territorial fragmentation and occupation. A review of working children, child

trafficking, children in conflict with the law, children detained in Israeli prisons and other marginalized or at risk groups should be undertaken in order to take action to facilitate their enrolment and integration into the school environment.

- Expand the coverage of existing services to help needy students (in cooperation with MOSA) and to provide support devices and food items to school children, especially in marginalized and remote areas, in a sustainable manner (in cooperation with MOH and MOSA). It is important to strengthen partnership with the local community, the private sector and municipalities in this regard.
- Offer cash assistance to poor and marginalized families, conditional to keeping their children in education, and offer scholarships to excelling children.
- Offer in-kind or cash assistance to cover the cost of transport, stationery and school uniforms for needy families until they are made free, especially in secondary education.
- Increase budget allocation to the inclusive education program.
- Allocate part of the budget to supporting education in marginalized areas, in coordination with international and local stakeholders, in order to implement developmental programs in these areas according to MOE recommendations under MOE supervision.
- There is a need to invest more resources in expanding technical, vocational education and training (TVET) programs by increasing fields of study and training programs for males and females, increasing their affordability for a larger number of students, improving quality and continuing to expand internship programs in institutions.

Monitoring and documentation

- Establish a national documentation centre for cases of violence against children in schools, home and society in partnership between MOE, MOSA and Ministry of Interior in particular, and apply a written policy to prevent violence in school and at home, and a clear strategy for counselling, school health, road safety, inclusive education and prevention of dropout.
- Confidentiality should be maintained in complaints and reporting mechanisms.
- Establish a monitoring mechanism to monitor the right to education, and indicators for children's rights in education development strategies, non-violence in schools, level of school dropout and penalties imposed on violators.
- MOE should continue with its non-violence policy and ensure that violations are immediately addressed, and remove any form of impunity for violators. The policy should be made in writing and should be integrated into a national policy to end school, family, and community based violence against children and address cultural practices that may increase violence against children.

- Focus on areas with unique problems such as East Jerusalem, areas along the Wall, South Hebron, Jordan Valley, and Bedouin areas, and bridge the gaps and discrepancy in service provision in these areas compared to other areas, in cooperation with the private sector, UNRWA, other UN agencies, and local and international NGOs, within a well-defined plan with clear roles and responsibilities.

Advocacy and awareness raising

- The Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) adopted by the Ministry has proved to be a success providing an effective, direct and successful method in saving resources. More donors should be encouraged to join SWAP and ensure that sector goals are addressed, the aid process is unified and resources are targeted to support national educational goals and priorities in a strategic manner.
- The education sector should stay away from politicization. The SP should lobby and come to a written agreement with Israel and the international community to keep the education sector and schools out of the circle of politics. Schools should be protected from Israeli violence and internal political conflicts. This includes preventing any attacks, vandalism or invasions on schools, ending the attacks against the Palestinian curriculum and ensuring that sufficient budgetary support is sustained to cover teacher salaries and overhead costs.
- Legal action should be initiated by the government and the international community to address all actions by Israeli soldiers and settlers which seek to deny children their right to education. This includes ensuring children's safety and protection while going to and coming back from school, and while they are in school, especially in East Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza, and areas close to the Wall. This also includes ensuring the right of MOE and UNRWA to build sufficient numbers of schools, classrooms and supportive infrastructure, especially in remote areas, and where students are forced to learn in overcrowded conditions and in caravans. Efforts at a national level should seek to develop intervention mechanisms and support to end these violations.
- Support IT and its use in education and development of innovative approaches in literacy programs, especially in remote, marginalized and poor areas with support from, and coordination with the private sector.
- Integrate the principles of children's rights, human rights, respect of parents, culture and heritage, respect of others, religions, differences, non-violence, nonviolent conflict resolution, and communication skills in the school curriculum.
- Distribute roles among the different stakeholders and support them to ensure universal coverage.

Annex 3: The Current Situation of Palestinian Education

1. Legal Framework¹³

The Education Law no. 16 of 1964, which is in force in the West Bank along with the draft Palestinian Education Law and the Basic Law provide for compulsory and free primary education. The British Mandate Education Law of 1933, which is in force in Gaza, is silent on the issue of compulsory education. Passing a unified and comprehensive public education law is important in order to harmonize laws across stakeholders and providers. The Palestinian Child Law (PCL) provides a strong legal framework protecting children's right to education. Under this law, articles 37, 38, 39 and 41 require the state to provide free, compulsory basic education for all children, to undertake actions to prevent children dropping out of school, eliminate discrimination, promote student participation in decision-making, protect students' dignity, prohibit the use of violence in schools and ensure that children with disabilities have access to education. The draft Education Law is in its third reading in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and awaiting ratification. The draft law is explicit in terms of providing MOE with the right to enforce school enrolment and to take legal action against parents/guardians who fail to keep their children in school. Until this law is passed, the West Bank and Gaza will keep implementing separate and disparate laws.

