



منتدى الاستراتيجيات الأردني
JORDAN STRATEGY FORUM

Education under COVID-19 Circumstances & Beyond

November 2020



#Policy_Brief

1. Introduction

To contain the spread of COVID-19, many countries around the world have decided to suspend their in-person instruction systems and move, temporarily, to remote learning. Home schooling is a shock to children's social life and learning experience. On-line teaching has moved, not only into uncharted territory, but also at an unprecedented speed and scale.

School closures and on-line learning might lead to slower rates of learning or "learning loss".

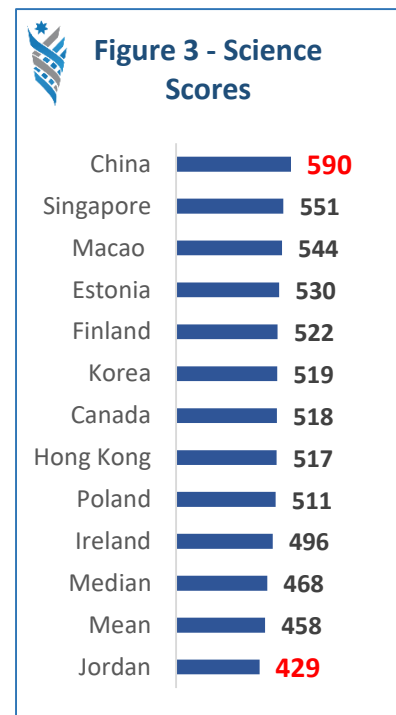
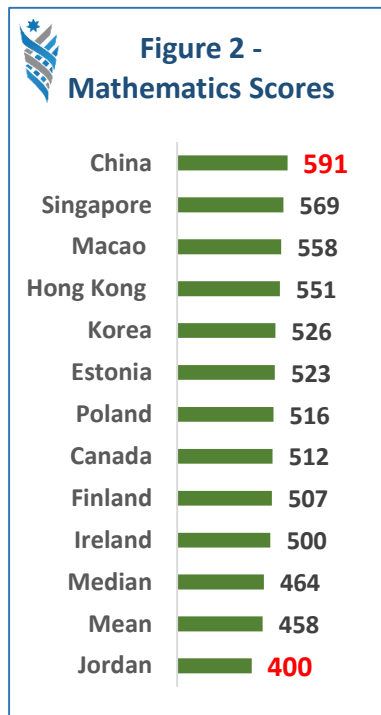
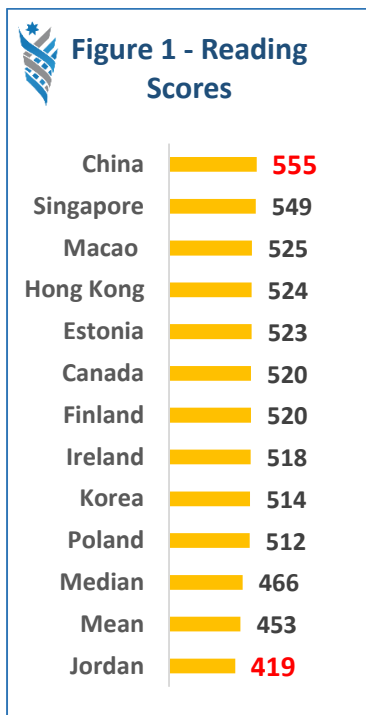
1. The move to remote learning may result in children spending less time learning and hence, more learning loss.
2. Confinement of students at home with their parents may cause stress and anxiety. Some may suffer from acute stress disorder, adjustment disorder, and grief. These factors negatively affect learning.
3. The classroom provides students with the opportunity to interact with classmates. Students may teach each other and improve their performance together. High achieving students may motivate weaker students, through either competition or social influence, to work harder.
4. Classroom activities help students acquire social skills and develop positive self-esteem and self-confidence. The classroom improves the ability of students to work in groups. These benefits may well improve students' performance.
5. The negative impact of school interruptions on students' academic skills and perseverance may differ by socioeconomic status.

COVID-19 has changed education, and probably forever. The mitigation of the negative consequences of the virus is particularly critical in Jordan.

