

Public Disclosure Authorized

Additional Financing -- Jordan Education Reform Support Program-for-Results

Technical Assessment

Addendum

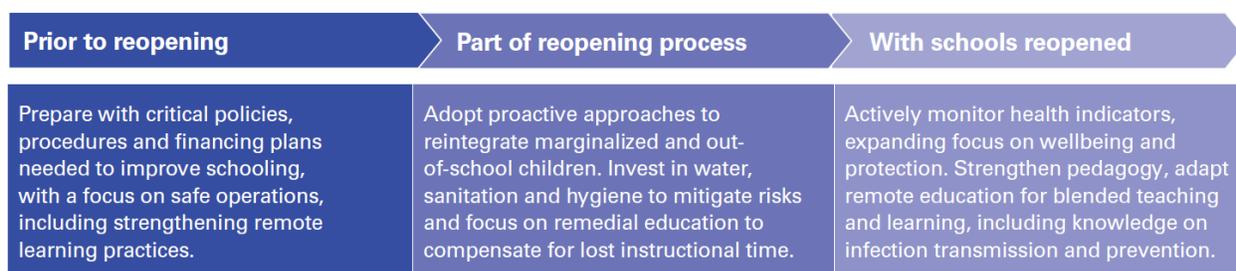
Technical Soundness

1. **The AF redoubles efforts in RAs that are proven to positively impact learning outcomes.** With regard to RA1 on ECE, evidence from rigorous evaluations suggests that high-quality ECE boosts children's school readiness by improving early literacy and numeracy skills and has been associated with better learning outcomes on standardized tests in middle and high school.¹ ECE has also been shown to effectively improve equity and mitigate the impact of children's socioeconomic background on their developmental trajectory, thus increasing human capital among the most vulnerable. The focus of RA2 on improving the learning environment in schools is grounded in the evidence on the impact of school safety and classroom disciplinary climate on teachers' ability to teach students' ability to learn.² How schools, school leaders, and teacher foster positive relationships with students, even when faced with extreme situations of misconduct, is a key determining factor in the ability of a student to perform better. Positive relationships are more likely to foster self-esteem and to enhance the quality of relationships with peers. As students feel more secure, they are more likely to learn more easily, adopt appropriate norms and behaviors, and feel more confident in raising their own expectations. Moreover, socially disadvantaged students tend to benefit more from positive relationships, perhaps because some may be more likely to experience stress and disrespect in their family environment. Positive student-teacher relationships have been directly connected with high socioemotional skills as well as decreased behavioral difficulties.

2. **The AF also supports MOE's medium-term response to the COVID-19 pandemic as reflected in its EDEP, which is in turn aligned with international thinking on preparing for and sustaining safe school reopening.** In April 2020, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank jointly published the *Framework for Reopening Schools* in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented risk to children's education, protection, and wellbeing that school closures represent. This framework aims to inform the decision-making process on when to reopen schools, support national preparations, and guide the implementation process, as part of the overall public health and education planning processes. The framework recognizes that disruptions to instructional time in the classroom can have a severe impact on a child's ability to learn. The longer marginalized children are out of school, the less likely they are to return. Prolonged closures disrupt essential school-based services such as school feeding and psychosocial support, and can cause stress and anxiety due to the loss of peer interaction and disrupted routines. These negative impacts will be significantly higher for marginalized children, refugees, and children living with disabilities. The framework outlines three phases in terms of how to go about reopening schools, each with a set of key activities:

¹ Weiland, Christina and Hirokazu Yoshikawa. 2013. "Impacts of a Prekindergarten Program on Children's Mathematics, Language, Literacy, Executive Function, and Emotional Skills." *Child Development*, Vol. 84 (6), pp. 2112-2130.

² Cahu, Paul and Manal Quota. April 2019. "Does School Safety and Classroom Disciplinary Climate Hinder Learning? Evidence from the MENA Region," *Policy Research Working Paper 8822*, Education Global Practice, World Bank Group.



Source: UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, World Bank. April 2020. *Framework for Reopening Schools*.