Other relevant laws include the Higher Education Law no. 11 of 1998, article 2, which specified the right to higher education for each citizen. The Disability Law no. 4 of 1999 in articles 6 and 10 specifies the right of persons with a disability to equal opportunities in terms of access to education according to their needs, and tax exemption on the educational, medical and transportation facilities for authorized disability institutions.

The Palestinian Reform and Rehabilitation Centres Law no. 6 of 1998 (articles 30-36) specifies the responsibility of rehabilitation centres in terms of coordination with the concerned parties to guarantee the right of their residents to continue their education: study, read, receive incentives for getting a degree, establishing a library and receiving educational and counselling sessions.

Gaps in the legal framework

Enforcement of education laws is insufficient. MOE ensures a "seat at school" for every child, but does not have the means and legal authority to ensure that marginalized and vulnerable children remain within school. This includes the inability of MOE to return school dropouts to school. There is no mechanism to enforce students' attendance or

¹³ PNA Report on the Implementation of the CRC in the OPT, 2011. Unless indicated otherwise, the named report is the reference for the section on the situation of education in Palestine.

prevent early dropout from schools. There are no Palestinian laws to hold parents or children's guardians accountable for ensuring their children's school attendance.¹⁴ Noted gaps in the legal framework include a lack of consistency, harmonization and compliance with local laws and standards, (e.g. Health, age of marriage, criminal responsibility and labour laws¹⁵), the dependency of the development budget on external funding, burden of indirect costs like transportation and uniforms which are usually covered by parents, the high university fees, the lack of penalties in cases of violations, and the insufficiency of resources, equipment and infrastructure that is friendly for children with disabilities.

2. Cooperation with UNRWA

MOE and UNRWA are working to improve coordination between them. The MOE Five Year Education Development Strategic Plan involved more coordination with UNRWA's education department; however, more efforts are needed to improve coordination strategies and objectives. This plan has detailed information for MOE, but does not represent UNRWA programs or a long term strategy for elaborating a comprehensive and harmonized educational system.¹⁶ Improving joint planning, monitoring, and synchronization of programs (school health, school counselling, inclusive education and teacher training strategy in particular) will reduce costs and ensure equitable availability of quality education for all children.¹⁷

3. Affordability, Availability and Access to Basic and Secondary Education

The Ministry sets increased access to education as one of the four main goals of its five-year educational plan, which was developed by MOE in cooperation and coordination with private sector institutions and UNRWA, in harmony with the government's sector plan. Activities supporting this include creating new educational institutions; increasing the intake and retention capacity of existing institutions; including students with special needs; creating special TVET institutions for females, reviewing laws, regulations and mechanisms; introducing career guidance services; and strengthening the private sector role.¹⁸

MOE and UNRWA have been able to ensure that most students have access to schools. MOE construction policy has been biased towards ensuring easy student

14 "The Status of Palestinian Citizens' Rights during 2006." Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights." 2006.

15 The mentioned laws all have ages that are younger than the age for compulsory education. Hence, girls can actually marry at an age where they have yet to complete their basic education in some cases.

16 "Education Development Strategic Plan 2008-2012; Towards Quality Education for Development." Ministry of Education and Higher Education Palestine; July 2008.

17 Palestinian National Authority Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. PCBS, 2010.

18 "Education Development Strategic Plan 2008-2012; Towards Quality Education for Development." Ministry of Education and Higher Education Palestine; July 2008.

access at the expense of implementing more long term cost efficient mechanisms that would reduce construction costs and increase school size. This may require supporting transportation costs for students, however, the savings accrued could be used to support improved teacher training and increasing the availability of school counselling, remedial education, non-formal education, more inclusive education and diverse learning approaches within the educational system. Although MOE is adopting a policy of optimal use of buildings, it still faces challenges in implementing this policy due to the geographic distribution of communities, population size and school levels. The political situation imposed by the Israeli occupation has meant that it is not possible for larger scale schools to serve a wider geographical area because of closures, check-points etc., instead there are larger number of smaller, less well equipped schools serving individual communities.

