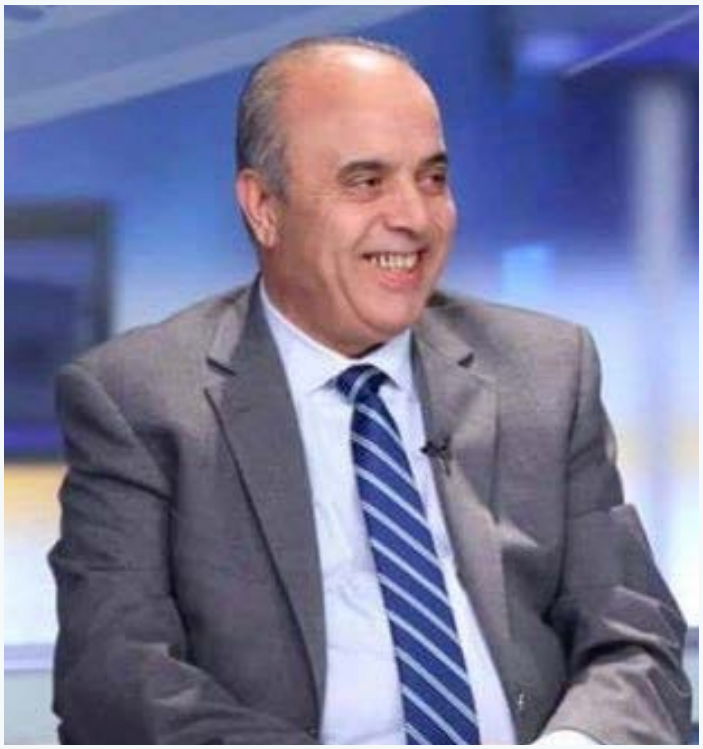
U.S. Embassy Amman

IREX

2025 ASAS IMPACT REPORT

EVERY CHILD CAN BE REMARKABLE



Foreword

H.E. Dr. Azmi Mahafzah

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Investing in early grade education is a national priority and fundamental strategic pillar for ensuring sustained improvement in the quality of education outcomes over the long term. These early years form the basis upon which essential literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills are built, shaping students' future learning pathways and overall success.

Strengthening early grade education is therefore a key entry point to achieving equitable, high-quality education and preparing students to contribute meaningfully to Jordan's economic and social development.

The Ministry of Education firmly believes that teachers are the cornerstone of improving teaching and learning, particularly in early grades. Pre-service preparation and continuous professional development are strategic priorities to ensure teachers possess the professional competencies required to apply effective, evidence-based instructional practices that respond to students' needs and support the development of foundational skills. Investment in teachers remains the most sustainable pathway to improving education quality and learning outcomes.

In this context, ASAS serves as a strategic partner supporting the Ministry's efforts to strengthen early grade education. By enhancing teacher competencies, improving classroom practices, and supporting an integrated professional development system grounded in evidence and best practice. Furthermore, ASAS reinforces the Ministry's direction toward advancing policies and programs related to early grade education, thereby strengthening institutional sustainability and ensuring measurable, system-level impact that positively enhances student learning in the foundational years.

Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2025 ASAS Impact Report. Through our partnerships with the U.S. Department of State, the Ministry of Education, the University of Jordan, Yarmouk University, the Hashemite University, the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, ASAS has helped advance meaningful improvements in early grade literacy and numeracy across Jordan. I am particularly proud of the innovative approaches adopted to support teacher professional development at scale, the transformation of university curricula, and the co-design of policies that provide student teachers with real-world, practical experience in a supported learning environment.

Artificial intelligence holds enormous potential for education; however, realizing that potential requires strong organizational and digital foundations. Our work with the Ministry of Education to assess these critical foundations is an important step forward and will continue into 2026 with the completion of the national AI readiness diagnostic.

While I take great pride in the progress achieved in 2025, the work of the ASAS team is ultimately about the lives it touches. I encourage readers to spend a few moments engaging with the stories of the students and teachers featured in this report. I hope their experiences, and the collective impact reflected in these pages, leave you with the same sense of optimism and pride that I felt in reading this report.

Cameron Mirza
Chief of Party

Strategic Alignment

ASAS operates at the intersection of Jordan's national education reform agenda and U.S. foreign assistance priorities.

Alignment with U.S. Government Priorities

ASAS advances U.S. national interests by strengthening Jordan's human capital pipeline at its foundation, early grade literacy and numeracy. Stronger foundational skills contribute to long-term economic stability, workforce readiness, and institutional resilience, reinforcing Jordan as a stable regional partner.

