HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS CHANGING EDUCATION:

A PERSPECTIVE FROM SAUDI ARABIA

Anthony Mann, Markus Schwabe, Pablo Fraser,
Gabor Fülöp and Grace Adoley Ansah

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For further information, contact:

Anthony Mann, Senior Policy Analyst (Education and Skills), Anthony.Mann@oecd.org

This paper has been authorised by Andreas Schleicher, Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD.

Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

Boxes

Overview

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to school closures around the world. This paper focuses on Saudi Arabia and draws on comparative international data to explore how well the country was prepared to deal with the educational consequences of the virus and how it has dealt with school closures. The analysis draws on 2018 OECD international surveys of school principals (TALIS), school students (PISA) and the second OECD-Harvard questionnaire on educational responses to Covid-19 completed by senior government officials in 36 countries (April/May 2020). All three surveys have been completed in Saudi Arabia (with the OECD-Harvard questionnaire returned on June 15th). In this paper, national results from Saudi Arabia are compared to those from OECD and non-OECD countries.

Preparedness for school closures

The pandemic required teachers to work in new ways, teaching online and adapting teaching styles to a locked down world. Teachers in Saudi Arabia are more engaged with information and communication technologies (ICT) than is usual across the OECD: they are more likely to engage with ICT within teacher training and professional development and more likely to make use of ICT within teaching and learning. Principals feel that schools largely enable the use of digital devices with lessons, but are deeply concerned that poor levels of internet capacity compromises their ability to make full use of online resources. Educationalists in Saudi Arabia are more likely to recognise the value of ICT in teaching and want to use it more.

Data from TALIS 2018 found that teachers and principals in Saudi Arabia are more open to change than peers across OECD countries. Collaborative working between teachers and between schools is relatively common in the kingdom. Opportunity exists to enhance collaboration and digital skills through delivering greater levels of professional development through online courses and seminars.

While teachers were relatively well prepared for the lockdown, the same cannot be said for students. Compared to peers across the OECD, students in Saudi Arabia are less likely to have easy access to a computer and quiet place at home to study. A specific concern relates to young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds of whom fewer than half report access to a computer they can use at home for school work. However, PISA 2018 shows that students in Saudi Arabia are strongly motivated to learn and confident that they can deal with unexpected challenges. They feel supported by their parents with whom schools seek to maintain strong relationships.

How the education system in Saudi Arabia responded to the pandemic

As with countries around the world, Saudi Arabia responded to the pandemic by closing schools. It expects schools to remain closed for 97 days. Compared to other countries, this figure is very high – more than

twice the time expected within OECD countries. As elsewhere, educational provision has continued through alternative means using television, online provision and instructional packages. In responding to the crisis, the Saudi Arabian approach was led by national government with particularly strong engagement from local education authorities, school principals and teachers. During the period of school closure in Saudi Arabia, officials feel that students are learning, but less than they would have done in school with a focus on a smaller number of subjects. This is a common perspective from education ministries around the world. Compared to other countries, teachers in Saudi Arabia had strong access to support from school leaders, peer networks and training courses during the closure.

Re-opening of schools

Saudi Arabian plans for school re-opening were still in development at the time of survey completion. A highly collaborative and staggered planned approach to re-opening was described by officials. Saudi Arabia is taking school re-opening very seriously and intends to assess student learning gaps that may have emerged during the lockdown and put in place remedial measures to support learners with different characteristics. The Saudi Arabian focus on supporting students in the process of transitioning from school into the labour market is welcome and relatively uncommon across other countries. Plans for supporting the well-being of students as they return to school are in line with those of other countries. Anticipated initiatives related to health and hygiene exceed those of peer countries in general terms, save for mandatory use of marks and antiseptic wipes and gels in schools. Plans for dealing with further outbreaks of the virus within schools reflect a determination to act quickly and thoroughly.

Looking forward, in alignment with planning in OECD and non-OECD countries, Saudi Arabia plans to learn from this period of school closures, identifying effective mitigation measures for any reoccurrences and updating emergency planning for school facilities.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a range of challenges not just to public health, but to many other areas of public life, including education. The need to contain the spread of the pandemic led many governments to put in place strict measures limiting physical proximity. Around the world, this has constrained the ability of students and teachers to meet in schools, as they normally would. The OECD is well-placed to provide useful data to countries in their responses to the pandemic. The purpose of this paper is to set out available data, in the context of comparative international evidence, on how well prepared the education system in Saudi Arabia was to respond to school closures, what the experience of the school closure has been and how typical plans to re-open schools are. To do this, the paper draws on two sources of data: OECD surveys exploring student and teacher experiences undertaken in 2018 and a joint 2020 OECD-Harvard questionnaire which explored national responses to the pandemic.

OECD TALIS and PISA data

The Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) is conducted by the OECD every three years. PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. In 2018, students and school principals in 79 countries and economic areas, including Saudi Arabia, completed the PISA survey providing valuable comparable data on the preparedness of national education systems to deal with the pandemic which would follow.[1] In each territory, a representative sample of thousands of young people is surveyed providing unparalleled data on the character of educational provision. In all, more than 650 000 young people completed the OECD PISA 2018 survey. In Saudi Arabia, 6 136 students in 235 schools, completed the assessment, representing 354 013 15-year-old students (85% of the total population of 15-year-olds). The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) asks teachers and school leaders about working conditions and learning environments at their schools to help countries face diverse challenges.[2] In 2018, some 260 000 teachers in 15 000 schools across 48 countries and economies, including Saudi Arabia, completed the TALIS survey. In Saudi Arabia, 2 744 lower-secondary teachers and 192 principals completed the TALIS questionnaires. Like PISA, TALIS asks many pertinent questions of relevance to the preparedness of national systems to maintain their effectiveness in light of the Covid-19 crisis. Data from PISA and TALIS is utilised within the annual OECD publication Education at a Glance.

Second OECD-Harvard Covid-19 questionnaire on educational responses to the pandemic

Sustaining education continuity amidst this pandemic has been challenging around the world. To assist education leaders in those efforts, the OECD and the Global Education Innovation Initiative at Harvard University have collaborated to obtain and analyse information on the education conditions faced in countries, and on the approaches adopted to sustain educational opportunity. The World Bank and the organisation Hundred have contributed to this effort as well. The goal of the survey was to collect data as rapidly as possible, in order to make information available sufficiently quickly to allow education leaders to

1 https://www.oecd.org/pisa/

2 http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/

take account of it during their responses to the emergency. The first result was a framework developed on the basis of a rapid survey conducted between 18 and 27 March 2020, with 333 responses from 99 different countries.[3] The framework examined the immediate education needs and priorities caused by the pandemic and related anticipated education challenges. It also discussed a series of options to sustain education continuity and offered a 25-item checklist to support the development of a strategy for education continuity. The report was translated into Arabic, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish by various education organisations, which adopted it into their own efforts to advocate for education continuity.

The second result of this collaborative initiative was a curated list of online education resources that had been identified in the first survey described above.[4] Using a framework of cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, each of the online resources respondents to the survey had indicated they were using was evaluated and presented in a manner that would facilitate use by peers. The approach included online resources utilised within education continuity strategies.

Third, the OECD and Harvard Graduate School of Education are in the process of documenting and analysing innovative practices to sustain education continuity around the world, showcasing practices of governments at the city, state and national levels, as well as the efforts of education organisations within civil society. The aim is that those will inform the ongoing design and revision of global efforts of education continuity.

Fourth, a second online survey was undertaken working through the country delegations of the OECD and institutional partners of the Global Education Innovation Initiative at Harvard University. The survey was distributed to those who had responded to the first survey and through other education organisation, such as WISE and the Organisation of Iberoamerican States. The survey closed on May 6 2020 and responses were received from 1 370 respondents in 59 countries. Responses were divided into two groups: (i) those of 37 senior government officials and 113 education administrators in 36 countries, predominantly employed in national government and (ii) responses provided by 747 teachers and 246 school administrators. For most countries, three or fewer surveys were received. Where more than one response was received, replies were aggregated and averaged. To provide all countries with the same weight in the analysis, the data were weighted by a factor equal to one over the number of respondents per country. The study was published on June 2 as *Schooling disrupted, schooling rethought – how the Covid-19 pandemic is changing education*.[5] The study included 'A checklist to sustain education continuity in the second phase of the pandemic' which is annexed to the current document.

This paper explores the responses to the second OECD-Harvard survey received from the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education on June 15th to replies received earlier from government officials and education administrators on other countries. As noted below, these international contextual responses are divided into two comparison groups: OECD and non-OECD countries. Where more than one respondent has replied to the survey, national responses are aggregated and averaged. In the paper that follows, Saudi Arabian responses are set out in relation to the average responses received from 27 OECD and 9 non-OECD countries.

3 https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=126_126988-t63lxosohs&title=A-framework-to-guide-an-education-response-to-the-Covid-19-Pandemic-of-2020

4 http://www.oecd.org/education/Supporting-the-continuation-of-teaching-and-learning-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf

5 https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=126_126988-t63lxosohs&title=A-framework-to-guide-an-education-response-to-the-Covid-19-Pandemic-of-2020

Table 1. Countries responding to the second OECD-Harvard survey on educational responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Responses from senior government and education administrators only.