In 2010/11 there were 2653 schools in the OPT (1747 basic schools and 905 secondary schools). About 74.4% of the total are public schools, 12.8% are UNRWA schools and 13% are private. There were 1,116,991 students enrolled. Out of the total schools, 61.8% had science labs, 68.7% had libraries and 68.9% had computer labs. There were 782 KGs in the same year, accommodating 60,134 children of both sexes.¹⁹

MOE and UNRWA have moved towards more child friendly approaches within the school setting. In 2009, 64.2% of schools were implementing child friendly criteria (safe, protected, developmentally appropriate environments that involve student participation) and 64.6% were implementing special needs friendly criteria (access for children with disabilities).²⁰

School fees²¹ are charged for all grades, although students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are exempted from fees if they receive authorization from MOSA. However, these fees are necessary since they usually support the basic running costs of the school (water, electricity, sewage fees). The ministry has not and will not turn any student away from school because they cannot pay school fees. Yet the Ministry has to exert efforts to reach all children and ensure education for them all, as some schools individually use a practice of beating or dismissal when a student does not pay these fees.²² The additional costs affiliated with education including stationary, food, transportation and uniforms create a burden on families, especially when they have more than one child in school and when the school is at distance from home.

Around 27% of children are poor (38.4% in Gaza and 19% in the West Bank).²³ It is estimated that 600,000 children live in poverty and 250,000 live in abject poverty.²⁴

19 Palestinian Children – Issues and Statistics (15) PCBS, 2012.

20 Education Sector and Cross-Sector Strategy 2011-2013, MOEHE

21 50 NIS for grades 1-10 and 75 NIS for grades 11 and 12, with fee waivers for social hardship cases, chronically ill children, and children of teachers.

22 The source of this information is the Independent Commission for Human Rights.

23 Save the Children – UK Annual Review, 2010.

24 MOSA strategy 2011-2013.

- Around 900,000 children in Gaza are vulnerable to food insecurity.²⁵
- One in ten children under five suffers from chronic malnutrition. Studies indicate that malnourished children grow at a slower rate and enter school at a later age, achieving lower academic results, which has a serious impact on national achievements. The proportion of these children is higher in Gaza than in the West Bank.

Currently, MOE is offering school feeding programs that will cover 600,000 students in 2012.²⁶ The Ministry also adopts a poverty focused approach²⁷ by focusing on the construction of classrooms, schools and non-formal education programs in geographical locations where poverty is higher or where people are isolated due to Israeli measures.²⁸ Although this approach is conducive to upholding children's rights to education, it may accommodate Israeli practices of isolating Palestinian communities in fragmented enclaves.

The Ministry has been caught between the dilemma of ensuring safe and urgent access and availability of education for all children, and executing a more sustainable program of increasing school size, pooling students, and supporting transportation costs. This latter approach directly confronts Israeli policies which seek to prevent students from accessing education (particularly in Area C, the Gaza buffer zone, East Jerusalem and along the apartheid Wall). MOE is still awaiting permits from Israel to build a number of schools and classrooms in these areas. These permits are rarely obtained and to the contrary, schools are usually shut down or issued demolition orders by the Israeli civil administration under the pretext that these schools were built without the proper authorization. In addition, Gaza has limited construction materials being allowed to enter. In East Jerusalem and Area C where the government's jurisdiction is limited, the Israeli government builds schools for Israeli settler children, but prevents the building of schools and classrooms for Palestinian children.²⁹

4. Enrolment Rates

Although gross enrolment rates are relatively high compared to neighbouring countries (95% in 2011) and enrolment is equitable in terms of gender, MOE does not have information on children who are not enrolled and the reasons for non-enrolment. Basic level enrolment is higher than that in secondary level, with 20% of students who enrol in basic education failing to complete secondary education.³⁰ Access to basic and secondary education is also equitable in geographic distribution (urban, rural, refugees), and income.

25 Save the Children – UK Annual Review, 2010.

26 MOEHE data- General Directorate of Planning .

27 With dual purpose of ensuring marginalized children have schools available and by allowing for small job creation programs through construction.

28 "Education Development Strategic Plan 2008-2012: Towards Quality Education for Development." Ministry of Education and Higher Education Palestine; July 2008, p. 50.

29 For further information, please see UNICEF fact sheet on education.

30 Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) 2008-2010.

