



Inclusive Education in the Covid-19 Era

Opportunities and Challenges for the State of Kuwait

On the 75th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Kuwait, the UNESCO Office for the Gulf States and Yemen, and UNICEF Gulf Area Office in Kuwait, invite you to participate in a discussion on the meaning and promise of inclusive education in the Covid-19 era.

CONTEXT

This year's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report addresses the theme of inclusion in education. In light of the spread of Covid-19 – which has highlighted, and indeed exacerbated, existing inequalities facing many learners around the world – the information presented in the 2020 GEM Report could not be more timely and relevant. Globally, education decision-makers and stakeholders are coming to terms with the myriad challenges confronting their systems and learners, and grappling with the question of how to take advantage of the opportunity to 'build back better'.

In Kuwait, as in many countries around the world, the closures of schools, colleges and universities vividly illustrated the growing digital divide through stark disparities in access to technology and connectivity for students and educators alike. Households with no or limited internet connectivity, and no or only one computer, struggled to ensure learning continued at home especially if those families included more than one school-aged child. Children and youth with learning difficulties or disabilities continue to confront additional challenges presented by remote learning modalities, as have those whose parents have limited ICT literacy and skills. Because inequalities and vulnerabilities are intersectional – meaning that they are often correlated and have compounding effects on each other – it is incumbent upon decision-makers and stakeholders to take a holistic approach to their resolution.

What policies, practices, training, and support can be put in place to bridge this gap? What measures can mitigate the impact of Covid-19, avoiding this gap to be widened? How to prepare for school reopening, amid the challenges of increased inequalities in the access to quality education? What steps must be taken by the State of Kuwait to guarantee the inclusion of such marginalized learners? How can education partners and stakeholders help to ensure all learners have access to quality and inclusive education?

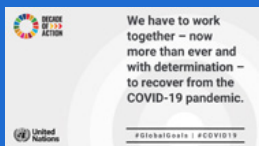
The UN75 Talk on Education aims to unpack the above challenges and issues, take stock of the current education situation in Kuwait and, with support of education partners and stakeholders, identify opportunities and map out recommendations to address them. In doing so, this Talk will draw lessons and build upon insights and perspectives from speakers and panelists, as well as other participants with a view to helping the State of Kuwait develop and/or enhance its ongoing response to education disruptions.

 **Webinar – 7 September 2020**
10.00 - 11.30 am Kuwait time

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HAVE YOUR SAY, TAKE THE SURVEY!

OBJECTIVES

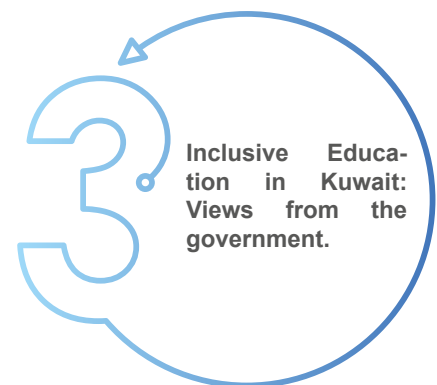
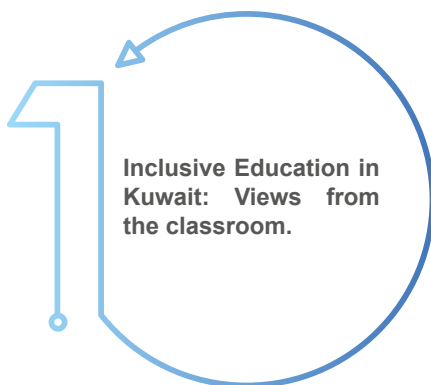
This United Nations Talk series is an opportunity for participatory consultation between stakeholders in public and private education, civil society, government and non-government organisations, for the objectives of:

- 1 Taking stock of the impact of Covid-19 school closures on progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4.
- 2 Identifying the particular challenges facing Kuwait in relation to ensuring inclusive education in remote learning scenarios, in both public and private K-12 systems.
- 3 Reinforcing and reprioritising the principles of inclusive education during and after disruptions Covid-19 disruptions.
- 4 (In the final session) Eliciting a commitment of actionable initiatives from the Ministry of Education in response to challenges brought about by COVID-19 and to address issues of quality and inclusion as laid out in the GEM Report 2020; and for the Ministry of Education to adopt **the following Commitment Statement:**



In light of the unparalleled disruption to education caused by Covid-19, and with the understanding that the crisis has been felt more keenly by vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, the participants of this UN75 Talk commit to proactively addressing all forms of exclusion, marginalization and discrimination to ensure all learners have access to, and participate in, quality education in the State of Kuwait. All participants acknowledge that quality education is a human right, regardless of a person's citizenship or residency status, socio-economic circumstances, disability status, geographical remoteness, ethnicity, language, incarceration status, gender, or religion. Today, the Ministry of Education reaffirms its commitment to supporting the reopening of government and non-government schools and higher education institutions in alignment with the guidelines elaborated in the Global Framework for School Reopening; to continue to improve the quality and inclusivity of remote learning systems, pedagogy, and materials for government and non-government school sectors; and to continue to expand and enhance professional capacity building opportunities related to inclusive education for government and non-government school teachers, principals, administrators and technical ministry staff.

The UN in Kuwait will have a series of webinars to engage and better understand the challenges and opportunities in the education sector to move forward towards meaningful actions and commitments.



SPEAKERS



Dr. Tarek El Sheikh
Representative of the UN Secretary-General
& Resident Coordinator to State of Kuwait



Dr. Misha'al A. Alshaheen Alrubaie
Deputy Minister of State for Youth Affairs



Mr. Ousama Al-Sultan
Assistant Undersecretary of Ministry of Education



Dr. Anna Paolini
UNESCO Representative in the Arab States
of the Gulf Director UNESCO Doha Office



Mr. Eltayeb Adam
UNICEF Resident Representative,
Gulf Area Office



Mrs. Amal Al Sayer
Founder and Chair of
Kuwaiti Association for Learning Differences



Ms. Hana Yoshimoto
Chief of Education, UNESCO Regional Bureau
of Education in the Arab States



Ms. Tatjana Colin
Head, Early Childhood Development Programs,
UNICEF Gulf Area Office in Kuwait

MODERATORS



Dr. Ziad H. Najem
CEO of KFAS Academy
Moderator



Ms. Regina Orvañanos
Acting Head of Resident Coordinator Office
Webinar moderator

AGENDA

Opening
addresses

10:00-10:20

UNICEF
Keynote

10:30-10:40

Audience
Q&A

11:05-11:20

10:15-10:25

10:20-11:30

UNESCO
Keynote

Discussion moderated
by KFAS Representative

Closing
Remarks

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