OECD countries	Number of responses	Non-OECD countries	Number of responses
Austria	1	Brazil	3
Belgium	1	Costa Rica	1
Canada	3	Croatia	1
Chile	1	Dominican Republic	11
Colombia	1	Georgia	2
Czech Republic	1	Jamaica	1
Estonia	1	Peru	1
Finland	1	South Africa	1
France	1	Uruguay	2
Germany	1		
Greece	1		
Hungary	1		
Iceland	1		
Italy	1		
Japan	1		
Korea, Rep.	2		
Latvia	1		
Lithuania	5		
Mexico	89		
Netherlands	1		
Norway	1		
Portugal	1		
Slovenia	1		
Spain	2		
Sweden	3		
United Kingdom	1		
United States	3		

Part One: How well prepared was the education system in Saudi Arabia for the pandemic

This section of the report sets out international comparative evidence on how well the education system in Saudi Arabia was prepared to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and consequential school closures. Data are drawn from the OECD TALIS and PISA surveys, both of which were undertaken in 2018. The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS survey asks teachers and school leaders about working conditions and learning environments at their schools to help countries face diverse challenges. In 2018, responses from a representative sample of educationalists were received from Saudi Arabia and 47 other countries and economies. The Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) is conducted by the OECD every three years. PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. In 2018, students and school principals in 79 countries and economic areas, including Saudi Arabia, completed the PISA survey providing valuable comparable data on the preparedness of national education systems to deal with the pandemic which would follow.

Preparedness for school closures

The availability of information and communication technologies (ICT) makes it possible to continue instruction and learning when physical interactions are no longer possible as was the case during the pandemic. However, both teachers and students need to be very familiar with these technologies and their use in order for them to be effective.

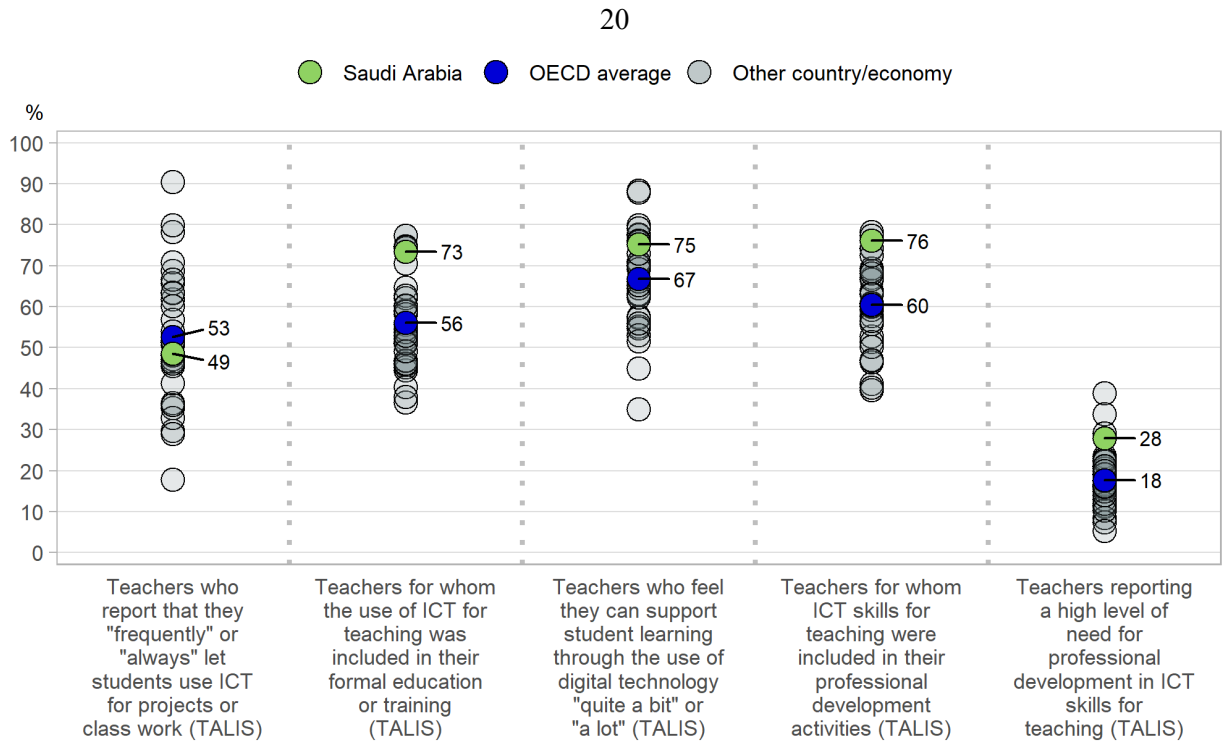
A good starting point to assess the extent to which teachers and their students were prepared for school closures is to examine how frequently these technologies were used in the classroom before the crisis hit. Results from the TALIS 2018 prior to the crisis show that on average across participating OECD countries and economies, only slightly more than half of lower-secondary teachers (53%) reported letting students use ICT for projects or class work "frequently" or "always". In Saudi Arabia, this was the case for a comparable 49% of teachers.

In order to be effective, teachers' practices need to be grounded in a body of knowledge acquired through quality training. In Saudi Arabia, 73% of teachers reported that use of ICT for teaching was included in their formal education or training, which is much higher than the average of the OECD countries taking part in TALIS (56%). At the time of the survey, 75% of teachers in Saudi Arabia felt that they could support

student learning through the use of digital technology (e.g. computers, tablets, smart boards) "quite a bit" or "a lot", which is higher than the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (67%).

Pre-service training in ICT for teaching may not be enough to ensure effective digital learning. Indeed, as learning technologies are characterised by a rapid pace of change, it is imperative for teachers to get access to in-service training to continually update their skills in this area. In Saudi Arabia, 76% of teachers reported that ICT skills for teaching were included in their professional development activities, which is again higher than the average of the OECD countries in TALIS (60%). At the same time, in Saudi Arabia 76% of teachers reported a high level of need for professional development in ICT skills for teaching, which is considerably higher than the average of OECD TALIS countries (18%). These pre-crisis reports suggest that teachers in Saudi Arabia take ICT for teaching seriously and are likely to be comparatively well prepared.

Figure 1. Teachers' preparedness for ICT-based teaching prior to the crisis

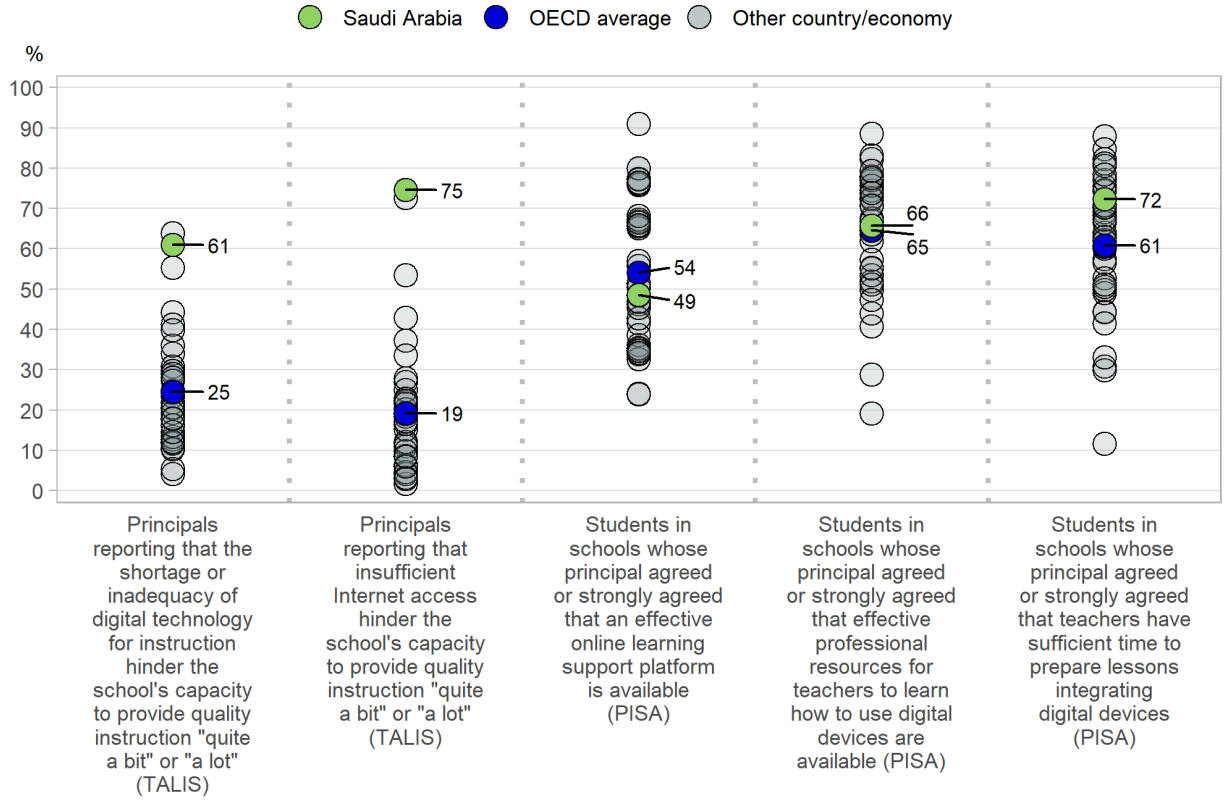


Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The OECD average refers to the average of OECD countries participating in TALIS 2018.
Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm. Accessed 20 June 2020.