Gross enrolment rates in basic and secondary education in the OPT by year, sex and stage of education³¹

Gross enrolment rate		Males %	Females %	Total %
2009/10	Basic	93.3	95.5	94.3
	Secondary	72.9	90.0	81.3
	Total	90.1	94.6	92.3
2010/11	Basic	91.7	96.1	93.9
	Secondary	68.3	87.1	77.5
	Total	88.1	94.7	91.3

Since there are only mild differences in enrolment rates, the drop in the enrolment rates is negligible, especially that statistics on students in Jerusalem schools under the Israeli ministry of education are not available to Palestinians, and are included within Israeli statistics. It should be noted that enrolment rates are derived from the estimated population projections.³²

Gross and net enrolment rates are lower for secondary education. The drop in enrolment rates is due to boys dropping out of school to join the labour force, while the girls get married. The risk of dropping out of school increases amongst students with poor achievement and those attending schools that are difficult to access. Some parents are hesitant to send children to school if they are located in areas where settler violence, closures, harassment at checkpoints and physical searches are done on a routine basis. Girls are more likely to be withdrawn from schools for fear of attacks against them by Israeli soldiers and/or settlers.³³

- During 2007, PCBS indicated that 29.2% of total females who got married in that year were under the age of 18, compared to 1.5% for males. This percentage was 27.5% for females and 1.1% for males in the West Bank and 31.5% for females and 2.1% for males in Gaza Strip. Furthermore, 4.3% of women in the OPT had had become mothers in the age group 15-19 years and 1.7% had had their first pregnancy.

5. Dropout Rates

The government has legal frameworks to prevent the occurrence of students dropping out of school but does not have the required mechanisms to execute. Article 37 of the PCL states that: “the state shall take all appropriate arrangements and measures to prohibit the early dropout of children from school.” Although the dropout rate remains low, higher rates of school dropouts are found in boys in Gaza. Female Gaza students in the secondary education stage have the highest dropout rate. Government

³¹ MoE data- General Directorate of Planning .

³² MoE data- General Directorate of Planning .

³³ UN commission on the status of women and UNICEF. Situation Analysis for Palestinian Children and Women in the OPT. 2009.

schools in Gaza are not easily accessible for girls in rural areas. Hence, when many of them complete the 10th grade they may not transfer to a secondary school. In addition, refugee girls only have access to grade 9 at UNRWA schools. If they want to continue their education they must transfer to a government school. Sometimes girls are discouraged from continuing their education so that they do not have to travel out of the camp or a distance from the home. In 2007/2008, the dropout rate reached 0.8% (1.1% for males and 0.6% for females). In the secondary stage the rate increases to reach 3% (2.6% for males and 3.7% for females). Dropout rates in secondary stage are higher than in the basic stage. Higher rates of male students drop out of the compulsory basic education cycle, but in the secondary stage (11 and 12th grade) this trend reverses and female students are more likely to drop out.³⁴

Dropout rates by year, stage and sex³⁵

Dropout rate		Males %	Females %	Total %
2009/10	Basic	1.0	0.6	0.8
	Secondary	2.0	2.2	2.1
	Total	1.2	0.9	1.1
2010/11	Basic	1.0	0.6	0.8
	Secondary	2.0	2.1	2.0
	Total	1.1	0.9	1.0

Dropping out of school has been attributed to social, educational, political, economic, and personal reasons relating to student's abilities. There are issues related to the Palestinian educational system that can be addressed through improving the quality of educational methods, curricula and teacher interactions with students, strengthening the role of the school counsellors, preventing physical or verbal punishment, improving school sanitation facilities, strengthening the role of parents' councils and building schools in safer areas. However, the political aspect is a major constraint that affects whether or not a child remains in school. For instance, some Bedouin children have to walk 5-7 km to go to school. Securing transportation for these children is not easy for poor families (200 NIS/child per month). For families with five or six children this also becomes quite costly, especially when they are turned back at checkpoints. The financial constraint is but one aspect. Safety of the child while coming and going to school and passing checkpoints is another problem that impedes children's desire to go to school. UNRWA says that due to these constraints 19% of males in Bedouin/herder families and 43% of females "never attend schools".³⁶ However, the Ministry has limited resources to support this initiative at this time, but does coordinate with MOSA to ensure that needy families are supported with cash assistance programs and children receive minimal stipends or assistance to continue their schooling. A solution could be to provide safe transport means.

³⁴ MoE data- General Directorate of Planning.

³⁵ MoE, General Directorate of Planning (2010).

