



Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education (MoE)

National Response Plan

for COVID19

March 2020

Background:

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV.' The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold.

The COVID-19 virus was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. On 30 January 2020, the WHO declared that the current outbreak constituted a public health emergency of international concern. On 11 March 2020, WHO announced COVID19 as pandemic with more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries outside mainland China and 4,291 deaths¹ mainly in South Korea, Italy and Iran.

As of 14 March, State of Palestine has currently 38 confirmed cases of COVID-19². Most are part of a cluster in Bethlehem (South West Bank) and one, for which the origin of infection is not confirmed, in Tulkarem (North West Bank). Around 3,654 are in home quarantine mainly in Bethlehem area and 64 under the supervision of the Ministry of Health (MoH). In the case of Bethlehem, MoH transferred one of the hotels in Bethlehem to a quarantine center.

State of Palestine declared a State of Emergency on March 6th after first 7 reported cases in Bethlehem. This entailed closing off Bethlehem governorate, suspending all tourism to West Bank, closing all schools for 30 days as well as public spaces, restaurants and gyms in Bethlehem and other governorates across the West Bank. Restrictions on movement between governorates were also imposed, and the disinfection of all public places including churches, mosques and touristic places throughout Palestine. Further restrictions have been announced by the Palestinian government on travelling through King Hussein Bridge.

As for education, all schools in West Bank and Gaza Strip including public, private and UNRWA schools are closed as a protective measure. The Ministry of Education is currently working on connecting teachers and students with available e-Learning platforms in order to maintain the continuity of knowledge sharing among children. These efforts are not intended to be compulsory or ensure continuity of the education process with all its components but aims at keeping children connected with the learning process and provide them with the meaningful resources for self-learning.

¹ <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>

² Ministry of Health Palestine

Rational:

This national COVID19 emergency response plan document aims at presenting the MoE Palestine planned preparedness and response measures to ensure students safety, psychosocial wellbeing and continuity of transferring knowledge and information to all student both in Gaza and West

Response Objectives:

Bank. This document is the umbrella for all interventions related to the COVID19 response and highlights areas where external need of technical and financial support from donors and partners is required.

During Pandemic and emergency status (schools are closed):

- School children and their families in West Bank and Gaza have the adequate information on the Pandemic and hygiene preventive measures.
- School children and their parents have access to free online platforms for age appropriate materials, worksheets and lessons to ensure the continuation of knowledge sharing to school children.
- Support the psychosocial well-being of both students, their parents and educators in West Bank and Gaza
- Improve all schools WASH facilities including latrines, water points and availability of clean water and distribution of cleaning and hygiene kits to schools and public KGs as mean of controlling spread of pandemic

Post Pandemic (Schools re-open):

- All schools and public KGs in West Bank and Gaza are cleaned and disinfected prior to re-opening
- Schools and public KGs in West Bank and Gaza have adequate hygiene kits and apply infection control measures regularly
- Smooth transition to normal education will be ensured through provision of adequate remedial education, PSS and recreational activities packages in schools.
- Special measures in place to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus directly or indirectly

Response Framework:

1. During Pandemic and emergency status (schools are closed):

Objective	Interventions	Monitoring Indicators	MoE focal point	Type of support needed	Budget
School children and their families in West Bank and Gaza have the adequate information on the Pandemic and hygiene preventive measures.	<p>Utilize all social media platforms for the MoE, Directorates, Schools and partners to:</p> <p>Continue disseminating WHO and MoH awareness raising materials</p> <p>Broadcast hygiene promotion animation movies produced earlier by MoE</p>		Mr. Ihab Shukri – DG school health	<p>WHO/UNICEF to keep updating MoE on the development of any new materials and guidance</p> <p>MoE partners as part of the resource mapping to share any Arabic materials developed by their organization in the region</p> <p>Partners to share all MoE published materials on their</p>	No additional associated cost

	<p>Map out relevant and appropriate child friendly materials and videos produced in the region and Palestine, and disseminate through social media</p> <p>Liaise with Palestine TV and radio stations to broadcast the MoE messages to children and their families</p>			social media platforms and websites	
<p>School children and their parents have access to free online platforms for age appropriate materials, worksheets and lessons to ensure the continuation of knowledge sharing to school children</p>	<p>On the short run:</p> <p>Update the MoE e-learning platform with new content and materials and with links to external useful resources</p>		<p>Mr. Ahmad Ammar DG supervision and Mr. Jihad Dreidi DG ICT</p>	<p>Partners who have developed self-learning materials to children are encouraged to share them with the MoE</p> <p>Partners to share the MoE messages in regard to self-learning</p>	<p>\$50,000 for developing the e-learning platform</p>

