Overview
Jordan has initiated comprehensive education reforms to capitalize on its strong record of education completion and adult literacy. Its reforms have strengthened education policy objectives and strategies, transformed education programs and practices, improved school buildings and learning environments, and enhanced equity in the poorer areas of the country.

Challenge
Beginning in 2002, with support from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the government of Jordan designed a comprehensive education strategy to address the following challenges in the education sector:

- A traditional, hierarchical top-down model of management as opposed to participatory, outcome-based, and learner-centered model;
- A curriculum designed on traditional rote-learning methods. Teachers’ academic qualifications were insufficient to adapt to a knowledge economy, and students lagged behind international peers in international assessments;
- Unsafe, overcrowded public schools, which lacked the resources necessary for education in a knowledge economy; and
- Unequal access to early childhood education for lower-income households, mainly due to provision of pre-primary education by the private sector.

Approach
In 2002, HM King Abdullah II of Jordan outlined a strategy to make Jordan a regional information technology hub. To achieve this goal, the government focused on developing human capital for a knowledge economy. Government officials prepared a strategy to reform the education system, titled “Education Reform for a Knowledge Economy” (ERfKE) and sought IBRD assistance in developing and financing the reform.

ERfKE I was designed as a comprehensive, 10-year multi-donor sector program. Its objective
was to transform the education system at the early childhood, basic, and secondary levels to produce graduates with the skills necessary for the knowledge economy.

With strong donor coordination, improved financial management and effective monitoring and evaluation, the reform program motivated the private sector to work with the Ministry of Education in developing high-quality, cutting edge, e-learning materials in key subjects, especially math and science, which would be used in Jordan’s schools.

At the government’s request, the World Bank played a lead role in assisting the Ministry of Education in jointly designing reforms and leading implementation. Bank experts helped develop information and computer technology applications for learning, and introduced increased rigor into program and financial management through its work with the government of Jordan and other donors.

Results
Jordan’s Education Reform for Knowledge Economy program has achieved the following results:

- Development of a national strategy for education.
- Introduction of new governance and management mechanisms to ensure greater community involvement in decisionmaking and delivery of basic skills and competencies for a knowledge economy.
- Introduction of new curricula and teaching methods; 80% of teachers have started using new methodologies in line with national education strategy.
- 80% of primary and secondary students have access to safe and adequate school facilities.
- 87% of enrolled students attend classes in environmentally efficient school buildings.
- 70% of basic and secondary students use online learning portals.
- 51% of children aged 5-6 are enrolled in kindergarten.
- 100% of kindergarten teachers have received training in the national curricula.

Toward the Future
To further strengthen capacity at the school and field directorate levels, and to support the strategic leadership at senior management levels of the Ministry of Education, ERiKE II, which runs through 2015, focuses on teachers (e.g., teacher policy, in-service training, and teachers as an agent for change). It also promotes directorate-level capacity building and school-level innovation as part of the decentralization process.

Partners