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المركز الإقليمي لتنمية الطفولة المبكرة
Early Childhood Development Regional Center

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UNESCO COVID-19 Education Strategy Regional Webinar-Arab States

A Strategic Framework for Reopening Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Settings in the Arab States'

Wednesday, 7 October 2020, 12pm-2pm (Beirut time)

Registration: <https://unesco-org.zoom.us/join/981638>

Password: 981638

YouTube Live Streaming: <https://www.youtube.com/unescoibeirutoffice>

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has crippled the education system globally while some groups of learners such as young children are more severely affected than others and often overlooked in the educational responses. Only around 44% countries across the world have provided online solutions at Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) level for distance learning and wellbeing programmes during the school closures, while more than 70% countries have provided the online solutions to the other levels of education to cope with the learning loss.¹ According to a global survey on the COVID-19 impact on Early Childhood Education (ECE) conducted by UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, around 155 million children in pre-primary programmes are heavily affected by the education institution closures worldwide, and the overall figure of affected young children is inevitably much higher given that “Early Childhood cover 0-8 years old children” and the data collection is not thorough enough. Moreover, 40 million young children across the globe have missed out on ECE in their pre-school year², and some 5 million young children have high risks of dropping out after the pandemic³. Challenges for young children to continue learning during school closures are much more than other levels of education due to multiple reasons such as pre-primary education was not emphasized during the school closures, pre-primary institutions’ reopening agenda is also slower compared to other levels of education, knowledge and skills vary among the caregivers, and young children are often less engaged in the remote learning programmes.

When it comes to the Arab States, where the pre-primary enrollment rate is relatively low (25.4%) compared to other developing regions in the world such as Central Asia (32.9%), South West Asia (54.9%), and Latin America and the Caribbean and Central (74.5%)⁴, and the private sector is the significant even dominant service provider for ECCE, monitoring and assessing the learning status of young children becomes more difficult.⁵ Even though ECE is acknowledged as “the foundation of lifelong learning and

¹ UNESCO. (July 2020). Synthesis report on COVID-19 education response webinar: ensuring quality of learning and well-being for young children in the context of the COVID-19.

² UNICEF. (July 2020). [Childcare in a global crisis: the impact of COVID-19 on work and family life](#).

³ ibid.

⁴ Data retrieved from UNESCO Institute for statistics, accessed April 2015.

⁵ UNESCO. (2015). A Review of literature: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Personnel in Low- and Middle- Income Countries.

child development, and thus of societies” in the 2019 Casablanca Declaration⁶ and the Arab region has made some progress in developing ECE, huge gaps still exist between policy commitment and practice. An estimated number of more than 5 million young children’s learning opportunities have been suspended in 20 Arab countries at the peak time of school closures due to the outbreak of COVID-19, and there are still around 0.8 million young learners waiting to continue their learning alongside educational institutions reopening gradually in the region.⁷ The prolonged closure of pre-primary institutions in the region has not only affected young children’s learning but will also exert a lifelong impact on their appropriate care, well being and development, especially given that parents often do not have sufficient knowledge on home schooling or parenting in the region. Thus, ensuring young children access equitable, quality and non-stop education is more urgent and challenging than ever.

Against this backdrop, UNESCO Beirut Office in collaboration with Early Childhood Development Regional Center (ECDRC) and in line with regional and global agenda for school reopening, organizes a webinar aiming to identify the needs and challenges to reopen ECCE settings at policy, school and local community levels thus to set forth a strategic framework on resuming ECCE programmes in the Arab States. Aligned with SDG4, this webinar will contribute to ensuring inclusive, equitable and continuous learning for all young learners in the Arab region to reach their full potential and supporting quality early childhood development of young children.

Objectives

The overarching goal of this webinar is **to develop a strategic framework for ECCE settings in the Arab region** in line with the regional and global school reopening agenda by addressing the needs and challenges of stakeholders and filling the gap of insufficient policy guidance as well as practical recommendations on restarting and implementing ECCE programmes in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, the objectives of this webinar will be:

- Assess current status of formal and non-formal ECCE programmes at national, institutional and programme levels in the region and identify the needs, common challenges and lessons learnt of education stakeholders during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Present a strategic framework on reopening ECCE settings in the region and highlight the importance of ECCE with special focus on correlation between early childhood development and continuity of education.
- Prioritize areas to effectively resume formal and non-formal ECCE programmes and provide practical guidance at policy and practice levels.
- Share good practices and successful experience on implementing formal and non-formal ECCE programmes during the pandemic at regional and global levels to shed a light on ECCE reopening in the Arab States.
- Mobilize international, regional and national communities to develop concrete solutions and actions towards quality ECCE for all young children

⁶ UNESCO, ILO, Morocco Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research. (December 2019). Casablanca Declaration and call for action on quality early childhood Education and the professionalization of teachers and Educators.

⁷ Data retrieved from UNESCO Institute for statistics, accessed 25 September 2020.

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of strategies and key elements necessary to resume formal and non-formal ECCE programmes.
- Raised awareness of the importance and necessity of ECCE for the development of individuals and societies, especially in non-formal ECCE.
- Catalyzed multilateral engagement and cooperation in implementing formal and non-formal ECCE programmes and preserving the rights to education for all young children in the region.
- Drew a set of recommendations on policies, partnerships and concrete solutions for resuming formal and non-formal ECCE programmes and reopening ECCE institutions.

Target audiences and panelists

The target audience will include ECCE education officials and managers, ECCE programme teachers and educators, academia in ECCE as well as any other relevant education practitioners working in this field.

The panelists will be government officials, educators and professionals in the field of ECCE, with wide experience in design and implementation of ECCE programmes in diverse contexts.

Registration

- [Registration](#) is free and required in advance. Password: 981638
- Once you register, a unique join URL will be sent to your email.

Live transmission via Youtube

[Live streaming](#) will be provided for those who might not be able to register in advance or to join due to limited capacity of the platform.

Languages

The webinar will be conducted in Arabic and English. Simultaneously interpretation services (from Arabic to English and vice versa) will be provided.

Once participants have entered the Zoom platform, they will be able to select language at the bottom of the platform. Those accessing via YouTube live transmission will have access to the webinar in the spoken language.