3. The MOE’s EDEP Recovery/Remedial and Sustainability Phases include several of the key activities in the framework, some of which are also supported by the AF. As part of the reopening process, the framework highlights the need to adopt proactive approaches to reintegrating marginalized and out-of-school children, as well as focusing on remedial education to compensate for lost instructional time. Along these lines, EDEP’s Recovery/Remedial Phase recognizes the likely learning gap emerging from the reliance on distance education, especially for students from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds (including Syrian refugees), and foresees a month-long catch-up program prior to the beginning of the new school year in September 2020. In addition, as part of the reopening process, the framework stresses the need to invest in water, sanitation, and hygiene to mitigate health risks. The EDEP Recovery/Remedial Phase foresees preparation of schools for the return of students, including ensuring minimum required health and safety measures. The AF, in turn, incentivizes MOE under RA2 to upgrade WASH facilities and ensure that schools meet minimum health and safety requirements.

4. Once schools are reopened, the framework stresses the need to adapt remote education for blended teaching and learning, which corresponds precisely to the AF support to activities under EDEP’s Sustainability Phase. In terms of delivering sustainable, high-quality remote learning, AF interventions under RA1 and RA4 directly incentivize building on MOE’s emergency response by enhancing the resilience of remote learning modalities for KG2 and basic education. The development of television content for KG2 and an iterative approach towards developing several blended learning modalities for all basic education students, including the more vulnerable, will provide the tools for “building back better”. In addition, the AF also incentivizes the training of teachers on blended learning teaching methods and how best to incorporate digital learning into in-person learning. Under RA3, the series of interventions on digitizing the *tawjihi* exam will expand the scope of options for MOE to conduct future assessments by transitioning away from paper and pen exams.

5. The focus in the framework, EDEP, and consequently the AF on promoting blended learning is justified by evidence on the enormous promise in terms of improved learning outcomes shown by educational software programs that are designed to help students develop particular skills.³ Targeting instruction to meet students’ learning levels has been found to be effective in improving student learning, but large class sizes with a wide range of learning levels can make it hard for teachers to personalize instruction. Software has the potential to overcome traditional classroom constraints by customizing activities for each student. Educational software– or “computer-assisted learning”– programs range from light-touch homework support tools to more intensive interventions that re-orient

³ Abdul Lateef Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). 2019. “Will Technology Transform Education for the Better?” *Evidence Review*.

the classroom around the use of software. Most educational software that have been evaluated experimentally help students practice particular skills through “personalized tutoring” approaches.

Disability and Inclusion

6. The focus on blended teaching and learning represents an opportunity to make education in Jordan more inclusive of students with disabilities or special needs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the shift to distance education has made learning more accessible to some students on the autism spectrum, for example. At the same time, remote learning opportunities might not be available or accessible for all students, and a variety of communication channels and methods need to be utilized, ensuring that educational content is shared in sign language, using captions, audio provision, and graphics.⁴ Available technology allows students with print disabilities to use online study materials in different formats like converting texts to audio or Braille characters. However, only a few countries, such as Finland, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, have considered learners with disabilities or diverse/special educational needs in their COVID-19 response, ensuring that some support services are available during the crisis. Yet, the pandemic presents an opportunity to ensure that remote learning is accessible for all and that some more individualized support is available. This will be helpful in future crisis situations and in efforts to address the needs of those who are at risk of not returning to school after they re-open. Once students, teachers and other school staff return to school, it is essential that health and safety is restored with improved health and sanitation practices followed in an inclusive manner with facilities, information and communication accessible for all students and staff. Demand for socio-emotional support and counseling services will increase as the well-being of teachers and students needs to take center stage. Responding to the COVID-19 crisis and recovering from it calls for an inclusive approach, which takes care of all learners, inclusive of children and youth with disabilities and other marginalized learners. Blended education can provide an avenue to emerge from the crisis with more inclusive education systems that can support all learners in getting back on track.

Gender

7. Gender disparities affect the education opportunity, experience and outcomes of both male and female students, but in distinct ways for each group.⁵ There are higher repetition and dropout rates and lower learning outcomes among boys, while the overall learning experience in male schools is of lower quality than in female schools. However, although better learning achievements are recorded in female schools, discriminatory social norms, gender bias and stereotypes compromise the education, career and life aspirations and choices of girls and women. Gender disparities also tend to be exacerbated among more vulnerable socioeconomic groups and refugee populations.