³⁶ Situation Analysis- UNICEF- Draft of December 2009.

MOE data on school dropout rates for the year 2007/2008 in governmental, UNRWA and private schools in the West Bank reveal that for basic education, four out of 1000 students dropped out due to the lack of ability to study, two out of 1000 students dropped out of school to work, or due to lack of desire to continue their education, and one out of 1000 students dropped out for early marriage or engagement. The same four reasons also applied for secondary education, but in a different order. There were 13 out of 1000 students who dropped due to the lack of ability to study (concentrate), 12 out of 1000 students dropped out for early marriage or engagement, eight out of 1000 students dropped out to work, while six out of 1000 students dropped out due to lack of desire to continue their education. Other reasons for school dropout include sickness and disability. Transportation was an issue on rare occasions. In general, school dropout rates are quite low for basic education students and the reasons are varied. However, school dropouts increase with grade level, particularly during the secondary stage of education, which is a critical stage of children's lives.

The CRC survey (through an open-ended questionnaire) asked why children were not attending school. Responses ranged from indicating that the children were not encouraged to go to school by their families, whether because of negligence or because the families themselves did not care about education, or due to poverty; children not being given the pocket money they needed or families being unable to afford school supplies. Child labour was the third most common reason to be mentioned. Some respondents indicated that children entered the workforce under their own initiative, and other indicated that it was under pressure from their parents. The fourth reason implicates the children themselves, with responses ranging from children refusing to go to school to children preferring not to go.

In 2009/10 school year, class repetition rate was 1.8% for males in basic school and 1.2% in secondary school. For females, the percentage was 1.6% in the basic stage and 1.0% in the secondary school.

6. School Counselling

MOE relies on its school counsellors to address cases of abuse. However, only 65% of schools had access to school counsellors as of 2006.³⁷ Furthermore, the school counsellors do not have written policies to provide guidance on how to deal with cases. Rather, working methods are developed during training, and rely on basic principles rather than specific procedures or policies.³⁸ For instance, in the schools with access to school counsellors, all students attend group classes with the counsellor. Thus, the students know about the counsellors, and the counsellors can begin to detect children in need of help. Referral to the

³⁷ "Child Protection in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; Structures Policies & Services." Institute of Community and Public Health Birzeit University & Secretariat for the National Plan of Action for Palestinian Children, 2006.

³⁸ Ibid.

counsellor can also be made through the students themselves, the principal, teachers, parents and friends.

UNRWA has several policy documents related to the issue of violence and abuse in its school system, the most prominent of which is the Educational Technical Instructions (ETI) No. 1/2003: Education Department Guidelines towards Corporal Punishment in UNRWA Schools and Training Centres. These guidelines offer clear procedures for addressing physical or verbal violence against children in an UNRWA school. The document prohibits corporal punishment.

Education is seen as a strategy to keep children out of violent clashes with the occupation. However, the quantity and quality of school counsellors need to be upgraded and expanded to allow them to treat students on site. Psycho-social factors highly affect students' achievements and behaviours. Unless counsellors can directly assist children in dealing with their problems, aid in addressing student concerns about their school and family life, and make referrals for difficult cases, the children will continue to suffer from the trauma that accompanies occupation, violence, and poverty.

Annex 4: Groups at Risk of Dropout, Non-enrolment and Deprivation from Education

1. Children with Disability and Learning Difficulties

Enrolment among children with special needs is limited despite MOE's efforts in providing a supportive environment for disabled children. In 2008 to 2010, approximately 1500-1600 children with a disability were enrolled in schools. However, those who do enrol do not usually complete the basic education cycle (up to grade 10) and usually drop out by grade six. School enrolment rates for children with intellectual/ mental disabilities are even lower than those of children with physical/ sensory difficulties—visually impaired, deaf, and physical disability. Little attention has been given to slow learners and students with learning difficulties either. Many of these students dropout, either because they are expected to maintain high academic standards based on standardized testing procedures set within the educational system or feel isolated, rejected and marginalized by teachers and students.

Children with severe intellectual/ mental and physical disabilities are usually unable to attend schools due to lack of capacity within schools to handle such cases, lack of ability to cover transportation costs, cultural practices which do not encourage the need to educate these children and in some cases, a families' inclination to hide the disability (social stigma). The actual number of disabled children is not available, hence the size of this problem is not known. However, it is estimated that thousands of school aged children with a disability are not currently enrolled in schools. Most government, UNRWA, and private schools do not have the resources (human, material or financial) to handle the integration of children with severe disabilities. Further research is needed on this issue. MOE has noted recently that more parents of children with disability are demanding their children's right to education, and the Ministry is currently reviewing methods of incorporating their needs. A number of students with a disability have difficulty attending school due to their physical impairments; they are followed up at home by teachers and supervisors. They are considered enrolled in school, but receiving their education at home. This is limited in number, but the trend is increasing.