The implementation of ICT in school also requires the availability of sufficient resources for its access and use. Principals' views on which school resource issues hinder the capacity to deliver high quality instruction can shed light on possible impediments to the wider use of ICT for teaching in schools. In Saudi Arabia, 61% of principals reported that the shortage or inadequacy of digital technology for instruction hindered the school's capacity to provide quality instruction "quite a bit" or "a lot", which is much higher than the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (25%). A further barrier to effective delivery of online learning is the availability of Internet access. In Saudi Arabia, three-quarters of principals reported that insufficient access of the Internet hinders their school's capacity to provide quality instruction 'quite a bit'

or ‘a lot’. Nowhere across all 48 OECD and non-OECD countries and economic areas taking part in TALIS are principals more concerned by poor access to the Internet. By way of illustration, only 19% of principals across the OECD countries participating in TALIS shared the concern.

Figure 2. School and student preparedness for ICT-based learning prior to the crisis



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The OECD average refers to the average of OECD countries participating in TALIS 2018.
Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm. Accessed 20 June 2020.

Data from the 2018 cycle of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) provide further insights into schools’ capacity to enhance teaching and learning using digital devices. Some of these aspects refer to the availability or quality of ICT infrastructure, while others refer to teachers’ and the schools’ capacity to integrate digital devices into instruction. In Saudi Arabia, 49% of students were enrolled in a school whose principal ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that an effective online learning support platform was available, which is statistically not significantly different from the average across OECD countries (54%). At the same time, 66% of students in Saudi Arabia attended a school whose principal ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that effective professional resources designed to help teachers learn how to use digital devices were available, which is again statistically not significantly different from the average across OECD countries (65%). PISA 2018 also asked principals about the time teachers are given to prepare lessons. In this regard, in Saudi Arabia, 72% of students attended a school whose principal ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that teachers have sufficient time to prepare lessons that integrate digital devices into learning,

which is higher than the average across OECD countries (61%). Principals are comparatively confident therefore that teachers are largely ready to teach using ICT, but are very concerned about the adequacy of internet access and digital technologies.

Teachers' and schools' readiness and capacity to change their ways of working

The capacity of schools to innovate, adapt and support staff varies from country to country and school to school. Yet it is these school capacities that can prove to be valuable assets for responding to crises and uncertain times, as well as building resilience, when facing challenges in delivering instruction.

School closures have forced many schools to 'think outside the box' and come up with innovative and pragmatic solutions in order to deliver teaching and ensure learning can happen remotely. The good news from the TALIS data collected in the 2018 cycle is that in spite of the challenges that the transition to remote teaching may have entailed for some teachers, a climate of openness to innovation was present in most OECD schools. In Saudi Arabia, 85% of teachers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that most teachers in the school are open to change, which is still higher than the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (74%) and among the highest of all responses.

The level of adaptation when faced with sudden change ultimately relies on the support of peers, enabling teachers as a professional collective to adjust to the new reality of remote teaching and to learn from each other. TALIS 2018 sheds light on the collaborative culture prevailing in schools prior to the COVID-19 crisis, as well as the leadership of principals, who can play a key role in fostering collegiality and collaboration among teachers. In Saudi Arabia, 36% of teachers reported participating in collaborative professional learning in their school at least once a month, which is higher than the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (21%). Teachers who engaged in professional collaboration such as this – which involves a high degree of interdependence among teachers – also tended to report more frequent use of effective teaching practices like cognitive activation.

In terms of the school leader's role in supporting innovation, 72% of principals in Saudi Arabia 'often' or 'very often' took actions to support co-operation among teachers to develop new teaching practices in the 12 months prior to the survey, which is again higher than the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (59%).

School leaders and teachers may also be able to tap into online resources that could facilitate the dissemination of information, instructional material and remote learning across schools. For example, familiarity with online training can prepare teachers for communicating and sharing information with the school community through online platforms. In Saudi Arabia, 23% of teachers participated in online courses/seminars in the 12 months prior to the survey, which is lower than the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (36%).

Out-of-school learning communities can also be a valuable asset for mutual professional support in times of crisis. From the perspective of teachers, 43% of them in Saudi Arabia participated in a network of teachers formed specifically for their professional development in the 12 months prior to the survey, which is comparable to the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (40%). From the perspective of school leaders in Saudi Arabia, 48% of principals reported collaborating 'often' or 'very often' with principals from other schools on challenging work tasks in the 12 months prior to the survey, which is higher than the average of the OECD countries in TALIS (37%).

Figure 3. School and student preparedness for ICT-based learning prior to the crisis

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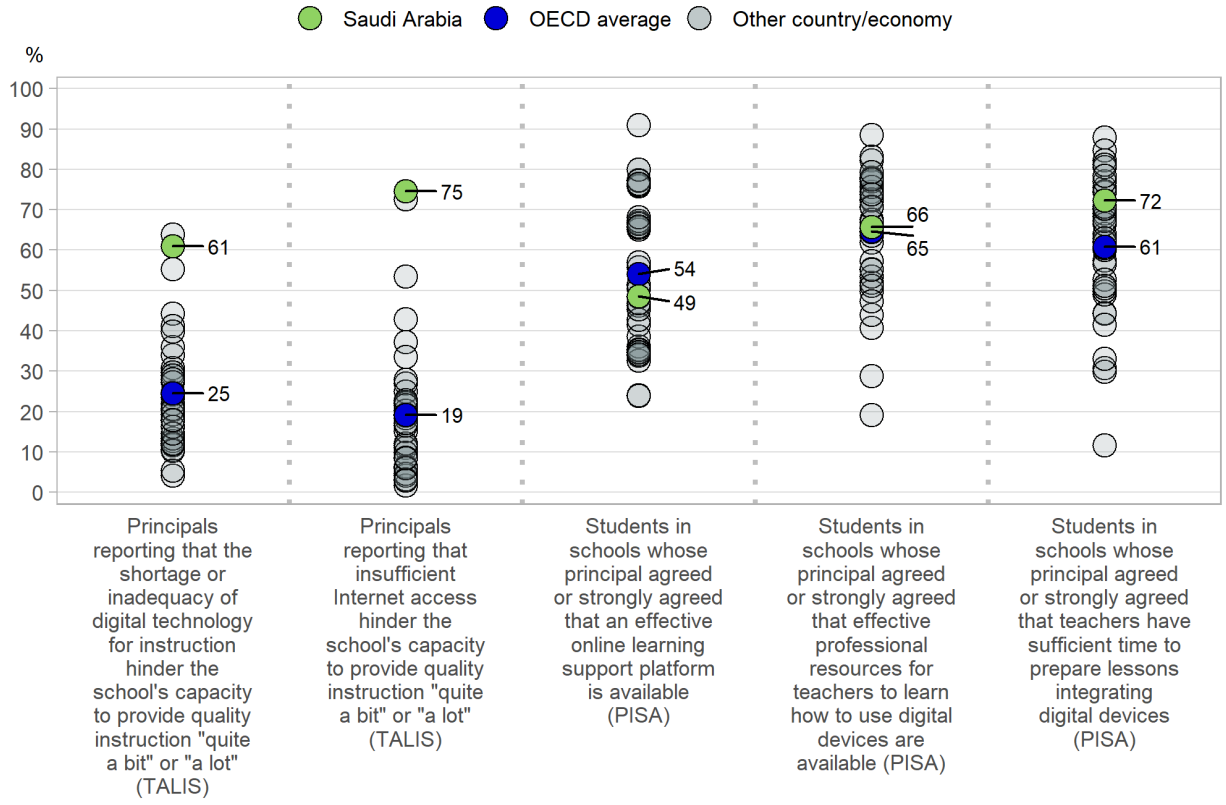


Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The OECD average refers to the average of OECD countries participating in TALIS 2018.
Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm. Accessed 20 June 2020.

