

Education Cluster Support to Ministry of Education (MoE)

COVID19 Response Plan

Reporting period: 20 March -15 May 2020

Affected Children:

All Education facilities in the oPt have been closed as a protective measure since the declaration of the state of emergency. There are 3,051 schools in the oPt: 2,300 in the West Bank and 751 in Gaza. In addition, there are 2,027 kindergartens: 1,332 in the West Bank and 695 in Gaza. The number of children affected is 1,430,000: 1,282,000 school children and 148,000 kindergarten children. Of these, 57 per cent are in the West Bank and 43 per cent are in Gaza. Out of the total number of children affected, 51 per cent are girls.

Identified Needs by Education Cluster and MoE:

- Continuation of distant learning for 1.4 million children in West Bank and Gaza that has been disrupted due education facilities closure.
- Availability of e-learning materials and platforms that can be used during the schools' closure to ensure continuity of learning for children while at home.
- Availability of learning materials that can be distributed to families without internet connection in remote areas in the West bank to be used for home-based learning.
- Dissemination of key awareness raising messages to children and their families around COVID 19, hygiene related preventive measures and the importance of continuity of learning at home.
- Cleaning and disinfecting all schools in preparation for their re-opening. This needs adequate supply of cleaning and disinfecting materials to all schools while they are closed.
- Provision of innovative psychosocial support interventions for teachers and students through utilizing social media and phone calls.
- Guidelines and key messages disseminated to children, their families and school staff to avoid stigmatization of children and teachers that may have been infected by the virus.
- Rehabilitation of school latrines and drinking water faucets including provision of adequate clean water to schools. The Ministry of Education assessed all school infrastructure earlier in the year and identified this as a critical need to ensure safe and healthy learning environments.

Education Cluster Response:

- **Structure of the Response:**

Due to the nature of this emergency both the Education Cluster and the MoE acknowledged the importance of developing a MoE holistic response plan that identifies the needs and the response strategy of the MoE. In order to support the MoE in this key function, the National Education Cluster Coordinator was deployed to the Ministry in Ramallah with a clear scope of working with the MoE in developing its response plan. The plan was developed and disseminated to all stakeholders on 17 March 2020.

Accordingly, the Education Cluster established 4 thematic taskforces to support the MoE in implementing the 4 main objectives under its response plan (distance learning, provision of MHPSS, hygiene promotion, renovation of schools WASH facilities as well as distribution of school hygiene kits). The Education Cluster through these taskforces is ensuring that the MoE has the technical capacity and the financial means to implement the priority interventions identified within the Ministry's plan.

- **Response Objectives:**

- School staff, children and their families in West Bank and Gaza have the adequate information and resources to prevent the spread of the pandemic.
- School children and their parents have access to free online platforms and home-based learning for age appropriate materials, worksheets and lessons to ensure the continuation of learning by school children.
- Support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of students, parents and educators in West bank and Gaza.
- Rehabilitation of school WASH facilities as an important measure to control the virus spreading prior to schools re-opening.

- **Financial Support:**

Education Cluster partners were able to allocate 2.2 million USD to support the MoE in implementing the COVID 19 Response Plan. The details of these allocations are in the table below:

Donor		Recipient	Amount US\$
Education Cannot Wait Multi Year Resilience Program		UNICEF, UNDP, SCI, UNESCO	640,000
ECW Emergency Response	First	UNICEF, SCI	850,000
Italy (IADC)		EDUCAID	35,000

ECHO	NRC	105,000
ECHO	UNICEF	76,000
Norway MFA	SCI	70,000
NORAD	SCI	30,000
UNESCO	UNESCO	150,000
Total funding to MoE response plan		2,226,000
ECW	UNRWA	480,000
Total Education Response funding		2,706,000