The Activity directly supports U.S. foreign policy priorities by:

- Strengthening human capital development through improved KG–G3 learning outcomes
- Building institutional capacity within the Ministry of Education and public universities
- Advancing economic competitiveness through workforce-aligned teacher preparation
- Promoting evidence-based governance through data-driven supervision and digital systems

By training 2,566 teachers, enrolling 800+ future educators in improved programs, and reaching 259,000 learners nationwide, ASAS translates partnership into measurable classroom-level impact.

Alignment with Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV)

ASAS directly supports the Human Capital pillar of Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision (EMV) by strengthening the systems that prepare teachers and support early grade learning at scale.

The Activity contributes to EMV goals by:

- Improving foundational literacy and numeracy in Kindergarten through Grade 3 classrooms
- Modernizing teacher education pathways across public universities
- Advancing quality assurance and accreditation standards
- Integrating digital transformation and AI readiness into education systems

Through collaboration with national institutions and international academic partners, ASAS embeds sustainable reforms within Jordan's education system, building a skilled, adaptable workforce aligned with the Kingdom's long-term development priorities.

Why ASAS

***In 2019, only 4 out of 10 Grade 2 students read at grade level in Jordan.**

When children fall behind in literacy and numeracy early, the gap widens over time. The early years, Kindergarten through Grade 3, are where learning foundations are built. When these foundations are strong, students are more likely to complete school, succeed in higher education, and participate productively in the workforce.

Our Approach

Working to shape the future of over one million children by strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy skills through empowering educators in Jordan to drive lasting change.

**Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Project RAMP, 2019*

#YouAreASAS

ASAS
Every Child Can Be Remarkable

259,000
Learners reached through strengthened instruction and materials

9,470
Teachers and education staff engaged in professional development

800+
Bachelor's degree students enrolled in improved early grade programs

60
New courses developed to revamp Early Grade Bachelor's programs across two universities

Aws's Story

When Learning Starts to Make Sense

When Aws started Grade 2, school quickly became a source of frustration. Letters blurred together. Numbers felt confusing. Homework ended in tears. His mother remembers wondering whether something had been missed in those early years when foundations are formed.

"I never imagined I would struggle to help my child build his learning foundations," she shared. "Today, I can finally see the results. He has begun reading letters, sounds, and simple words, and he can read and write numbers with confidence."

Aws did not change overnight. What changed was the way instruction responded to him. His teacher began using more structured literacy techniques, breaking reading into smaller steps and checking understanding regularly. In mathematics, she adjusted pacing and used targeted practice to reinforce number sense. Instead of moving on when the lesson ended, she used short formative assessments to identify where students were struggling and adapted her instruction accordingly.

These shifts reflect broader changes supported through the ASAS Activity. In 2025, more than **2,500** early grade teachers nationwide participated in a structured, accredited professional development program focused on strengthening Arabic and mathematics instruction. Teachers were trained in lesson planning aligned to learning goals, formative assessment strategies, differentiated instruction, and techniques to support struggling learners. Supervisors were also trained to use classroom observation tools and coaching approaches to reinforce these practices in schools.

As these instructional practices strengthened, classrooms began to shift. Teachers were better equipped to identify learning gaps early, adjust their lessons, and support struggling students before they fell behind. Across the system, early grade literacy and numeracy outcomes improved, reflecting the cumulative effect of stronger teacher preparation, accredited professional development, and coaching-oriented supervision.

Behind every percentage point is a student like Aws, a child who found his footing because the adults in his classroom were better equipped, better supported, and better prepared to respond to his needs.

Empowering Teachers, Reaching Thousands of Learners

Through a high-quality professional development program, ASAS strengthened the classroom practices of 9,470 teachers and education staff, representing nearly 70% of early grade teachers nationwide, equipping them with practical skills for effective lesson planning, classroom instruction, and student support, strengthening teaching and learning. These improved practices are reaching more than 259,000 students, creating more engaging and effective classrooms and supporting a stronger learning journey from the earliest grades. Investing in teacher quality is one of the most powerful ways to improve student outcomes, and these efforts are raising learning results at scale across Jordan's schools.

Evidence shows that investments in high-quality teacher professional development deliver large-scale improvements in student learning outcomes.

(World Bank, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2019)

Early Learning Gains Strengthening Jordan's Future

Jordan is making strong gains in improving learning outcomes in early grade education. In 2025, math proficiency increased from 13.7% to 18.6% in Grade 2 and from 29.3% to 36% in Grade 3, while reading comprehension rose from 38.3% to 62.8% in Grade 2 and 58.7% to 79.4% in Grade 3. These gains matter as evidence shows that strong early literacy and numeracy are proven foundations for later learning and workforce readiness. While many education systems regionally and globally struggle to recover from COVID-19 learning losses, Jordan's progress reflects a stronger system and a solid foundation for future growth.