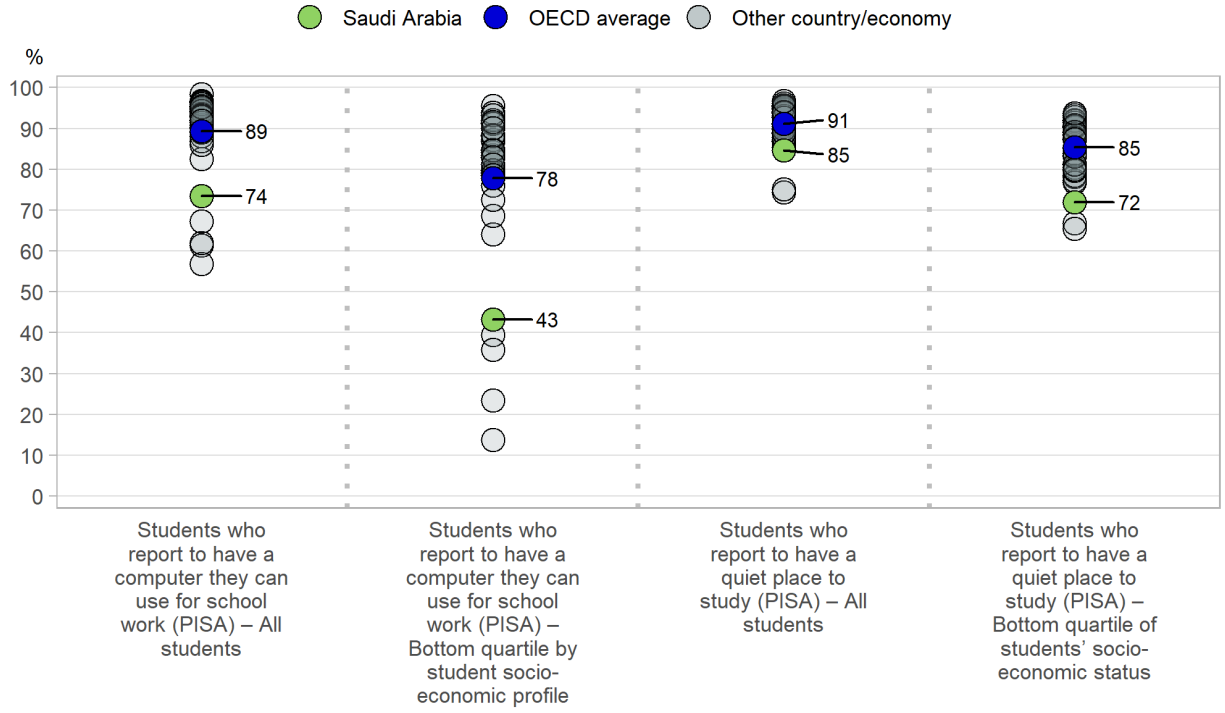
Students' conditions and environments for home schooling

Although the absence of in-person lessons can be somewhat compensated by the use of online platforms and other technology-rich activities, access to the necessary digital devices is not equally distributed across the population. In particular, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who lack access to these devices may be severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis, increasing learning inequalities as a result.

A pre-requisite for any type of online learning activity is that students have access to a computer. According to PISA 2018 data collected prior to the crisis, this is a precondition that was not met by all students before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. In Saudi Arabia, 74% of students reported having a computer they could use for school work, which is lower than the OECD average (89%). For those from the bottom quartile of the socio-economic distribution, only 43% of students reported having a computer they could use for school work, which is substantially lower than the OECD average (78%). Moreover, access to the home computer may in fact have deteriorated with the crisis in cases where its use had to be shared with other members of the household.

The conditions for creating an adequate climate for home schooling not only rely on access to technology, but also on whether an appropriate physical space for learning exists at home. In Saudi Arabia, 85% of students reported having a quiet place to study at home, which is lower than the OECD average (91%). This percentage is 72% for students coming from the bottom quartile of the socio-economic distribution, which is lower than the OECD average (85%). Much like access to computers, access to a quiet place to study may also have deteriorated during the crisis due to similar needs by parents for teleworking, and siblings for home schooling. Consequently, it is a matter of concern that many students, particularly the most disadvantaged, lack the resources to learn remotely.

Figure 4. Students' home settings for online learning prior to the crisis



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The OECD average refers to the average of OECD countries participating in PISA 2018.
Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, https://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/. Accessed 20 June 2020.

Students' attitudes towards self-directed learning and the scope for parental support

The COVID-19 crisis is changing life around the world. Students and their families are learning to operate under a climate of uncertainty, economic downturn and risk-prevention, which can negatively affect students' academic motivation. Moreover, in a remote teaching and learning context, parents become a key resource for education provision as both motivators of student engagement and facilitators of student learning.

Levels of resilience and self-efficacy describe students' confidence in their ability to pursue their goals in the face of challenging situations. Based on PISA 2018 data collected before the crisis, 86% of students

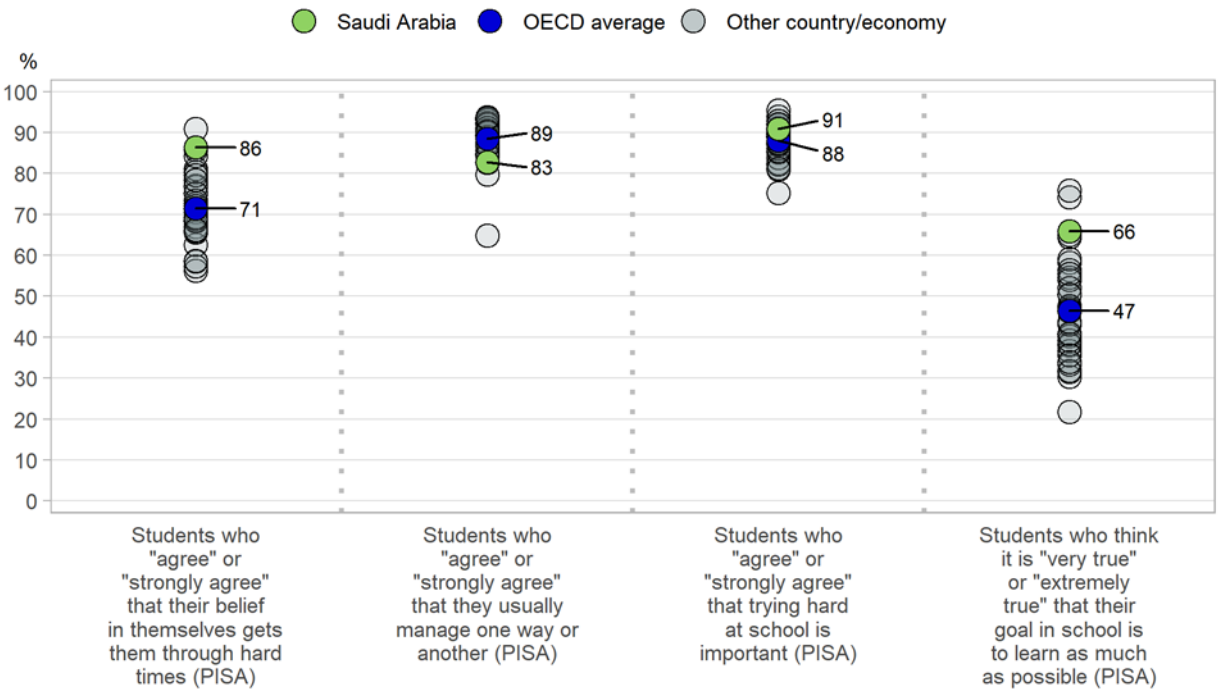
in Saudi Arabia 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their belief in themselves gets them through hard times, which is higher than the OECD average (71%). At the same time, 83% of students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they usually manage one way or another, which is lower than the OECD average (89%).

When looking at students from the bottom quartile of the socio-economic distribution, 84% of students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their belief in themselves gets them through hard times, which is higher than the OECD average (71%), and 78% of students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they usually manage one way or another, which is lower than the OECD average (86%).

Students' learning goals at school are an important factor in estimating the level of motivation and engagement with their education during these troubled times. In Saudi Arabia, 91% of students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that trying hard at school is important (OECD average: 88%). Also, 66% of students thought it is 'very true' or 'extremely true' that their goal in school is to learn as much as possible (OECD average: 47%).

Looking at students in the bottom quartile of socio-economic distribution in Saudi Arabia, 89% of students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that trying hard at school is important, which is statistically not significantly different from the OECD average (87%). Moreover, 64% of students think it is 'very true' or 'extremely true' that their goal in school is to learn as much as possible, which is higher than the OECD average (42%). These are very positive findings.

Figure 5. Students' attitudes towards self-directed learning prior to the crisis.