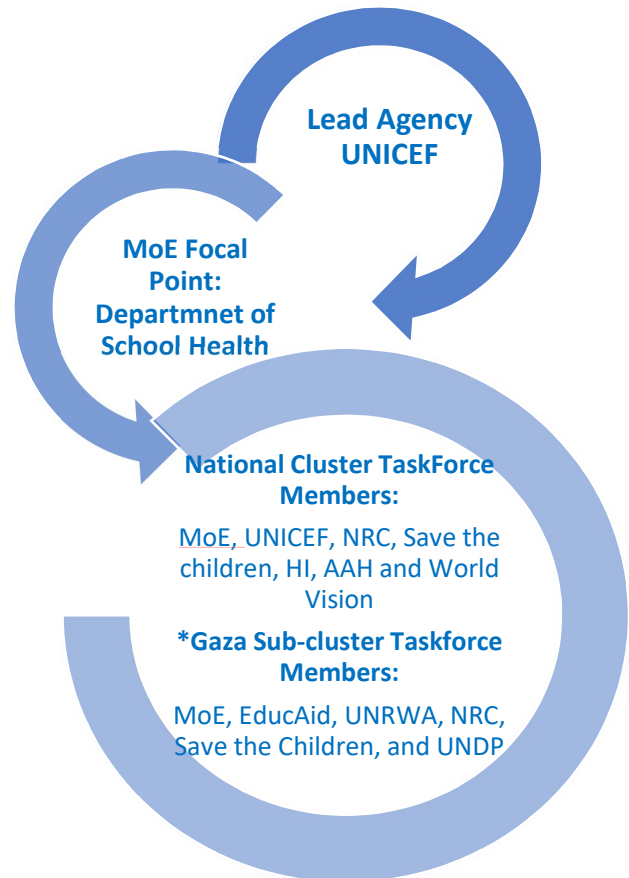
Progress by Thematic Taskforce:

