

UNICEF Jordan COVID-19 Education Response

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic is negatively impacting children's education around the world, with children in emerging and developing economies some of the worst-affected. On 15 March 2020, the Government of Jordan closed all schools, kindergartens and universities, impacting 2.37 million learners¹. In Jordan, the Syrian refugee population includes over 230,900 school-age children², though numbers of unregistered refugees in Jordan are much higher.³ Until the COVID-19 crisis, **learning outcomes** had been improving, but significant **inequalities remain** by **gender** and **nationality**.⁴ School closures bring the risk of increased **learning inequality** and **drop out**, particularly for the poorest children, refugees, those living in informal tented settlements, refugee camps and those with disabilities. Children in early adolescence are at greatest risk of drop out, often linked to **child labour** and **child marriage**.

¹ UNESCO, "Global Monitoring of School Closures Caused by Covid-19" [link](#)

² *ibid*

³ United Nations, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects 2019, Accessed March 2020 [link](#)

⁴ OECD, Education GPS, PISA 2018 Jordan, [link](#)

UNICEF RESPONSE

Since the onset of the crisis, UNICEF has been supporting the Ministry of Education (MOE) to ensure learning continuity for children through **distance education** during the COVID-19 outbreak. **Televised lessons** are broadcast nationally, and **digital platforms** have been established to facilitate access to educational content and a learning management system. A web-landing page has been created for teachers which hosts **professional development** courses focused on using new technologies. These initiatives are at a nascent stage and will require significant **technical and financial support** to be effective in improving learning outcomes for children at scale across the country. UNICEF has supported the education of the most vulnerable girls and boys before, during and in adapting to the post-COVID-19 operating environment for children, schools and communities.

BEFORE SCHOOL CLOSURES, UNICEF SUPPORTED WITH:

- Assisting schools with **hygiene awareness** campaigns that included **handwashing demonstrations** and introducing **social distancing** prior to school closures.
- Providing **disability inclusive workbooks** to students with disabilities before school closure (covering Arabic, mathematics, sensory and perceptual skills), augmented by **videos** circulated to parents that support parents in providing **speech and occupational therapy** with their child.
- Developing **COVID-19 School Operational Guidelines** with MOE and Ministry of Health, based on Global Guidance on Safe School Operation developed by UNICEF, IFRC and WHO.



I don't have access to TV or to internet, so I just read my books. I would love to return to school.

Khadija, 12,
East Amman

UNICEF SUPPORT DURING THE CRISIS RESPONSE:

- Supported the continued **filming of televised lessons** by MOE, as well as national COVID-19 response planning.
- Enabling teachers to provide safe and high-quality support for students through **developing guidance and training on online safety**, as well as provision of 200 laptops to access **virtual learning spaces**.
- Conducting **home visits** in camps (where to date there are no COVID-19 cases) through **shadow teachers** that provide therapy and learning support to **children with disabilities**.
- Supporting distance learning of vulnerable children without access to Internet through provision of **printed materials** for 12,000 children in Grade 1 to Grade 6 (Arabic and Maths) in camps.
- Providing 140 **tablets pre-loaded with e-learning resources** for children (50 per cent with disabilities) in camps.
- Enabling up to **6,000 children to continue non-formal education** by distance learning with teacher-student groups via WhatsApp and Facebook, training of NFE facilitators and quality assured e-learning materials.
- **Remote psychosocial support for 200 girls** studying within non-formal education programme.
- Digitally supporting online learning opportunities for **early childhood education** via social media with fun learning activities and parental support.
- **Coordinating** the Education Sector Working Group's response, including a **Partner Mapping** of support and a **Learning Resources Survey**, highlighting available distance learning resources.



My school shut and we started distance learning. But I didn't give up. I'm working really hard to finish my studies so I can achieve my dreams.

Dureen, 17,
Azraq refugee camp

UNICEF SEEKS \$7 MILLION TO ENABLE CHILDREN TO RETURN SAFELY BACK TO SCHOOL AND RECOVER LOST LEARNING

- **E-learning resources and connectivity:** To provide tablets pre-loaded for the most vulnerable children, supporting and monitoring their continued learning (includes tablet, sim, facilitator and training costs) which requires **US\$ 2 million for 3,000 children.**
- **MOE accredited non-formal education:** Continue support for up to 6,000 vulnerable children enrolled in MOE accredited non-formal education, including life skills, counselling and pathways to training and employment which requires **US\$ 3.24 million.**
- **Learning Bridges:** A national programme that will enable all 850,000 children enrolled in Grade 4 to 9 to recover lost learning through developing materials, linked to core curricula objectives, training teachers and supporting parents. To also serve as home work in case of future school closures. This requires **US\$ 1,000,000.**
- **Ensure safe learning environments:** To continue WASH infrastructure rehabilitation and provision of hygiene supplies, UNICEF requires **US\$ 500,000.**
- **Roll out a Safely Back to School campaign.** To support out of school children, and those at risk of drop out due to COVID19, to re-enroll which requires **US\$ 360,000.**

LOOKING FORWARD

UNICEF is engaging partners to return safely back to school and to enable all children to continue their **learning during school closures**, recognizing the increased risk of learning inequality and drop out. Challenges remain in the ability of children to engage with distance education due to limitations of data, connectivity, compatible devices and IT skills. Girls and children with disabilities face challenges and need targeted support. Teachers, facilitators and parents need to be supported to ensure **retention** and **learning** of all children during this critical period. Additional support is needed for vulnerable adolescents to continue their learning, given the emerging increase in early marriage and child labour due to COVID19. Water and sanitation infrastructure in schools needs improving.

UNICEF is providing psychosocial support for children and families as part of back to school efforts. Investments in **blended learning** during the COVID-19 response can be of benefit to the Jordan education system longer term (i.e. the sustainability phase). This includes maintenance of hand washing stations, provision of hygiene and sanitation materials, and training on infection prevention control in schools. As an example, UNICEF is supporting the MOE to strengthen the new Jo Teachers platform to support **online teacher professional development**.

These efforts will require **additional resources**. UNICEF Jordan is appealing for US\$ 7 million in funding to adequately support the COVID-19 response and ensure that the most vulnerable children continue to access education and make a safe transition back to learning.

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