According to the MOSA strategy, the number of children with disabilities is estimated at 100,000. Around 45% of school aged children are not enrolled in education. The 2011 disability survey outlined the needs of persons with disabilities (10-17 years) who are currently enrolled in the educational system in order to complete their schooling, with 28.9% stating they need accessible classrooms, 23.7% are in urgent need of accessible transportation, 19.2% for accessible school buildings, and 16.2% for accessible sanitary units. Over one third of persons above the age of 15 have never attended school (35.5% in the West Bank and 42.2% in Gaza). On the other hand, 33.8% had enrolled and dropped out (37.0% in the West Bank and 27.1% in Gaza). Findings also indicated that 53.1% are illiterate (51.5% in the West Bank and 56.3% in Gaza).

2. Children in Conflict with the Law

Despite the existence of a supporting law and MOE efforts to arrange for enrolment of these children in school, many centres in fact lack the sufficient capacity to provide education and educational resources. Some school principals are reluctant to accept these children in school, fearing that they may have a negative influence on other students. No penalties are provided for such violations. Children in conflict with the law and deprived of liberty do not fully enjoy the right to education. Only girls who are housed at the Dar Al Fatayat rehabilitation centre are allowed to attend school off premises. The boys in the reform institutions are not allowed to attend school, and they receive basic literacy education for approximately three hours per day within the centre. There is no cooperation with MOE on these matters, and the curriculum is designed and implemented by the literacy trainers.³⁹

It is necessary to ensure the provision of proper education in these centres in order to enable and equip children in conflict with the law with tools that would help them become successful and productive citizens, It is estimated that there are between 500-2200 children in conflict with the law every year.⁴⁰

3. Children in East Jerusalem

Due to the fact that Israel has illegally annexed East Jerusalem, the Palestinian government cannot provide services there. Thus, the Jerusalem municipality manages 55% of schools but the Palestinian curriculum is used. However, there are Israeli attempts recently to change this. Other schools in operation in East Jerusalem include Islamic Waqf schools run by the Islamic Endowment (Waqf) department under the supervision of MOE, private schools (including charitable and religious schools), and UNRWA schools.

³⁹ Deputy Director, Dar Al-Amal Reform Center (Ramallah- Telephone Interview, 17/11/2008).

⁴⁰ MOSA strategy 2011-2013.

According to the Israeli law, Palestinian children in East Jerusalem are entitled to receive free education from kindergarten through to the 12th grade. However, many Palestinian families who have not been granted residency permits are forced to enrol their children in private schools, because they are prevented from enrolling them in public schools. Other children are not allowed to register in public schools because they are overcrowded and do not have available space in the classroom to meet the needs. Israel provides five times the level of educational investments in West Jerusalem compared to East Jerusalem.

There are 5500 school aged children in East Jerusalem who do not attend school. There is no compliance by the State of Israel with the court rulings in terms of increasing the number of classrooms (Ir Amim and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel – ACRI). In addition, people in East Jerusalem are becoming poorer: 65.1% of the families are below the poverty line with 95,000 Palestinian children living in poverty. Families are becoming less educated and higher rates of violence and drug abuse have been reported. Student achievement rates are poor. There is now a requirement for an extra 1500 classrooms to be built, buildings are not safe, and there are not sufficient bathrooms, playgrounds and libraries. Classrooms are crowded, and most are in need of modernisation and refurbishment.⁴¹

Despite the considerable limitations on MOE's ability to work in East Jerusalem, one of the main policies of its five-year plan states that, "Education in Jerusalem will receive special attention, especially in the areas of provision of classrooms, schools, and improving teachers' salaries. Donors will be urged to invest in education in Jerusalem."⁴²

4. Children in Gaza Strip and in UNRWA Schools

Another one of MOE's main policies states that, "Subsequent to the current situation in Gaza, the Ministry will not neglect the Gaza Strip. Equal importance, the situation allowing, will be given to improve the education system quantitatively and qualitatively."⁴³ However, there is a total disconnect between planning and reality in this situation. The ongoing blockade, occupation and political conflicts have no doubt impacted on the quality of education in Gaza.