Evidence suggests that improvements of 20+ percentage point gains in early grade reading are considered significant.

(WorldBank and OECD)

Tomorrow's Teachers

Over 800 students enrolled in the revamped early grade programs across our 3 university partners. These future teachers will gain deep knowledge, skills, competencies and real world practical experiences that will fully prepare them for the life of an early grades' educator. With over 60 revised courses and new courses in areas such as artificial intelligence and neuroscience the revised programs co-developed with our U.S. partner, Vanderbilt University, have been through rigorous review and benchmarking that will prepare students for not just entering the teaching profession but for a changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of students over the course of their careers.

A National Standard for Classroom-Ready Teaching

Through ASAS, early grade teacher preparation programs were redesigned, revising over 60% of study plans, strengthening literacy and numeracy content, and integrating modern tools, to ensure future teachers enter classrooms better prepared to build strong foundations for young learners.

Previously, student teachers spent just one semester in classrooms during their final year, around 350 hours. ASAS led a national policy reform to strengthen teacher preparation. Under the new regulation, classroom practice is now built across three years of teacher training. Over three years, future teachers now spend a minimum of 800 hours gaining hands-on experience in real classrooms before graduation.

When Lesson Plans Meet Real Children

On the first day of her practicum, Soha Atta, a second-year Early Childhood Education student at Hashemite University, stood beside her mentor teacher and watched twenty small chairs in a kindergarten classroom at Zadni Ilman Academy in Zarqa Directorate fill quickly. The room was louder, faster, and far less predictable than anything she had imagined while writing lesson plans at her university desk. By the end of that first week, she understood something she hadn't before: ***"Teaching is tiring, but it is enjoyable at the same time."*** Like many of her peers, Soha expected teaching to follow the structure she had carefully prepared. But children do not stay on script. They interrupt. They disagree. They surprise you.

For Saja Taha, familiar concepts she had learned in class unfolded in real time. Cooperative play was no longer a definition; it was children inviting a classmate to join them. A disagreement over a pencil became a lesson in emotional regulation. ***"The practicum helped me transform theoretical concepts into real classroom practices,"*** she reflected.

Over time, hesitation gave way to confidence. As Hadeel Yousef explained, ***"The theoretical courses give us the foundation, but the reality of the classroom helps us apply these ideas in a deeper and more practical way."***

By the end of the practicum, they were noticing growth in their flexibility, their calm responses to conflict, and the confidence with which they led the room. **They entered classrooms citing theory. They left seeing themselves as teachers.**

Using Data to Improve Early Grades Classrooms in Jordan

Ministry of Education (MOE) classroom observations in Jordan's early grades show clear improvements in teaching, with 76.3% of teachers now meeting quality teaching standards, up from 57% in 2024. Research shows that good teaching is the most important school factor in improving how children learn, especially in the early years.

By regularly reviewing classroom practice and using this data to guide targeted support, such as peer learning, classroom visits, and supervisor guidance, the ASAS project is helping the MOE strengthen teaching and improve learning across schools through decisions based on data.

Field Directorates will use assessment data to guide coaching, classroom support, and teacher collaboration.

Policy Advancements

ASAS is strengthening Jordan's education system by improving how teachers are prepared, supported, and guided nationwide. These reforms are built into the system itself so better teaching reaches more students and gives young learners a stronger start in school, today and for years to come.

3 NEW POLICIES INTRODUCED IN 2025

Practicum Policy Updated

Giving future teachers gradual, consistent real world experience before graduation.

Practicums Expanded to Public and Private Schools

Solves placement capacity issues and diversifies experience.

Master Teacher Role Updated

Mentorship from current/master teachers has proved critical to student teacher development.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In 2025, ASAS began assessing the Jordanian education systems' readiness for AI by understanding current capacities, gaps, and risks. This assessment will provide the evidence needed to inform future decisions, including how national AI ethics guidelines could be adopted and where for education and where strategic investment is required. It will also provide, through a sandbox environment, an opportunity for the safe testing of AI tools. This process will improve the return on investment and support teachers to use AI safely, ethically and with confidence.

U.S. Embassy Amman

IREX

SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL

أكاديمية الملكة رانيا لتدريب المعلمين
Queen Rania Teacher Academy

DEVELOPMENT GATEWAY
An IREX Venture

Cameron Mirza
Chief of Party
cmirza@irex.org

Rula Al-Jundi
Deputy Chief of Party
ral-jundi@irex.org

This document was prepared by IREX under the Early Grade Education Activity (ASAS) and is funded by the United States Government. The contents are the sole responsibility of IREX and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Government.