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UNICEF EDUCATION

Reimagine Education Case Study

JORDAN

Recovering and accelerating learning for 1 million children in Grades 4 to 9 through the Learning Bridges Programme

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Blended learning, which combines in-person lessons with home-based learning, is increasingly the norm as schools reopen. In Jordan, the Ministry of Education in partnership with UNICEF, launched a national blended learning programme, Learning Bridges, in September 2020 with the aim of providing all students in Grades 4 to 9 with a printed activity pack each week linked to the core subjects of Arabic, English, Math, and Science, with life skills embedded throughout. Each activity pack comes with a QR code that links to an online resource, which includes audio content for children with poor literacy or visual impairments. [Learning Bridges](#) has been used by teachers to support children's remote learning during school closures and will continue when schools reopen.

This blended learning approach is designed to help students recover lost learning from the previous year and accelerate learning in the new academic year. Learning is accelerated through a cross curricular approach that links together the key learning outcomes across the four core subjects for that week's planned curriculum. Learning is recovered as students have access to a range of carefully chosen media resources that ensures they can work at their own pace, selecting resources where they need to build up understanding from the previous school year.

To support teachers and community facilitators, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education produced an [online training](#) to develop pedagogical understanding of blended learning as well as to offer practical ways to utilise the Learning Bridges resources, which generated over one million views. With every activity pack, teachers receive instructions on how to introduce the activity, support student learning, and give feedback. By using the QR code, teachers will also have access to [extra resources](#) to help them and their students. In addition, 142 Learning Bridges Champions, selected from amongst teachers and supervisors, are in place in all 42 districts and camp schools. These

Champions help teachers get all their students engaged in the weekly activities. Since boys are three times less likely to be engaged in Learning Bridges than girls, male Learning Bridges Champions play an essential role to encourage teachers in boys' schools to participate.

Parents are also essential to learning. Every activity pack comes with instructions on what parents can do to help their child's learning, without expecting parents to replace the role of the teacher. UNICEF has also developed a short series of videos and social media messages to encourage parents to support their children's love of learning.

RESULTS

By the end of 2021, Learning Bridges aims to reach all one million students in Grades 4 to 9 across 3,220 schools. Results as of January 2021, after five months implementation, include:

- 70 *per cent* of schools reported an implementation of more than 50 *per cent* of the activities
- 300,000 children have engaged with more than 50 *per cent* of the activities
- 360 online and printed resources produced, with semester two materials partially completed
- 30,000 teachers have registered for the online Learning Bridges training and 20,000 teachers have received the Learning Bridges training certificate

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Teacher innovation:** The disruption of COVID-19 has been an opportunity to modernise teaching and teacher training. With Learning Bridges, teachers are empowered to break away from traditional textbook-heavy approach to deliver the core curriculum in creative ways,

including exploring gamification, setting up exhibits of student work, and film making. Other innovations include the use of online teaching resources. The [good practice padlets](#), which act like large online notice boards of children's work, attract an average of 100,000 views a month. The online Learning Bridges teacher training course that has reached 30,000 teachers is also a first in Jordan.

- **Accelerating learning:** With so much learning lost during COVID-19, Learning Bridges has enabled the Ministry of Education to slim the curriculum to core learning objectives. The weekly activity packs are all cross-curricular, aligned directly to that week's taught content for each grade, making them effective at accelerating learning. Learning objectives are clearly identified on all activity sheets for teachers, students, and their families.
- **Leveraging investments:** The initial UNICEF investment of US \$500,000 in Learning Bridges enabled the Ministry of Education to leverage additional funding of US \$382,000 from donors to hire 12 project writers for its Curriculum Department. These funds also enabled the printing of the weekly Learning Bridges activity packs.

NEXT STEPS

UNICEF will continue to provide additional support to children in refugee camps to ensure that they have access to the printed learning packs and online resources. It also intends to set up an Innovation Fund to empower schools to find their own solutions for reaching the most vulnerable children. When allowed to reopen, community centres will establish Learning Bridges Clubs. Community facilitators will use the guidelines for parents to help students with no access to technology access the digital content and complete their schoolwork.

Cost effectiveness: UNICEF's initial investment of US \$500,000 has reached 300,000 students and trained 30,000 teachers. The national digital platform used for accessing online blended programme costs UNICEF only US \$12 per month. To date, the cost per student (excluding the Ministry of Education's contribution) is approximately \$1.66 over one year.

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