The 2007–2008 academic year saw a more than 50% increase in failure rates in standardized tests compared to the previous academic year for children registered in UNRWA schools,⁴⁴ in which 256 work days were lost due to access restrictions in the West Bank for teachers and school administrators. In Gaza, the ongoing blockade

41 Failed Grade- Palestinian Education System in East Jerusalem 2010 – Ir Amim and ACRI – August 2010.

42 "Education Development Strategic Plan 2008-2012; Towards Quality Education for Development." Ministry of Education and Higher Education Palestine; July 2008.

43 Ibid.

44 Data provided by UNRWA Gaza on 28 April 2010 for the Child Rights Annual Review, Save the Children UK, 2009.

resulted in delays in the arrival of textbooks and needed stationery, uniforms and school bags. Hunger among students due to poverty and unemployment was also reported. Remedial programs for children with learning difficulties and learning disabilities are available in 13 out of 19 camps.⁴⁵

According to UNRWA/Gaza, 90% of UNRWA schools in Gaza are currently running on a double shift basis, where the physical school building is put to use twice – in the morning and in the afternoon – to house two separate schools with an average of around 1,000 pupils each. In 2008-2009, there were 124 facilities/buildings hosting 221 schools (double shifts.) In 2009-2010, there were 128 facilities/buildings hosting 228 schools. In order to accommodate more classrooms, UNRWA had to rent government school facilities, set up classrooms in containers, and increase the number of double shift schools. Only limited construction, repairs and upgrading of infrastructure were carried out to repair the damages incurred during Operation Cast Lead. Since September 2010, a slight, temporary and limited relaxation of the closure took place which allowed the transport of some building materials into Gaza.

In Gaza, the overall learning environment for all students is characterized by severe overcrowding as illustrated by an average class size of 38 students for every teacher. Younger grades tend to be more crowded and may have as many as 45-50 pupils per classroom. Moreover, thousands of students are confined to makeshift classrooms and ad hoc solutions, including the existence of an entire school built from shipping containers and the use of 88 containers to supplement classroom capacity in 40 schools throughout the Gaza Strip. As many as 186 classes regularly rotate between classrooms and the school yard as a result of insufficient classroom space.⁴⁶

- Refugees comprise 44% of the population (37.2% in the West Bank and 56.0% in Gaza).⁴⁷
- In Gaza, 80% of government schools and 90% of UNRWA schools operate on a double shift system due to the lack of classrooms. There is a need for 130 new government schools, and 100 new UNRWA schools in order to replace the double shift system. UNICEF has not been able, so far, to construct 500 additional classrooms in the existing government schools due to the strict constraints on importing building materials through official crossing points in view of the blockade on Gaza. As a result, children are forced to study in overcrowded classrooms and schools are forced to reduce lesson times by about one third and go without extracurricular activities (UNICEF).
- In the 2010/11 school year, UNRWA was unable to accommodate around 40,000 new students due to the severe shortage of classrooms.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ UNRWA education fact sheet November 2008 – www.UNRWAat60.org.

⁴⁶ Data provided by UNRWA/Gaza upon the request of Save the Children.

⁴⁷ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

⁴⁸ Annual Review, Save the Children UK, 2010.

5. Children in Area C (including the Seam Zone)

The term Area C is an Israeli security term that should be rejected. Areas under this term are not homogeneous. The Israeli zoning policies impede Palestinian socio-economic development in areas outside SP jurisdiction, preventing people from building and repeatedly demolishing homes and public structures. Construction is in fact prohibited in around 70% of the so-called Area C or about 44% of the West Bank. The Israeli authorities allow Palestinian construction in less than 1% of this area. In addition, the Israeli Separation Wall does not follow the Green Line with almost 85% of the current route extending inside the West Bank (especially in Area C) and 9.5% of the West Bank area is left at the western Israeli side of the Wall.

