RELIEF INTERNATIONAL

"Education Cannot Wait"*

Relief International's education response to COVID-19 in Jordan

April, 2020

Rapid Needs Assessment
Mechanisms to continue supporting remedial and non-formal education through distance learning programs
Syrian Refugee Camps and Host Community

Relief International (RI) launched its Jordan operations in 2004, offering life-saving assistance to Palestinian and Iraqi refugees and Jordanian host communities. Since 2012, RI Jordan's focus has shifted to the crisis in neighboring Syria, which has sent more than 751,275 refugees into camps and communities in Jordan. In the host community RI Jordan has been providing remedial education and anti-violence awareness campaigns to Jordanian and Syrian refugee students in 16 schools across 4 governorates. RI has also supported Syrian refugees in Za'atari and Azraq Camps since 2013, and is considered one of the leading agencies providing remedial education, Ministry of Education (MoE)-certified Non-Formal Education (NFE), and Early Childhood Development (ECD) activities.

In light of the recent developments relating to COVID-19 (a coronavirus), the Government of Jordan (GoJ) has suspended the operation of schools and consequently RI has been working to support the distance education provided by GoJ through distance education mechanisms.

According to the Ministry of Education **7,434** schools are closed affecting **2.4** million students in Jordan.

And **47** schools are closed in Azraq and Za'atari Syrian Refugee Camps affecting **28,641** students.

Relief International conducted a rapid needs assessment covering both camps and host communities in order to better ascertain the obstacles to operationalizing a distance learning modality for both remedial and non-formal education programs across the north of Jordan.

The purpose of the assessment was to identify the main challenges facing the communities served across Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa'a Governorates in terms of internet coverage, availability of internet-enabled devices, levels of interest in distance learning and the different possibilities for learning modalities.

Demographic Details

RI reached **2,963** caregivers to participate in the survey in host communities: Governorates of Amman, Irbid, Mafraq, and Zarqa. Camps: Za'atari and Azraq Syrian refugee camps.
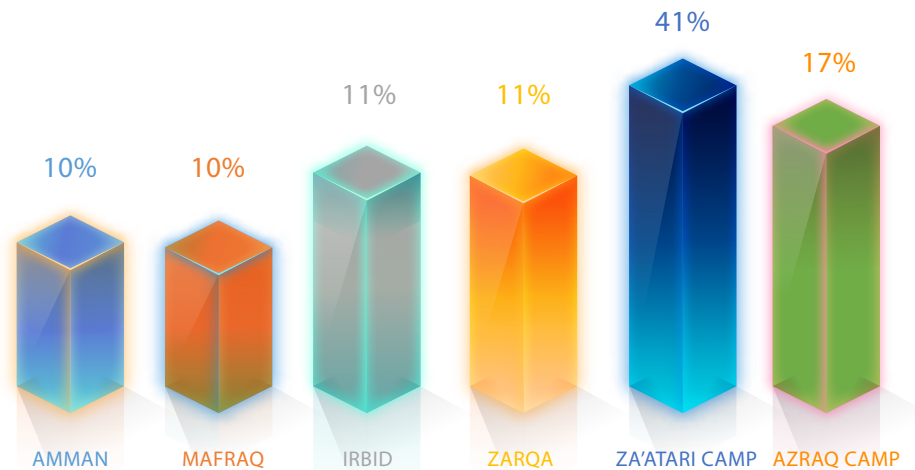
1,303 Females

1,660 Males

Percentage of respondents by the governorate and Camps

AMMAN	MAFRAQ	IRBID	ZARQA	ZA'ATARI CAMP	AZRAQ CAMP
10%	10%	11%	11%	41%	17%

*Key education in emergencies principle

MAIN FINDINGS – HOST Communities

RI conducted a rapid needs assessment in households across Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa Governorates to assess the feasibility of distance learning for students in remedial education.

Total number of reached: **1260**

Adapting to the crisis: What are the *caregivers of our students saying?*

98% *support online education*

50% *suggest recorded lessons*

Adapting to the crisis: *How can we connect?*

84% *with internet*

16% *poor internet*

97% *at least one smart phone*

87% *give permission*

76% *run out of data each month*

89% *have WhatsApp*

MAIN FINDINGS – Za'atari and Azraq Camps

RI conducted a rapid needs assessment in households across Za'atari and Azraq Camps to assess the feasibility of distance learning for students in remedial and non-formal education.