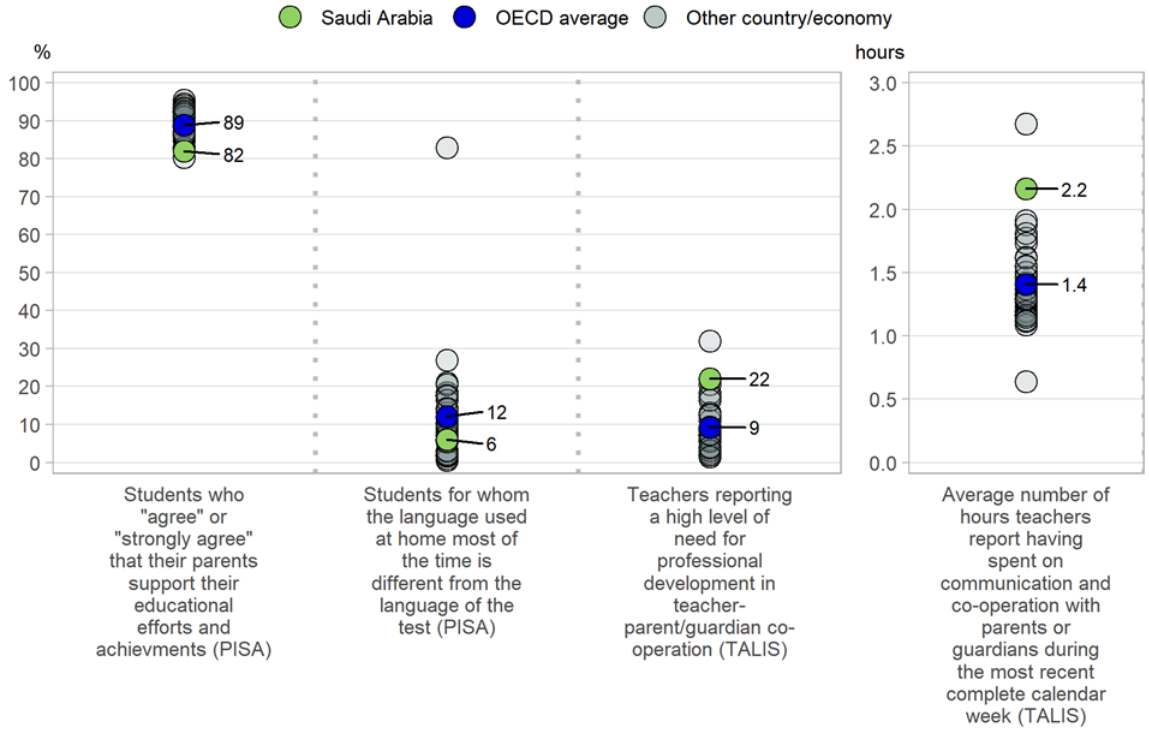


Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The OECD average refers to the average of OECD countries participating in PISA 2018
Source: OECD PISA 2018 Database, https://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/. Accessed 20 June 2020.

Students need the support of their parents to engage with their learning and reduce anxiety in these stressful times. In Saudi Arabia, 82% of students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their parents support their educational efforts and achievements, which is comparable, but lower than the OECD average (89%). At the same time, 77% of students coming from the bottom quartile of the socio-economic distribution reported so, which is lower than the OECD average (85%). In some specific socio-demographic groups, the academic support of parents to students might be hindered by language barriers. In Saudi Arabia, 6% of students reported that the language used at home most of the time is different from the language of the PISA test (OECD average: 12%). This is the case for 5% of students coming from the bottom quartile of the socio-economic distribution (OECD average: 19%).

The relationship between schools, parents and the larger school community is vital to provide contextualised and pertinent quality education. An open and fluid interaction between the school staff and parents has become now more important than ever. Yet, TALIS 2018 data show that interactions between schools and parents or guardians were not very prominent prior to the crisis. In Saudi Arabia, on average teachers reported having spent 2.2 hours on communication and co-operation with parents or guardians during the most recent complete calendar week, which is higher than the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (1.4 hours). Moreover, 22% of teachers reported a high level of need for professional development in teacher-parent/guardian co-operation, which is much higher than the average of the OECD countries participating in TALIS (9%).

Figure 6. Parental support and assistance



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The OECD average refers to the average of OECD countries participating in TALIS 2018 and/or PISA 2018.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm and PISA 2018 Database, https://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/. Accessed 20 June 2020...

Part Two: How the education system in Saudi Arabia responded to the pandemic

This section of the report sets out international comparative evidence on how the education system in Saudi Arabia has responded to the Covid-19 pandemic and consequential school closures. Data are drawn from the second OECD-Harvard questionnaire on educational responses to Covid-19 which collected from government officials in 36 countries in April/May 2020. In the analysis below, responses from Saudi Arabia, collated in June 2020, are compared to both OECD and non-OECD countries (see the Introduction to this paper.)

Instructional time lost

Education outcomes are shaped by the amount of instructional time that is available multiplied by the instructional quality of how this time is used. Almost all countries have statutory or regulatory requirements regarding the number of hours of instruction that must be delivered in an academic year. These are most often stipulated as the minimum number of hours of instruction a school must offer. Matching resources with students' needs and making optimal use of time are central objectives of sound education policy.

The OECD-Harvard publication *Schooling disrupted, schooling rethought* assesses the impact of the pandemic on education on instructional time lost. Those losses result from institutional responses to the pandemic, such as the closure of schools as part of the physical distancing measures, and from individual responses, resulting from the constraints facing students resulting from the direct impact of the pandemic on them or their families. Respondents were asked to estimate the number of instructional days, excluding weekends and holidays, on which students had not been able to attend school, for each level of education, and also to estimate the additional number of days that they were expected to still stay at home.

On average across the participating countries, students had spent about 30 instructional days at home, and were, at the time the survey was conducted, expected to remain an additional 15 instructional days outside of school, for a total of approximately 40-45 instructional days. This represents about two months of school work, a considerable proportion of the expected learning time, which on average across OECD countries amounts to 799 compulsory instruction hours per year at the primary level, and 919 compulsory instruction hours per year at the lower-secondary level.

In Saudi Arabia, officials anticipate students at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary level spending a total of 97 days at home. This figure is much higher than the average of responses from other

survey respondents which reported the total number of days that students had been schooled at home combined with estimates of the number of further days that schools would be closed. OECD countries, on average anticipated that school closures would range from 37 days for primary students to 40 days for upper secondary students and non-OECD countries expected students to learn from home for an average of 61 days across all levels of education. Across the respondent countries, very few countries anticipate students being out of school for longer than is the case in Saudi Arabia. In terms of upper secondary provision, only Peru fits into this category.

Saudi Arabia is also unusual in its expectation that students from the three levels of education would be schooled from home for the same number of days. Most countries have prioritised the re-opening of primary schools, given the importance of social interaction in the early grades and the greater difficulties that younger students face in learning remotely, despite the much greater challenges to maintain physical distancing among younger students if they are brought together in schools. In OECD countries, across the survey, countries typically expected students from primary and lower-secondary education levels to return to their classrooms slightly more quickly than students at upper secondary level.

Alternative learning opportunities during school closures

In order to minimise the loss of learning while schools were closed, countries sought to provide alternative learning opportunities. To examine how they did this, respondents to the second OECD-Harvard survey were asked to indicate which were the main forms used to provide education continuity during the period of physical distancing, and how those arrangements were made.

Responsibilities for alternative learning opportunities

The survey asked respondents to rank the various approaches that had been followed to make alternative education arrangements. The responses indicate that governments played an important role in making arrangements for education continuity, but in many countries schools and parents were also involved in decision-making. The modality most frequently mentioned as the main form of education continuity included the government making alternative education arrangements but in ways that involved the schools (52%), followed by schools making their own arrangements without governmental support (35%). In Saudi Arabia, as most commonly experienced in both OECD and non-OECD countries, alternative education arrangements were made by government.

Delivery of alternative learning opportunities

Respondents to the second OECD-Harvard survey were also asked to estimate what percentage of students accessed the curriculum during the most recent week when it was not possible to attend school through various means of education continuity. The most frequently mentioned options all involve teachers. About 67% indicated that students were accessing the curriculum directly from teachers, and 53% indicated that they are doing so from teachers plus other means. In Saudi Arabia, a different pattern of delivery is apparent (Table 1) with students much more likely to be accessing the school curriculum through a mixture of delivery modes and considerably less dependent on delivery solely from teachers.

Table 2. Estimates of the percentage of students who were able to access the school curriculum, through various means, during the time when unable to meet.

Level of support	OECD countries	Non-OECD countries	Saudi Arabia
Support from teachers	67%	70%	0%
Support through other means	0%	25%	30%
Support from teachers and through other means	56%	45%	70%
No support	0%	10%	0%

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Instructional resources used

The OECD-Harvard survey found that a range of instructional resources were used to provide education continuity, often in combination. The most common resources reported were existing online resources, online instruction delivered by the same teachers of students, instructional packages with printed resources and educational television. In a number of countries, online instruction provided by private tutors also played an important role. As set out in Table 2, the delivery approaches of Saudi Arabia are very similar to both OECD and non-OECD countries. Only in radio education did a significant number of countries make use of a delivery resource which was not used in Saudi Arabia.

Table 3. Which instructional resources have been used to support the academic experience of students while they were unable to come to school? (check all that apply

Instructional resource used	OECD countries	Non-OECD countries	Saudi Arabia
Instructional packages (textbooks, worksheets, printouts)	91%	83%	Yes
Radio education	38%	50%	No
Educational television	77%	79%	Yes
Existing online instructional resources	96%	96%	Yes
Online instruction delivered by the same teachers of the students learning	92%	95%	Yes
Online instruction provided by private tutors	35%	34%	Yes
Other modalities	28%	33%	No

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Box 1. Screen time and child well-being

With the increased use of digital technologies during the pandemic, a common concern has been the amount of screen time that children are exposed to and the potential impact on their emotional and physical well-being. A review of the evidence suggests that a moderate use of digital technology, especially watching age appropriate, high quality programming, may promote certain cognitive and social benefits. In addition, "coviewing" (i.e. engaging in screen time with a parent or caregiver) can enhance infant attention and their propensity to learn from on-screen content (Gottschalk, 2019).