8. The MOE’s Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education 2018-2022 aims to guide and support the Ministry’s efforts to ensure that gender inequalities in education are identified and appropriate interventions to address them are implemented. The Strategy is fully aligned with the ESP 2018-2022, aiming to reinforce its objectives and mainstream gender in its implementation, and the MOE

⁴ Alasuutari, Hanna. April 20, 2020. “Tackling inequity in education during and after COVID-19,” *World Bank Blogs* available at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/tackling-inequity-education-during-and-after-covid-19>

⁵ Jordan Ministry of Education. July 30, 2018. *Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education 2018-2022*.

is responsible for implementing and monitoring the Strategy. It highlights significant gender disparities that can be observed between male and female students in Jordan, especially with relation to:

- (a) the demand for, participation and engagement in, and value attached to education
- (b) the learning and socialization process in school and the overall learning environment
- (c) the quality of education provided in male and female schools
- (d) the learning outcomes between male and female students
- (e) the choice of subjects in vocational and higher education by male and female students, which eventually affects their career choices and life prospects
- (f) the way education qualifications are used by male and female students

9. The Strategy on Gender Equality in Education has two overarching goals, to be pursued through 15 strategic objectives that are organized under each of the six domains of the ESP to ensure alignment of the Strategy with the ESP (see below). Implementation of the Strategy is based on an action plan spanning the period 2018-2022 that also serves as a tool to coordinate the support being provided by different donors to the MOE to implement the Strategy. Support under the AF is therefore coordinated with other donors under the overall ESP framework as well as the Strategy’s action plan. Among the different strategic objectives outlined below, the AF contributes, in particular, to:

- (a) Ensuring equal access to quality ECED for both boys and girls – by supporting a gender-sensitive KG2 quality assurance system (DLI3) and monitoring gender-disaggregated expansion in KG2 enrolment (DLI2);
- (b) Ensuring safe, healthy and enabling learning environments for both boys and girls – by supporting gender-sensitive socioemotional learning programs (DLI5) and gender-specific WASH facilities and health requirements in schools (DLI6);
- (c) Ensuring gender analysis and the use of sex-disaggregated data in education information systems and decision-making – by supporting gender-disaggregated data collection on student and staff behavior and wellbeing with resulting semi-annual reporting that is gender-disaggregated (DLI5 and PAP action);
- (d) Ensuring teaching and learning content is free from gender bias and stereotypes – by supporting teacher training and certification that is gender-sensitive (DLI4, DLI8, and PAP action); and
- (e) Ensuring equal access to technology, with special attention to closing the gender digital divide and promoting girls’ digital skills and competences – by supporting a gender-sensitive blended learning strategy and content (DLI8).

OVERARCHING GOALS	
<p>A. Ensure the education system recognizes and fulfils the distinct needs and aspirations of male and female students, in terms of learning opportunities, experiences and outcomes</p> <p>B. Build individual and institutional capacity within the MOE on gender-responsive analysis, mainstreaming and monitoring</p>	
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	
<p>Domain 1: Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure equal access to quality ECED programs for both boys and girls 2. Ensure equal opportunities in care, play and learning in ECED programs and environments, based on gender equality <p>Domain 2: Access and Equity</p>	

3. Ensure safe, healthy and enabling learning environments for both boys and girls and reduce the risk of SRGBV
4. Promote inclusive education, acknowledging and addressing the specific needs and circumstances of both girls and boys, especially those in vulnerable groups and children with special needs
5. Ensure non-formal education and lifelong learning opportunities are gender-responsive

Domain 3: System Strengthening

6. Mainstream gender in institutional performance management
7. Ensure gender analysis and the use of sex-disaggregated data in education information systems and decision-making

Domain 4: Quality

8. Ensure teaching and learning content is free from gender bias and stereotypes
9. Ensure equal access to technology, with special attention to closing the gender digital divide and promoting girls' digital skills and competences
10. Promote gender balance in school leadership and community participation
11. Study, address and prevent causes of dropout among girls and boys and ensure safe learning environments

Domain 5: Human Resources

12. Ensure teacher policies are based on and promote gender equality

Domain 6: Vocational Education

13. Promote gender balance in the management of vocational education
14. Promote equal learning opportunities to vocational education and improve access of both boys and girls to non-traditional vocational streams
15. Ensure learning contents, processes and environments in vocational education are free from gender bias

Source: Jordan Ministry of Education. July 30, 2018. *Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education 2018-2022*.