

UNICEF Education COVID-19 Case Study

Jordan – Keeping children learning during school closures and ensuring their safe return

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On 15 March 2020, the Government of Jordan closed all schools and universities, impacting [2.37 million learners](#). Prior to closure, UNICEF supported a COVID-19 prevention campaign that included handwashing demonstrations and physical distancing. Since then, UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Education (MOE) to provide children with access to distance learning – including innovative approaches to bridging the digital divide for the most vulnerable – whilst ensuring that investments in the COVID-19 response also improve the long-term resilience and quality of the education system. Surveys showed that 23 per cent of vulnerable households had no internet access, whilst girls often had less access to online learning than boys. Looking forward to the next school year, UNICEF will support children to return school safely and to recover lost learning, with a focus on the most vulnerable girls and boys, including refugees.

Keeping children learning during school closures

Since the pandemic started, UNICEF has partnered with the Government to mount an effective and inclusive response. Together, UNICEF and the Ministries of Education and Health developed the national **COVID-19 School Operational Guidelines**, particularly important as schools reopen in 2020/2021. UNICEF has reached over 30,000 children with remote Learning Support Services combined with child protection activities through frontline staff in 141 [Makani centres](#) in host communities, refugee camps and informal temporary settlements.

Additionally, UNICEF provided funding for digital and printed materials aimed at children with disabilities in Grades KG2 to Grade 6 as well as 20,000 vulnerable children in Grades 4 to 6 living in refugee camps and informal, temporary

settlements. Videos complemented the printed learning packs for children with disabilities to help parents undertake speech and occupational therapy with their child, as well as regular home [visits](#) by two shadow teachers (community volunteers), one of whom provides tailored learning support; the other, rehabilitation therapies through a partnership between UNICEF and Mercy Corps, reaching 1,000 children. An innovative element of these visits is the use of transparent face masks to facilitate lip reading. In Village 5 of Azraq Camp, UNICEF provided all 80 children with disabilities a tablet pre-loaded with learning materials and accessible apps along with free data.

To make online learning safer and more equitable, UNICEF provided 9,250 families with up to 45,000 school-aged children with 10 GB of free monthly data since May. MOE websites are data free during specified times of day and electricity hours have been extended in refugee camps to ensure children can watch television when MOE lessons are aired.

As well, UNICEF has contributed digital resources for other skills-related programming during school closures. For example, it developed 12 videos shared with 3,000 teachers through WhatsApp and 900 school Facebook sites to enable up to 180,000 students from Grade 7 to 10 in the [Nashatati](#) programme to continue building life skills, citizenship and social cohesion through game-based sports. UNICEF also supported nearly 4,000 children enrolled in non-formal education to continue learning during school closures through WhatsApp groups with their facilitators and peers. Prolonged isolation and additional stresses resulting from the pandemic may increase challenges relating to children's mental health and wellbeing. UNICEF identified and provided 200 vulnerable girls enrolled in NFE with psychosocial support services.

Ensuring children can go safely back to school during reopening

UNICEF is leading a Safely Back to School campaign. Its core elements are national media engagement, outreach and referral, preparation of camp schools for safe reopening, and school readiness activities for children entering Grade 1. As part of efforts to strengthen safe school operations in preparation for school reopening, UNICEF is reinforcing good hygiene practices and cleaning procedures, and performing urgent maintenance of water and sanitation.

Other key elements to open up better are efforts to accelerate learning recovery and promote wellbeing and protection. To this end, UNICEF is supporting project-based learning through a programme called Learning Bridges that will engage parents in learning from home to support learning recovery for 750,000 in Grades 4 to 9. UNICEF has also finalised guidance in collaboration with education and child protection officials to ensure online protection of children in light of the plan to reopen using a blended learning approach to provide a mix of online and in-person classes; online safeguarding course for teachers and other education personnel, and standing operating procedures on gender-based violence and child protection referrals.

KEY FEATURES

- **Equity at the forefront.** At each phase of the pandemic, UNICEF has collaborated with the government to adopt equity-focused measures so that the most marginalised are not left behind. This is reflected in the mix of digital and non-digital platforms, zero-rated resources, provision of devices and data, tailored programmes for refugees, children with disabilities, and those learning through non-formal pathways.
- **Seizing the opportunity to modernise and innovate.** UNICEF has assisted the MOE to adopt new platforms but also approaches and content while at the same time providing supports to those using the digital resources and tools, so critical to successful implementation.
- **Linking to long-term planning.** The MOE's Education During Emergency Plan proposes not only immediate action but links to longer-term education sector planning, including sustainability to shape longer-term professional development programmes of teachers and other educational personnel.

EMERGENT LESSONS LEARNED

- **Parental support** has been identified as a crucial element in keeping children’s quality learning at home. Accordingly, UNICEF’s Learning Bridges has been designed to promote and encourage parental support in learning recovery. The MOE’s campaign around the launch of Learning Bridges will include promotional videos that demonstrate mothers and fathers supporting their children’s learning through the programme.

OTHER RESOURCES For other resources, including more case studies, click [here](#) and filter by “Area of Work” (Education).

For more information, please contact:

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