Although excessive time online should be avoided, the short-term intensive use of digital devices for education purposes during school closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is not expected to lead to long term challenges, as long as:

• good practice is followed (imposed breaks, balancing learning online with physical and social activity in the home, etc.).

• parents and students are vigilant about potential increased exposure to risks (e.g., cyber-bullying, etc.),

• device settings limiting exposure to harmful or inappropriate content and protection of personal data traces are installed and activated.

Moving forward, education decision-makers will have to review and verify that any agreements signed with digital providers and products during the crisis meet the safety and design standards for children and protection of student data.

Source: Burns, T. and F. Gottschalk (eds.) (2019), Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-being in the Digital Age, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/b7f33425-en .

Equity in access

In spite of the variety of resources used to provide education continuity, the OECD-Harvard survey revealed that a significant percentage of students was unable to access the curriculum during the period when they could not attend schools. Respondents from OECD countries estimated that only about half of the students were able to access all or most of the curriculum. In non-OECD countries, only 10% respondents responded in this fashion and it was more common for countries to share in the Saudi Arabian response that a good amount of the curriculum was delivered over the period of confinement.

Table 4. Considering the support provided by teachers and schools and other modalities, about what percentage of the students were able to access all or most of the school curriculum?

Extent of access	OECD countries	Non-OECD countries	Saudi Arabia
All or most of the curriculum	49%	30%	---
A good amount	14%	26%	Yes
Some, but not much	4%	8%	---
Very little or none	1%	6%	---

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Evaluation of the strategy for education continuity

In general, education continuity strategies was viewed positively by senior government representatives and administrators, though as reported in *Schooling disrupted, schooling rethought*, the views of teachers were somewhat more reserved. Most reported that their national strategy was well planned and executed. Very few saw it as chaotic, but almost 30% reported there was a lot of improvisation (and amongst educators this percentage is almost half). Very few reported that co-ordination was lacking. About 30% of national officials saw the strategy as designed in a top down fashion by the government. At the same time, over 75% reported that the strategy was designed collaboratively, including teachers. About 25% mentioned that collaboration also included parents, and for one in five respondents collaboration also included the wider community. Very few reported there were conflicts with teachers, parents or between the government and schools, and over 65% said communications were well-managed. Importantly, overall 80% reported that everybody did all they could to help. What is most striking about the response from Saudi Arabia, by way of comparison, is the highly collaborative nature of national action. Saudi Arabia is distinctive in the extent to which schools, parents and local communities were engaged by national authorities to confirm educational strategies in response to the pandemic (See tables 4 and 5).

Table 5. Thinking about the education related to the curriculum that students received when they could not attend school, to what extent do you agree with these statements? OECD countries.

Statement	Completely agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Completely disagree (%)	Not sure (%)	No answer (%)
It was well planned	27	**46**	0	0	12	15
It was well executed	27	**42**	0	0	11	20
It was fairly chaotic	0	4	39	**28**	9	20
There was a lot of improvisation	4	**22**	20	15	23	16
There was no co-ordination	1	2	**35**	41	6	16
It was designed in a top down fashion by the government	8	**13**	37	20	5	16
It was designed in a top down fashion by local education authorities	**0**	17	32	24	7	19
It was designed in a top down fashion by school principals	**0**	25	24	11	17	23
It was designed in a collaborative manner including teachers	**28**	46	3	0	8	16
It was designed at the discretion of the teacher, in isolation	0	15	25	**32**	8	19

Statement	Completely agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Completely disagree (%)	Not sure (%)	No answer (%)
It was designed in a collaborative manner including parents	5	**29**	15	4	27	20
It was designed in a collaborative manner including the community	0	**28**	14	5	29	23
There was strong collaboration between public and private sectors	**17**	27	11	0	22	23
There were conflicts between schools and the government	0	0	**29**	39	12	19
There were conflicts with parents	0	0	**46**	12	18	23
There were conflicts with teachers	0	0	**42**	13	21	23
Communications were well managed	11	**53**	2	0	10	24
Everybody did all they could to help	**55**	29	0	0	0	16

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Table 6. Thinking about the education related to the curriculum that students received when they could not attend school, to what extent do you agree with these statements? Non-OECD countries. Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.

Statement	Completely agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Completely disagree (%)	Not sure (%)	No answer (%)
It was well planned	21	**42**	12	11	10	4
It was well executed	19	**39**	1	11	26	4
It was fairly chaotic	0	2	53	**14**	14	18
There was a lot of improvisation	1	**37**	31	5	23	4
There was no co-ordination	0	18	**50**	16	12	5
It was designed in a top down fashion by the government	30	**35**	13	6	11	5
It was designed in a top down fashion by local education authorities	**18**	20	26	19	13	5
It was designed in a top down fashion by school principals	**0**	2	38	16	40	5
It was designed in a collaborative manner including teachers	**17**	70	2	4	1	5
It was designed at the discretion of the teacher, in isolation	0	7	**31**	6	52	5
It was designed in a collaborative manner including parents	2	**10**	28	17	39	5
It was designed in a collaborative manner including the community	1	**16**	39	5	34	5
There was strong collaboration between public and private sectors	**7**	36	21	24	6	5

Statement	Completely agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Completely disagree (%)	Not sure (%)	No answer (%)
There were conflicts between schools and the government	0	22	**50**	21	2	5
There were conflicts with parents	11	13	**36**	10	25	5
There were conflicts with teachers	0	28	**45**	2	21	5
Communications were well managed	23	**47**	3	11	11	5
Everybody did all they could to help	**30**	41	12	0	12	5

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global surve undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

When asked to estimate how effective their strategy for education continuity was, compared to what students normally learn in schools, almost half of all respondents indicated that it is not possible to know and 32% indicated that students learned, but less than they would have normally learned in school. It is noteworthy that educators assessed this aspect more positively, with over 60% of educators reporting that students either learned about what they would have learned if they had attended schools or that they learned, but less than they would have in school (see *Schooling Disrupted, Schooling Rethought*). The response from Saudi Arabia is among the more positive responses from countries. Only 5% of OECD countries felt that their systems did better with students learning what they have learned if they had attended school.

Table 7. In comparison with the typical education which happens in school, how effective was the delivery of the education that students received during the period in which they could not attend school?

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing)	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing)	Saudi Arabia
They learned about what they would have learned if they had attended school	5	0	---
They learned, but less than they would have in school	26	48	Yes
They learned some, but not very much	0.7	13	---
They did not learn very much	0.25	1	---
It is not possible to assess how effective it was	52	35	---
No answer	15	4	---

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Respondents to the second OECD-Harvard survey were split with respect to whether the focus of the curriculum during the strategy for education continuity was similar to or different from what normally happens in school. In total, about 40% indicated that it was similar, and 39% indicated that the focus was on fewer subjects than are regularly taught in school. Practice in Saudi Arabia reflected that of non-OECD countries in focusing on fewer subjects during the pandemic.

Table 8. If students received alternative forms of education, during the period when they could not attend their school, how similar or different was the focus of that education to

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing)	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing)	Saudi Arabia
The focus and amount of teaching was similar to what happens in school	47	18	---
The focus was on fewer subjects than is normally the case in school	36	47	Yes
The focus was on keeping students engaged but there was not much focus on academic learning.	5	32	---
No answer	12	4	---

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

By weighted average of responses from both OECD and non-OECD countries, almost 12% of all respondents indicated that the focus was on keeping students engaged but there was not much focus on academic learning. It is noteworthy that amongst educators the latter percentage was almost twice as high, which may highlight the difficulties that teachers faced with ensuring student participation and engagement (see *Schooling Disrupted, Schooling Rethought*). Consequently, it may be advisable in Saudi Arabia to collate the perspectives of school teachers and principals.

When asked what was the focus of their strategy of education continuity, the most frequent responses across all countries related to academic learning: ensure the continuity of academic learning (63% of all responses), provide support to teachers (41%), and provide support for disadvantaged students (41%). Other responses were ensure social and emotional development of students (21%), address emotional needs of students (67%), ensure support to parents to assist their students, ensure continuity and integrity of academic learning (37%), and revise graduation and transition policies (36%). About one in three respondents also identified as a focus of the strategy the provision of food to students, the well-being of students, the provision of social services to students, supporting students with special needs or the well-being of teachers. One in four respondents identified the maintenance of career guidance as a focus of strategies for educational continuity. This last figure raises concerns as the pandemic took place during a period when in many countries, notably in the northern hemisphere, students were in the process of preparing for transitions within or out of education. In the economic crisis that has accompanied the pandemic, unemployment has risen rapidly for young people. Many young people who had expected to leave secondary schooling and enter the workforce will have sought, at short notice, to find ways of progressing to tertiary education. Others will have witnessed the turbulence of the labour market and questioned continuing demand for knowledge and skills under development. In Saudi Arabia, where career ambitions are remarkably concentrated, the importance of accessible and effective career guidance is notably high. Looking more broadly, responses from Saudi Arabia are very much in line with those from the other non-OECD countries which responded to the survey. The most striking contrast with OECD countries is in the desire to ensure the continuity of learning for students. Here, nearly three-quarters of OECD countries ranked this as a top priority.