Total number of reached: **1703**

Adapting to the crisis: What are the *caregivers of our students saying?*

87% *support online education*

55% *suggest recorded lessons*

Adapting to the crisis: *How can we connect?*

82% *with internet*

65% *poor internet*

99% *at least one smart phone*

96% *give permission*

86% *run out of data each month*

97% *have WhatsApp*

Recommendations for

Education partners

- Education service providers/ stakeholders are encouraged to look at distance learning during this crisis as an opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills in this area and pay more attention to blended learning and efficient distance learning platforms.

- All education sector members / education service providers are urged to follow education in emergencies main principal "Education Cannot Wait" and continue their educational programs during the COVI-19 crisis to maintain children's connectivity with their schools, teachers and classmates.

- The Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) is urged to advocate with the Government of Jordan to allocate at least one day per week for computer / smartphones shops to allow parents to either buy new devices or do the needed maintenance of devices that need repair. This will support and ensure success of distance learning at a national level, as many parents have more than two school aged children at home, where available devices available per household are usually less than the number of school-aged children. This should be followed with clear safety instructions for shops/sellers.

- Education service providers/ stakeholders should support the Ministry of Education (MoE) efforts in distance learning by providing technical assistance, best practices in distance learning that can support the MoE in addressing the current challenges they are facing on the 'Darsak platform' or televised classes such as lack of interactivity between students and teachers.

- Education service providers/ stakeholders should pay extra attention to potential protection risks including cyber-bullying as students will spend extra time on their electronic devices and internet, and the potential for improper comments and harassment on WhatsApp groups etc.

- Education service providers/ stakeholders need to look for innovative ways to collect data related to their indicators, do proper monitoring and evaluation activities and measuring the impact of distance learning activities as much as possible.

- Education service providers/stakeholders should pay attention to quality of distance learning classes whether these are pre-recorded video lessons, voice records or any other format including learning worksheets and online tests, ensuring learning content is correct and meets the highest pre-crisis educational standards. Any online portals should support the use of Arabic language characters where appropriate.

- Education service providers/stakeholders should work with internet service providers to provide discounted rates to households with students in order to soften the barriers to distance learning. Where possible education service providers should work to help support households in covering additional costs that would be incurred.

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Students

- All partners should agree on communicating key messages to all students explaining to them the importance of distance learning, and how it is different to normal classes especially when it comes to students' roles, personal commitment, self-motivation and becoming an active learner. This is in addition to outlining the expected changes in educational evaluation and learning assessment, as this will contribute to changing learner's attitudes towards active learning in the long-run.

- To ensure effective support, especially to Tawjihi students, education stakeholders should keep following-up on MoE televised lessons and the Darsak platform providing them with daily and weekly schedules and for repeated lessons, or recording these lessons and sharing them with those who missed these classes.

- Education service providers are encouraged to follow an effective, easy, accessible and user-friendly mechanism to provide distance learning to students, providing students with clear tips and instructions on how to use the technology efficiently.

Parents

- Education service providers/stakeholders are urged to keep effective communication with parents and local communities they are serving, highlighting the importance of distance learning and the changes in roles of teachers, students and parents in distance learning in order to ensure effective support to students.

- Education service providers/stakeholders are advised to provide extra internet bundles to their beneficiaries especially those with low income, and advocate to enhance internet connection in areas where internet connection is very week such as Syrian refugee camps.

- Education service providers/stakeholders should stay active on social medial and other media platforms, channels highlighting the importance of learning continuity through any distance learning modality. Moreover, it's important to unify together to dispel negative stereotypes of distance learning and publish online messages showing the great success of distance learning in many areas, cases, countries etc.

Teachers

- Education service providers/stakeholders should support MoE efforts on building the capacities of teachers in both formal and non-formal education programs on distance learning methods and tools, especially in integrating pedagogy and technology and instructional design in distance learning.

- Education service providers/stakeholders are urged to maintain effective communication with the teachers they are working with highlighting the importance of distance learning and the changes in roles of teachers from direct teaching to distance learning and virtual classes, changes related to student's evaluation and assessments, shifting from traditional exams to new evaluation tools.

- Maximize and highlight the roles and responsibilities of teachers in distance learning and how this requires them to commit to learning more about technology and instructional design to ensure quality education videos and recorded lessons and avoid a potential decrease in the roles of teachers in distance learning.