The Israeli Separation Wall prevents hundreds of schoolchildren from accessing their schools and has led to students dropping out, particularly girls whose families fear for their safety. Strict Israeli controls on building and development mean that Palestinian children are forced to learn in cramped, makeshift classrooms or caravans where basics such as electricity, functioning toilets and safe drinking water are lacking.⁴⁹ In marginalized areas, as in At-Tuwani village in South Hebron, children attending the school there from the neighbouring villages are subject to settler violence. Children are accompanied by foreign volunteers to protect them. No adults are allowed to accompany them near the fenced area of the settlement. In 2004, the Knesset mandated the Israeli army to provide an escort for the children through that area. But sometimes the children have to wait for the escort causing them to be late for school, or it passes too fast for the children to follow. Each year since 2007/2008, documented attacks of settler violence against children have increased.⁵⁰

The Ministry is faced with a dilemma. It is responsible for ensuring access to those children who have been denied access to their schools because the Israeli Separation Wall dissected their communities and cut off access. However, providing children with new school facilities in their enclave would support the presence of the Israeli Separation Wall as a fact on the ground. The Ministry does not take any actions that can be interpreted as mitigating the effects of the Wall, and third party states are under a legal obligation to “provide neither aid nor assistance in maintaining the situation created by its construction.”⁵¹ According to these criteria, donors may be dissuaded from supporting the building of new schools in communities affected by the Wall.⁵² Moreover, the Ministry has limited authority in Area C and cannot build unless it receives a permit from Israel, which is rarely granted. However, the government and international humanitarian organizations

49 Child Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory- Save the Children- 2009 Review. For more information please see UNICEF Education fact sheet.

50 Protecting Palestinian Children from Political Violence: The Role of the International Community, by Jason Hart and Claudia La Forte 2009. This was confirmed by Save the Children UK case studies in area C.

51 “The Wall in the West Bank; State of Implementation of the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion.” Al Haq. November 2006.

52 Ibid.

have ensured that all children in these areas have access to education, but for most of them this access is difficult to reach, costly, and puts children at risk of violence by Israeli settlers and soldiers.

UNICEF sources indicate that:

- 49,284 children are enrolled in 183 schools in Area “C” – 42,627 in Basic education and 6,657 in Secondary education.
- In Area C, the vast majority of communities report that distance to school and transportation costs are the main obstacles to education, which can result in high dropout rates, particularly among female students, and separation of family units to facilitate access to schools for children.
- At least 26 schools have been issued demolition or stop-work orders in Area C and East Jerusalem. In 2011, part of a school was demolished in the Area C village of Dkeika (Hebron), and in 2010, the school in Khirbet Tana (Area C/Nablus) was demolished two times. In the first seven months of 2011, the Israeli authorities demolished 387 Palestinian structures in Area C and East Jerusalem, leaving at least 755 persons, including 409 children homeless. This number is higher than the total number of demolitions carried out in 2010.
- In 2010, more than 702 demolition, eviction or stop-work-orders were issued or renewed against residential and non-residential structures in the West Bank, in Area C and East Jerusalem, affecting a total of 2,973 people, including 1,180 children.
- 18% of school buildings in Area C are not safe (including caravans and tents) and 31% lack water and sanitation facilities.⁵³

6. Working Children⁵⁴

There is a relationship between employed children and their educational level and attainment, the family economic conditions, and the social position concerning education. Children’s statistical data for 2010 showed that around 65,000 children in the age group 5-14 years are working (6%). The 2009 labour force survey indicated that 25.9% of children not attending school are employed. Consequently, their earning continues to be continuously low even in adult age. In some cases, parents may have one or two sons leave school and contribute to the family income for educating their siblings. Education expenses, to some families, are considered a direct loss (fees, stationery and clothes) and indirect loss (losing children’s supposed income), all of which makes children’s learning a heavy burden to parents. Some children do not

⁵³ Annual Review, Save the Children UK, 2010.

⁵⁴ Palestinian Children: Issues and Statistics, PCBS 2010.

go to school or drop out for many reasons: unsuitable timing of study for children's working hours (like in agriculture), distant studying place (mainly for girls) and the absence of transportation.⁵⁵

- According to 2010 Palestinian family survey, the percentage of children aged 5-14 years attending school and also engaged in child labour was 5.9% in 2010; 7.8 % in the West Bank and 3.0 % in Gaza, and 7.5 % among male children attending school compared to 4.1% among females. The rate was 6.5% in the age group 5-11 years and 4.3% in the age group 12-14 years.⁵⁶ In contrast, 25.9% of children not enrolled in education are working: 33.3% in the West Bank and 11.2% in Gaza, and 34.4% among male children compared to 5.3% among females.⁵⁷
- 17.8% of elementary level students and 12.2% of preparatory level students work to support their families.⁵⁸

55 Palestinian Children – Issues and Statistics (15) PCBS, 2012.

56 Ibid.

57 PNA report on the implementation of the CRC in the OPT, 2011.

58 Ibid.