Table 9. To what extent were the following areas sufficiently addressed during the period when students were not able to attend school? (OECD countries).

	To a great extent (%)	To some extent (%)	Not sure (%)	Very little (%)	Not at all (%)	No answer (%)
Ensure the continuity of the academic learning of students	72	**18**	2	0	0	8
Ensure social development of students	18	**63**	4	3	4	8
Address emotional needs of students	31	**37**	19	4	0	8
Ensure physical education of students	7	**55**	14	12	4	8
Ensuring student collaboration and team work	19	**52**	14	5	0	8
Support education of students with special needs	34	**44**	10	4	0	8
Support education of disadvantaged students	48	**31**	12	0	0	8
Support students whose parents have limited command of the language of instruction	29	**41**	17	1	0	12
Support students at risk of violence at home	19	**31**	31	7	0	12
Ensure support for parents and caregivers to support student learning	27	**51**	6	4	0	12
Ensure continuity/integrity of the assessment of student learning	44	**41**	3	0	0	12
Revise graduation/grade transition policy to allow student progress	41	**32**	5	0	6	16
Ensure distribution of food to students	33	**22**	14	8	12	12
Ensure provision of other social services to students	34	**27**	23	4	0	12
Ensure well-being of students	38	**36**	13	4	0	8
Ensure medical attention of students affected by Covid-19	32	**17**	23	6	10	12
Provide professional support, advice to teachers	48	**34**	6	0	0	12
Ensure well-being of teachers	25	**43**	19	5	0	8
Ensure medical attention to teachers affected by Covid-19	35	**13**	25	5	10	12
Ensure that career guidance was maintained	29	**35**	20	4	0	12

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020. *Note*: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.

Table 10. To what extent where the following areas sufficiently addressed during the period when students were not able to attend school? (Non-OECD countries).

	To a great extent (%)	To some extent (%)	Not sure (%)	Very little (%)	Not at all (%)	No answer (%)
Ensure the continuity of the academic learning of students	38	**39**	0	20	0	4
Ensure social development of students	27	**38**	7	13	11	4
Address emotional needs of students	13	**48**	10	14	11	4
Ensure physical education of students	5	**34**	15	16	25	5
Ensuring student collaboration and team work	14	**32**	20	30	0	4
Support education of students with special needs	12	**42**	25	13	3	5
Support education of disadvantaged students	19	**48**	15	11	4	4
Support students whose parents have limited command of the language of instruction	12	**43**	5	27	9	5
Support students at risk of violence at home	12	**37**	26	6	15	4
Ensure support for parents and caregivers to support student learning	11	**62**	6	18	0	4
Ensure continuity/integrity of the assessment of student learning	15	**56**	6	19	1	4
Revise graduation/grade transition policy to allow student progress	22	**25**	32	17	0	4
Ensure distribution of food to students	45	**22**	11	0	18	4
Ensure provision of other social services to students	24	**27**	21	21	2	4
Ensure well-being of students	26	**32**	20	18	0	4
Ensure medical attention of students affected by Covid-19	18	**26**	29	11	12	4
Provide professional support, advice to teachers	20	**53**	17	7	0	4
Ensure well-being of teachers	13	**57**	9	5	12	4
Ensure medical attention to teachers affected by Covid-19	12	**46**	19	8	12	4
Ensure that caree guidance was maintained	4	**64**	15	2	11	4

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020. *Note*: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.

To support the implementation of their strategy of education continuity, government representatives and national administrators reported within the survey that teachers were supported in various ways, the main ones included providing them with access to resources, peer networks within the school and across schools, and just in time guidance from leadership. However, one in five of all respondents (weighted average of OECD and non-OECD countries) indicated that teachers were not offered professional development during this period. For some of these dimensions, the assessment provided by teachers differed. For example, while 87% of government representatives or administrators reported participation in peer networks in schools, only 50% of teachers reported so (*Schooling Disrupted, Schooling Rethought*). A variety of resources were used to support teacher professional development, mostly existing online learning platforms, tools that enable teachers to communicate with other teachers and virtual classrooms. In this respect, the reports from educators show quite similar results. Comparing practice in Saudi Arabia during the pandemic to that in OECD and non-OECD countries (Tables 11 and 12), very similar results are observed with one significant exception: Saudi Arabia was one a very few countries which provided teaching staff with funds to undertake courses related to professional development as part of the response to the pandemic.

Table 11. What approaches were used to provide the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate during the pandemic? (select all that apply).

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing)	Non-OECC countries (% agreeing)	Saudi Arabia
Providing them with access to resources (printed, online, etc.)	94	80	Yes
Just in time guidance from leadership as needed	84	57	Yes
Participation in peer-networks within the school	88	84	Yes
Participation in peer-networks across schools	84	69	Yes
Providing them funds to take courses	19	2	Yes
Teachers were not offered professional development during the Pandemic	11	61	No

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Table 12. What resources were used to support the professional development of teachers and their capacity to innovate during the Pandemic? (check all that apply

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing)	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing)	Saudi Arabia
Instructional packages, printouts, texts	72	51	Yes
Radio education	19	28	No
Educational television	48	60	Yes
Existing online distance learning platform	90	96	Yes
New online platforms (virtual classrooms) so that teachers can access professional development and engage in self-directed or collaborative learning with peers	75	83	Yes

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing)	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing)	Saudi Arabia
Tools that enable teachers to share knowledge with other teachers in the same country	82	76	Yes
Tools that enable teachers to collaborate with peers in other countries	46	42	Yes

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Re-opening of schools

In the context of the pandemic it is far more complex to re-open schools than to close them. Policy makers need to make difficult and uncertain trade-offs between keeping education services locked down to reduce the risk of the virus transmission on the one hand, and managing the adverse effects of school closures on children's safety, well-being and learning, on the other. School closures not only lead to a loss of education opportunities, and thus long-term social and economic prospects of students (see the preceding sections), but the longer disadvantaged children are out of school, the less likely they are to return. Further, prolonged closures disrupt essential school-based services, such as immunisation, school meals, and mental health and psychosocial support, and can cause stress and anxiety due to the loss of peer interaction and disrupted routines. These negative impacts are likely to be significantly higher for disadvantaged children, children living with disabilities, and children in institutions. Not least, school closures have also serious long-term consequences for economies and societies, such as increased inequality, poorer health outcomes, and reduced social cohesion. Nevertheless, school re-openings must be safe and consistent with each country's overall health response to the pandemic, with all reasonable measures taken to protect students, staff, teachers and their families.

The timing of school re-openings must be guided by the best interest of the child and overall public health considerations, based on an assessment of the associated benefits and risks and informed by cross-sectoral and context-specific evidence, including education, public health and socio-economic factors. When asked if they knew whether there were plans to re-open schools this academic year, half of the respondents indicated that there were definite plans to re-open them. One in four indicated that there were plans to re-open schools, but no definite date had yet been set. The figures vary considerably from those provided by educators (see *Schooling Disrupted, Schooling Rethought*). For example, while half of the government representatives and administrators, on average across all countries, reported that there was a definite date for re-opening schools, only 17% of educators said so. Conversely, while only 4% of the government representatives and administrators said that schools would not re-open this academic year, 21% of educators said so. The scale of the difference speaks to differing perceptions between national administrators and teachers which threaten to undermine the coherency of communications towards parents and children if left unaddressed. Investigation of such difference of opinion may be advisable in Saudi Arabia.

Strategies for re-opening schools

Plans for re-opening schools were shared by senior government respondents from 20 countries. When establishing their approaches to re-opening schools, governments need to weigh trade-offs between ensuring coherence and consistency in their approaches, on the one hand, and responsiveness to local circumstances and needs, efficiency and improved financial control, and reduced bureaucracy and

incentivised local initiative, on the other. In Saudi Arabia, as in 80% of other responding countries, survey participants indicated that the process of school re-opening would be decided at the national level.

Table 13. Is there a definite date to re-open most schools this academic year?

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing)	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing)	Saudi Arabia
Yes, there is a definite date, if so specify month/day	54	37	---
There are plans to re-open, but there is no definite date	20	39	Yes
There is no clarity as to whether schools will reopen	14	14	---
Schools will not reopen this academic year	5	1	---
I don't know	2	5	---
No answer	4	4	---

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

The structures and regulations involved in the re-opening of schools are just like the small visible tip of an iceberg. The reason the re-opening of schools is so difficult is that there is a much larger invisible part under the waterline. This invisible part is composed of the beliefs, motivations and fears of the people who are involved, parents and teachers included. This is where unexpected collisions occur, because this part tends to evade the radar of public policy. Therefore, policy makers are rarely successful with processes such as the re-opening of schools unless they help those concerned understand the merits and risks involved, and build a shared understanding and collective ownership for the processes involved in re-opening schools. In this regard, the data show considerable variation across countries. In the countries examined here, the groups more likely to be involved in the process of re-opening the schools include the ministries of education, health, civil protection, local authorities and principals and principal associations. Over 80% of all respondents from government also indicated that teacher unions are involved, although this percentage was just 34% amongst the responding educators (see Schooling Disrupted, Schooling Rethought). Over 60% of all responding government representatives and administrators indicated that parents would be involved in the process of re-opening schools, 52% that communities would be involved (though just 36% amongst educators) and 45% that students would be involved. As tables 13 and 14 set out, the highly collaborative approaches that will determine school re-openings in Saudi Arabia exceed practice in both OECD and non-OECD countries.