	<p>Select a pool of supervisors and teachers to video tape classes and broadcast them on directorates and MoE YouTube channels</p> <p>Encourage all school teachers to connect with their students through available social media platforms and support their learning efforts remotely</p> <p>Utilize the social media platforms of the MoE and its partners to raise awareness of parents and children on the importance of home-based learning and provide caregivers with clear guidance on how to best support</p>			<p>on their social media and websites</p> <p>Funding of the new e-learning platform that the MoE will be developing.</p>	
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	<p>their children learning and emotional needs</p> <p>On the long run:</p> <p>Fully activate the MoE e-learning platform through rich, and interactive content and materials, teachers' capacity building and offering IT solutions for teachers' direct engagement with their students. MoE will take into consideration supporting vulnerable children in remote areas to have equal access to the platform.</p>				
<p>Support the psychosocial well-being of both students, their parents and educators in West bank and Gaza</p>	<p>Prepare and disseminate media and social media messages to caregivers, teachers and children on supporting children emotional and psychosocial wellbeing. Focus on gender</p>		<p>Mr. Mohammed Hawwash DG of school counselling</p>	<p>MHPSS partners to work with MoE on producing and disseminating the PSS package targeting caregivers, teachers and children.</p>	<p>\$15,000</p>

	<p>specific issues and discrimination and stigmatization.</p> <p>Disseminate through media and social media links to remote MHPSS service providers and hotlines</p> <p>Encourage all school counselors and MoE PSS emergency teams to utilize school social media platforms to provide PSS messages and offer individual counseling to children, teachers and parents</p>				
<p>Improve all schools WASH facilities including latrines, water points and availability of clean water and distribution of cleaning and</p>	<p>Renovate latrines in 293 schools in West Bank and Gaza</p>		<p>Ms. Wisam Nakhleh DG of school building</p>	<p>Donors to directly support the MoE to be able to construct and renovate latrines and water points and</p>	<p>\$5.2 million for renovation and construction</p>

<p>hygiene kits to schools and public KGs in West Bank and Gaza as mean of controlling spread of pandemic</p>	<p>Build additional latrines in 402 schools in West Bank and Gaza taking into consideration units for Children with Disabilities</p> <p>Renovate the clean drinking water units at 134 school in West Bank and Gaza</p> <p>Purchase and disseminate cleaning and hygiene packages to all schools in West Bank and Gaza</p>			<p>purchase hygiene and cleaning packages. Other partners can offer support through direct implementation in their targeted schools in coordination with the ministry.</p>	<p>of WASH facilities \$770,000 for school hygiene packages for 1 month</p>
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2.Post Pandemic (Schools re-open)

Objective	Interventions	Monitoring Indicators	MoE focal point	Type of support needed	Budget
<p>All schools and public KGs in West Bank and Gaza are cleaned and disinfected prior to re-opening</p>	<p>MoE to ensure that schools and public KGs have the adequate cleaning materials for at least the first 2 months</p> <p>MoE with MoH disseminate the guidance for school cleaning and disinfecting to all schools and KGs (public and private) regularly</p> <p>Liaise with the municipalities and village councils to clean and disinfect schools</p>		<p>Mr. Ihab Shukri</p>	<p>Support in the purchase of the cleaning and hygiene packages. The budget is already calculated above</p>	
<p>Schools children in West Bank and Gaza have adequate hygiene kits and schools and KGs apply infection control measures regularly</p>	<p>Distribute children personal hygiene kits to vulnerable children in West Bank and Gaza schools and public KGs</p> <p>A clear guidance package with division of tasks is distributed to all schools and</p>		<p>Mr. Ihab Shukri</p>	<p>Support in the purchase of the personal hygiene kits</p> <p>A small technical team to support school health department in developing and</p>	<p>\$2M for personal hygiene kits for children studying in the most vulnerable 340 schools and</p>

	<p>KGs on all infection control measures that need to be implemented. This guidance should also be disseminated through e-school and social media to all school staff before schools are open</p>			<p>disseminating the infection control guidance package</p>	<p>public KGs in WB and Gaza</p>
<p>Smooth transition to normal education will be ensured through provision of adequate remedial education, PSS and recreational activities packages in schools and public KGs</p>	<p>A detailed plan will be put in place during the school closure period, to ensure that the first days after the re-opening of schools and KGs are transitional and will consider emotional and psychological wellbeing of children in addition to their learning needs. Interventions will include:</p> <p>PSS interventions lead by the school counselor and MoE PSS teams</p> <p>Crises cells at schools to develop actions to support with post emergency interventions at schools.</p>		<p>Mr. Mohammed Hawash DG School Counselling and Special Education and Mr. Ayoob Eliyan DG of Field Follow Up</p>	<p>Specialized partners to technically support the Counselling department in developing the back to school plan.</p> <p>MHPSS partners to support MoE through provision of structures MHPSS interventions</p> <p>Specialized partners to support on the remedial education programs for vulnerable children</p> <p>Partners to support in organizing fun and recreational days at schools</p>	<p>TBD</p>