1. Hygiene



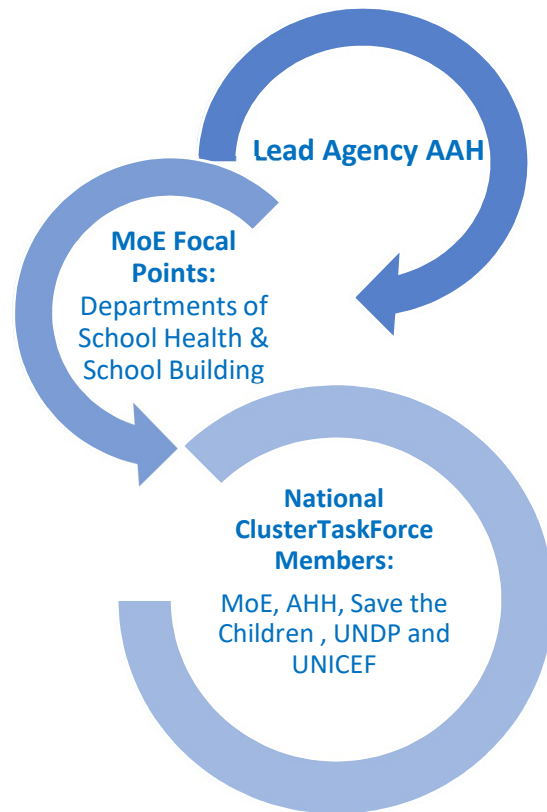
taskforce

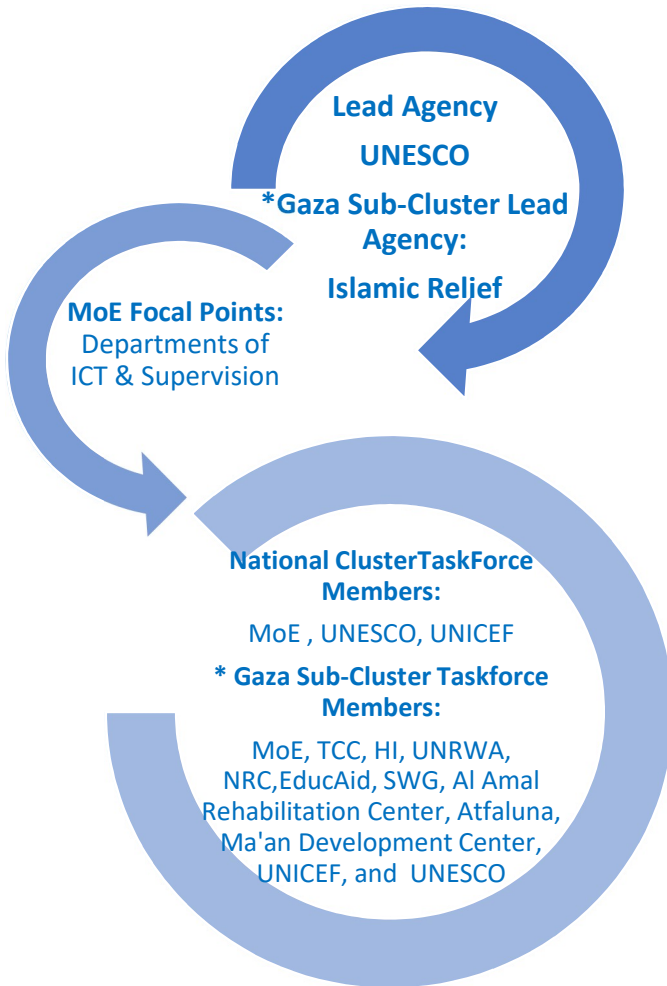
- Taskforce successfully identifies all material support needed by MoE to ensure children are safe once schools reopen and during 12th grade exams.
- Taskforce drafted the safe school guidance kit to be used by all schools once reopened.
- Taskforce members started procurement for 2,200 school hygiene and cleaning kits for schools in West Bank including East Jerusalem and Gaza. This covers the needs of all public schools for one month prior to reopening.
- Taskforce procured all hygiene and cleaning items needed for the 850 testing and corrections centres for 12th grade exams
- Taskforce will print the safety protocol and messages targeting 12th grade students and tests administrators. MoE will distribute these brochures to all testing centres on the first day of the 12th grade exams.



2. WASH Infrastructure Taskforce

- Taskforce identified schools in Gaza and West Bank in need of rehabilitation and construction of additional latrines as well as rehabilitation of drinking water points.
- Taskforce members allocated funds to cover the rehabilitation of latrines and drinking water faucets in approximately 70 schools across the country.
- Taskforce agreed upon implementation modalities given the challenges imposed by the pandemic and the emergency status in the country.
- Construction work started in few schools, while it will start soon in the others as construction work has just been allowed from beginning of May after easing the restrictions measures.
- Funding allocation for the infrastructure interventions has proven to be challenging on the short run; so the taskforce advises the MoE to reach out to its development donors including JFPs to support filling in the gap in this area of intervention.





3. Distance Taskforce

Learning

- The taskforce members were able to allocate approximately \$600,000 to support the MoE in its distance learning program.
- Taskforce members submitted a joint plan to the MoE presenting their potential areas of support to the MoE
- MoE is now finalizing their own distance learning plan which identifies the needs for support from the distance learning taskforce members.
- The taskforce can't start its support to the MoE until the MoE develops a clear strategy for distance learning, and key members of the taskforce are ready to support the MoE in developing this long-term strategy.

4. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Taskforce



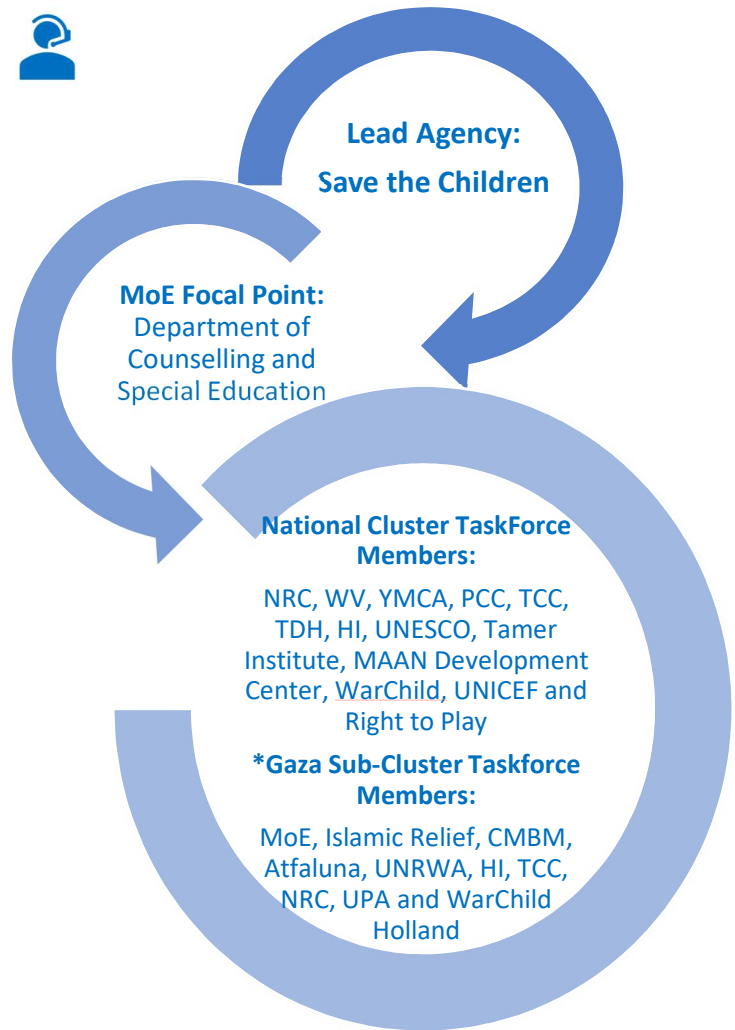
The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Task Force had met in order to support Ministry of Education (MoE) National Response plan for COVID-19 Pandemic crises. The task force had focused on the mental health needs and psychosocial interventions of students during and after the pandemic.

During pandemic and emergency status where schools are closed and students are at home, the response plan aimed to support the psychosocial well-being of both students, their parents and educators in the West Bank and Gaza. The post pandemic phase aims to support student's smooth transition to normal education and school adjustment, through provision of adequate remedial education, psychosocial and recreational activities packages.

All produced and implemented activities for awareness raising and psychosocial support were posted on MoE and various social media platforms and facilitated by MoE counselors.

With ensured proper coordination and material exchange, the MHPSS Taskforce had succeeded in reaching out for students, parents and counselors. The process and the activities were gender sensitive, inclusive for students with special and mental health needs and age related. Guidelines of child safeguarding, parental involvement, child friendly materials and referral of children/families with emerging psychosocial needs/risks were followed and warranted.

All activities were interactive and involving of participants. There was a bouquet of different approaches, each had blossomed in its unique way to fulfil the needs of students, parents and 500 counselors. Activities included: capacity building and wellbeing support of counselors (helping the helpers), expressive art activities, storytelling and discussion, using puppets, relaxation exercises, daily living activities, stress management activities and many others were designed and presented to supports student's psychosocial needs, adjustment and protection while being at home quarantine. On the other hand, for students /parents with preexisting mental health needs and or new emerging ones, a series of specialized awareness materials, online consultations and counseling sessions and referral measurements when in need, were utilized. Issues of



discriminations against students/ families and or staff who had been affected by COVID19 were covered and targeted.

The MHPSS Taskforce was able to achieve the following:

1. Consider and meet all MoE requests needed to support students, parents and counselors at this stage.
2. Reach a great harmony in integrating all efforts, effective and efficient collaboration among members and MOE, and facilitated with Incredible leadership and commitment by all task force members who were very active at every meeting and extremely responsive to MoE needs.
3. Fortify the relationship between partners and MoE.
4. Implement interventions with children, parents and counselors and fulfilling wide spectrum of needs due to organization's coordination of resources
5. Reach higher capacity of counselors to respond and reach out for students in need by maintain their own well-being.
6. Present a directory of hotlines available for referral posted on MOE website.

The interventions are monitored to reflect their impact on targeted groups and feedback shared by students. The Taskforce will convey a lesson learned session with task force members to capture learning, look into impact, challenges, modalities of working, and any other needed areas of support.

For detailed information about partners' activities for COVID19 Response, please visit the 5Ws (Who does What, Where and When) tool:

<http://data.ochaopt.org/dbs/5ws/index.aspx>

For additional information about various resources and documents produced during COVID19 Response by the oPt Education Cluster team and partners, please check:

[COVID19 Response Shared Resources](#)