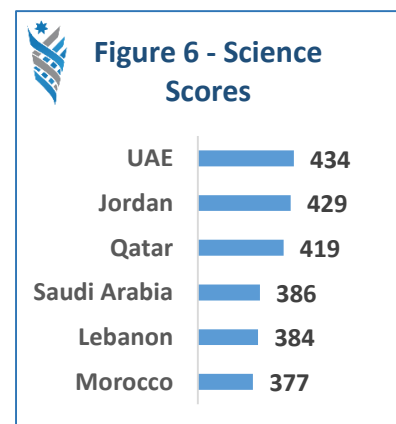
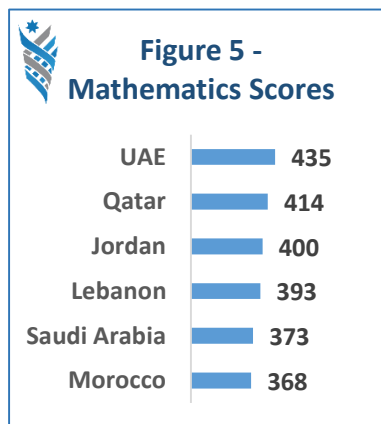
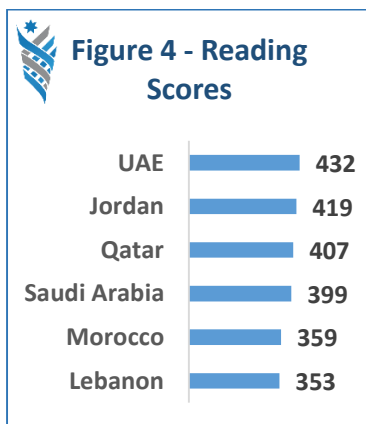
2. Some Observations

In this policy brief, the Jordan Strategy Form (JSF) argues why COVID-19 might be more serious in its implications to school education than in many other countries. In addition, the JSF aims at providing some recommendations to mitigate the implications (adverse) of the virus.

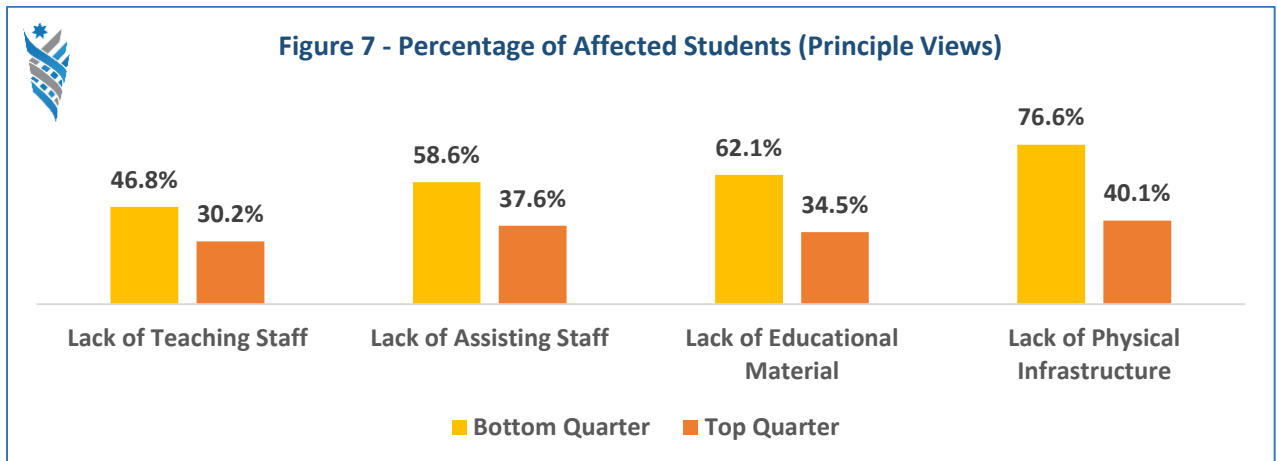
1. Well before the onslaught of COVID-19, the performance of Jordanian 15-year-olds in reading literacy, mathematics, and science was way lower than the global mean and median (2018 Programmed for International Student Assessment / PISA). The mean scores of Jordanian kids were incredibly lower than the Chinese kids.