	<p>Fun and recreational activities implemented by all teachers and school staff and partner organizations</p> <p>Structured MHPSS interventions by specialized organizations</p> <p>Awareness raising on nondiscrimination and stigmatization</p> <p>Identification of vulnerable children who will need additional learning support and remedial education programs. The support will be provided during school hours in addition to after school and weekends by MoE teachers or by specialized partners</p>				
<p>Special measures in place to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus directly or indirectly</p>	<p>MoE as part of the transitional period, will raise awareness of children on not to stigmatize children who were affected by the virus. These messages will also be</p>		<p>Mr. Mohammed Hawash DG School Counselling and</p>	<p>Partners can share with MoE materials that their organization has been using globally as part of</p>	<p>No additional cost required. Will be done fully through</p>

	mainstreamed by teachers in the classroom and within all recreational and PSS activities.		Special Education	the COVID 19 response related to stigma.	Ministry resources
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12th Grade Exam:

The below information is based on the scenario that schools will re-open in April. The MoE has plans for other scenarios which will be announced in due course and might need different level of support and logistical needs.

For 12th grade the MoE has announced the following:

- The 12th grade official exams remain on the same dates.
- The Mock exams were cancelled and instead they will be shared with all students as worksheets.
- The Ministry asked 12th grade students to use these days to study and prepare for the exams.
- MoE will upload links on its website for 12th grade materials that students are encouraged to use.

The below table presents the MoE plan for West Bank and Gaza to conduct the official exams taking into consideration safety, health and protection of students and teachers:

Objective	Interventions	Monitoring Indicators	MoE focal point	Type of support needed	Budget
<p>Conduct 12th grade exam on time, considering the protection of children and educational facilities and follow all necessary precautions to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19</p>	<p>Increase the number of testing halls to reduce the number of people/rooms as one of the measures to prevent potential spreads of the virus (this results in the need for more teachers to monitor the exams)</p> <p>Ensure all testing rooms and correction centres have adequate hygiene and cleaning kits</p> <p>Increase number of correction centres from 3 to 6, to consider movement restrictions and number of people/rooms</p>		<p>Mr. Mohammed Awwad DG for Testing</p>	<p>Direct financial support to cover the additional logistical and Human Resource needs</p> <p>Support the Ministry in procuring Hygiene kits for all test halls and correction centres.</p>	<p>\$470,000</p>

Communication:

External Communication:

It's clear from the MoE response framework that media and social media messages are an integral intervention within the MoE emergency response, therefore the Ministry is developing a comprehensive and detailed media plan that includes all messaging around hygiene, learning, supporting children to understand, emotional support that targets parents, teachers, school management and children. This plan will be coordinated with the risk communication taskforce that includes representatives from UNICEF, WHO, MoH, BoP, and PICA and will be coordinated by the DG of Public Relations and media at the MoE. This will ensure consistent messaging and prevent duplication of efforts.

Internal Communication:

Following the announcement of the emergency status, the MoE acknowledged the difficulty in communication between the school principals, directorates and the Ministry. This gap in communication forced the Ministry to use public social media platforms such as Facebook for communication and some key messages and the Ministry was not certain if to have reached all the relevant school principals.

In response to this internal communication gap, the Ministry will start working on a special mobile application that allows for proper communication flow between the different layers of the structure, which can be easily accessible through smart phones. This will help us overcome the communication challenges the ministry is facing now with its schools being closed and principals not being able to access the school computers. The Ministry will seek the support of one of its partners to support in developing this mobile application.

Administrative Emergency decisions and measures:

Attendance and operation of administrative teams at the MoE, and at the directorates:

- MoE staff who live outside Ramallah Governorate are to operate from the nearest directorate to their residence city, after coordinating with the director of the unit that they are part of.
- Directorate staff who are from a different city are to be stationed in the nearest directorate in their residence city.
- Operation and work at the Bethlehem directorate is based off the crises cell decisions, and which is led by the Bethlehem governorate governor.

- Director generals at MoE and Directors of the directorates who live outside their workstation are to delegate a department's director from their departments.
- Working mothers with children in KGs, nursery, schools are to work from home after coordinating with their supervisors. All work commitments are to be shared via email.

School attendance:

The school head teacher should develop a schedule with the secretary to ensure that regular monitoring for the school and its facilities is taking place and taking advantage of these days to improve school environment referencing to the national school environment mapping which MoE has recently executed.