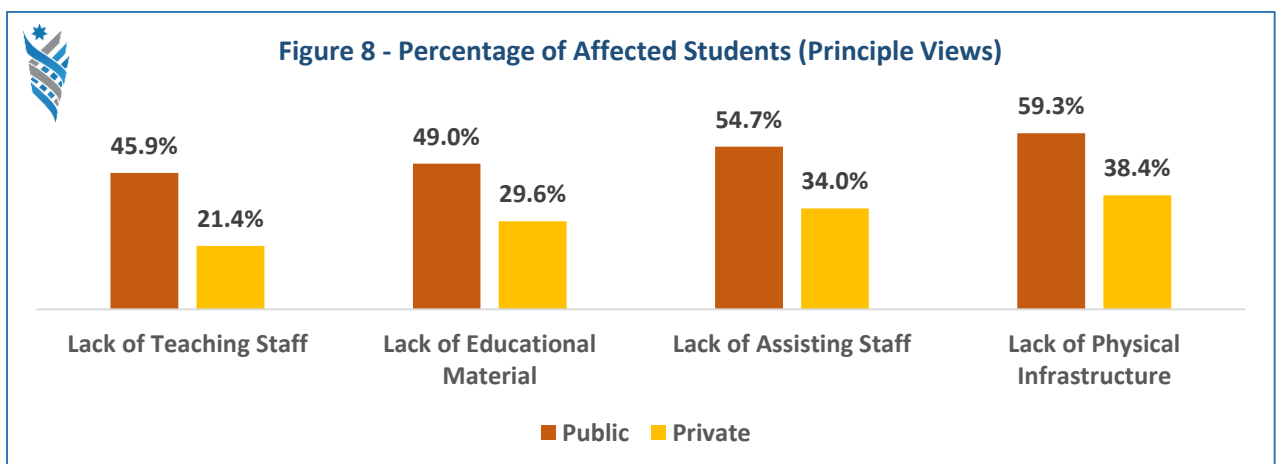
2. Relative to the Arab countries that took part in PISA's 2018 exams, the Jordanian scores are second to the UAE only. However, this does not mean that Jordanian kids score well. All six Arab countries' kids perform poorly relative to the global average.



3. Based on the socio-economic profile of the schools, the education of 76.6%, 62.1%, 58.6%, and 46.8% of the students in the bottom quarter is hindered by a lack of physical infrastructure, lack of educational material, lack of assisting staff, and a lack of teaching staff respectively (as reported by principles of schools). While these ratios are lower in the top quarter schools, the ratios are still high.



4. The education of 59.3%, 54.7%, 49.0%, and 45.9% of the students in public schools is hindered by a lack of physical infrastructure, lack of educational material, lack of assisting staff, and a lack of teaching staff respectively. While these ratios are lower in private schools, the ratios are still high.



3. IN A NUTSHELL

Well before the onslaught of COVID-19, the performance of school kids in Jordan was modest. In addition, the education of large proportions of Jordanian students, as seen by their principles, is hindered by a lack of teaching staff, educational material, assisting staff, and a lack of physical infrastructure. Indeed, these weaknesses are more apparent in public schools, and in the schools that belong to the bottom quarter in terms of their socio-economic profile.

To mitigate the potentially negative consequences of COVID-19, the government and all other stakeholders should consider the three main policy responses. Education during COVID-19 and beyond: Policy Brief: August 2020 / United Nations.

1. Maintain & Protect Education Financing

COVID-19 has forced the government to implement a myriad of monetary policy and fiscal measures to contain not only the human, but also the economic implications of the virus. These measures will press hard public finance in Jordan. The budget deficit will increase as government spending increases and tax and non-tax revenues fall. The government will have no choice but to increase public debt.

The government should mitigate any long-term consequences for children, despite constraints on public spending. The government must protect the financing of education.....through strengthening domestic revenue mobilization, preserving the share of expenditure for education as a top priority and addressing any inefficiencies in education spending. In addition, any foreign assistance for education should be sought and actively.

2. Build Resilient Education System

A resilient education system enables any government to respond to the immediate challenges of re-opening schools and better cope with future crises. This is why the government should focus on equity and inclusion, reinforce capacities for risk management, ensure strong leadership and coordination, and enhance consultation and communication mechanisms.

3. Re-Imagine Education

The government should address learning losses and prevent dropouts, particularly among the disadvantaged. The government should support the teaching profession and teachers' readiness, and expand the definition of the right to education to include connectivity. The government should also remove barriers to connectivity, strengthen data and monitoring of learning, strengthen the articulation and flexibility across levels and types of education and training.



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JORDAN STRATEGY FORUM

هاتف: +٩٦٢ ٦٥١١ ٦٤٧٦ فاكس: +٩٦٢ ٦٥١١ ٦٣٧٦

www.jsf.org info@jsf.org

 /JordanStrategyForumJSF  @JSFJordan