Table 14. To what extent will the following groups to be involved in forward planning for re-opening schools? OECD countries. Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold

Organisation	Not much/not at all (% agreeing)	Don't know (% agreeing)	To a great extent (% agreeing)	No answer (% agreeing)
Ministry of Education	0	1	**95**	5
Ministry of Health	1	1	**93**	4
Civil Protection	21	13	**57**	9
Local authorities	20	1	**75**	4
Police	40	17	**29**	13
Students	46	4	**35**	15
Teachers' Unions	5	1	**85**	9

Principals or Principal Associations	9	1	**86**	4
Parents	30	1	**54**	15
Local community	26	17	**43**	15
NGOs	49	**26**	14	10
International organisations	52	17	**16**	15
Private partners	48	23	**18**	11

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Table 15. To what extent will the following groups to be involved in forward planning for re-opening schools? Non-OECD countries. Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.

Organisation	Not much/not at all (% agreeing)	Don't know (% agreeing)	To a great extent (% agreeing)	No answer (% agreeing)
Ministry of Education	11	0	**89**	0
Ministry of Health	11	0	**89**	0
Civil Protection	11	14	**69**	6
Local authorities	11	11	**72**	6
Police	39	42	**14**	6
Students	19	28	**47**	6
Teachers' Unions	17	14	**64**	6
Principals or Principal Associations	11	3	**81**	6
Parents	31	6	**58**	6
Local community	31	8	**56**	6
NGOs	42	**31**	22	6
International organisations	22	33	**39**	6
Private partners	47	19	**28**	6

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

In Saudi Arabia, as in most cases (72% of all respondents from national governments agreed), re-opening plans would cover all education institutions. Planned strategies, however, to reopen schools vary. In most cases, schools will reopen on different dates depending on the level of education or grade. Perhaps benefiting from completing the second OECD-Harvard survey later than was the case in other countries, officials in Saudi Arabia clearly expected a staggered process of school re-opening, with schools varying by level of education, grade of student and geographic location expecting to reopen at different times.

Table 16. When do schools plan to re-open in your jurisdiction? (select all that apply).

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes definitely')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes definitely')	Saudi Arabia response
All schools will re-open on the same date	25	42	Don't know
Schools will re-open on different dates based on the levels of education they cover	71	36	Yes definitely
Schools will re-open on different dates based on geographical location	24	25	Yes definitely
Schools will re-open on different schedules based on the grade	44	58	Yes definitely

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Related to securing ownership and support for the re-opening of schools from parents and students, but also related to how equitable access will be, is the question of whether attendance should be mandatory or not. In Saudi Arabia, there is no expectation that physical attendance will be compulsory when schools reopen. On average across all countries, attendance will not be mandatory in 30% of the cases; in 62% of the cases it will be mandatory except for students with family members who are sick. In less than 1% of the cases will attendance be mandatory.

In Saudi Arabia, as elsewhere, the strategies for school re-opening also comprise a wide range of approaches, amongst which the most frequent include a progressive return of students by age cohorts and school attendance scheduled in shifts (see Table 16). Approximately half of respondents indicated a hybrid model of in-person and distance learning would be utilised to facilitate social distancing, entailing new forms of interactive and collaborative learning. Few respondents reported that student and teacher returns would be contingent upon results of antibody testing. Only one in five respondents reported a return to normal scheduling and school attendance. These results shine a light on the complexities involved in managing school re-openings where student returns will require close management.

Table 17. What strategies for school re-opening are most likely to be used in your jurisdiction? (select all that apply).

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes definitely')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes definitely')	Saudi Arabia response
Return to normal scheduling and student attendance, as was practiced before the pandemic	18	19	Yes, definitely
Progressive return of students (e.g. by age cohorts)	65	47	Yes, definitely
Classroom based teaching and learning with school attendance scheduled in shifts to reduce student numbers in schools and facilitate social distancing	61	50	Yes, definitely
Hybrid model of distance and classroom based teaching and learning to reduce student numbers in schools and facilitate social distancing	59	53	Yes, definitely
Classroom teaching conducted in schools' outdoor spaces	17	31	Yes, definitely
Student and teacher returns contingent upon results of antibody testing	11	8	Don't know

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

In most countries, national and state governments have issued guidelines elaborating the conditions for school re-opening. For instance in France, classes have been re-opened under strict sanitary conditions with no more than 15 students per class. School life is being organised to respect physical distancing rules with strict hygiene measures and the distribution of hydro alcoholic gels. All teachers and school supervisors will receive masks that they must wear when they cannot respect distancing. In Iceland, the norms involve a distance of two meters between students and a maximum of 50 students in the same area.

In Germany, the federal states agreed that schools would gradually reopen from the beginning of May. However, this initially only applied to graduating and transition classes of the various education courses/levels. Strict safety measures will apply to those groups, e.g. a limited number of students per classroom, a supply of disinfectant. The ongoing schooling of those students who do not fall into the these categories is subject to a framework for the gradual re-opening of schools approved on May 6 by Chancellor Merkel and the Prime Ministers of the federal states. The framework provides that students will be able to visit their school on a daily or weekly basis before summer holidays start. In addition, particular attention will be paid to students with special needs.

Assessment and remediation

It is encouraging that plans for school re-opening generally include arrangements to assess and remediate learning gaps whether for all students, for disadvantaged students, for students who were unable to access e-learning during the confinement period, for students at risk of dropping out or repeating a grade and/or for students transitioning from one level to the next. Some 89% of all government respondents reported that their plans would include remedial measures to reduce students' learning gaps, although that percentage was only 66% amongst educators (see *Schooling Disrupted, Schooling Rethought*). Some 78% reported that remedial measures would have a special focus on disadvantaged students and 81% will focus on students who were unable to access e-learning. Slightly more than half (55%) anticipated placing a specific focus on students transitioning from school into the labour market. Some 70% indicated a focus on students with special education needs, 62% on students with an immigrant background and 49% on students from ethnic minority or indigenous students. However, amongst educators, only around 17% reported a special focus on the latter two groups (see *Schooling Disrupted, Schooling Rethought*). The Saudi Arabian determination to address the specific needs of different groups of students is in alignment with, but exceeds, that found in the averages of responses from OECD and non-OECD countries which responded to the second OECD-Harvard survey.

Table 18. To what extent do current plans for school re-opening include any of these measures to address learning gaps? (select all that apply).

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes definitely')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes definitely')	Saudi Arabia response
Assessment of any gaps in student learning that may have accumulated during confinement period	69	78	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures to reduce students' learning gaps (in general)	71	89	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on disadvantaged students	67	72	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on students who were unable to access e-learning	67	86	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on students at risk of drop-out	62	72	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on students at risk of grade repetition	62	86	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on students who had dropped out of school before the crisis	44	44	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on students with special education needs	62	67	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on immigrant and refugee students	61	44	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on ethnic minority or indigenous students	48	50	Yes, Definitely

Remedial measures with a special focus on students in programmes with a vocational orientation (where a large part of the programme consists of practical or work-based components which cannot be compensated through online learning)	60	58	Yes, Definitely
Remedial measures with a special focus on all students transitioning from one level of education to the next (e.g. from pre-primary to primary education, from primary to lower secondary, from lower secondary to upper secondary, from upper secondary to tertiary)	64	69	Yes, Definitely
Students transitioning from school into the labour market	50	47	Yes, Definitely
Other measures to address learning gaps (please specify)	14	33	No

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Supporting the well-being of students

Plans for school re-opening also include provisions in Saudi Arabia and in many other countries, to address the well-being of students, particularly with counselling, supporting students in psychological distress, those who have been victims of violence at home and students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. At the same time, only a small number of all respondents from backgrounds in national government indicated that there would be hiring of additional school doctors, nurses, psychologists or specialised teachers.

Table 19. Do your current plans for school re-opening include any of these measures to address the well-being of students?

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes definitely')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes definitely')	Saudi Arabia response
Assessment of students' mental health (efforts to identify students that may be experiencing particularly challenging circumstances)	50	33	Yes, definitely
Counselling for students	65	61	Don't know
Hiring additional school doctors, nurses, psychologists, specialised teachers	10	3	No
Special support measures for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds	63	58	Yes, definitely
Special support measures for students who may be victims of violence at home	49	69	Yes, definitely
Special support measures for students in psychological distress	60	53	Yes, definitely
Other support measures (please specify)	6	11	Don't know

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Adjustments to the curriculum

In responding to the second OECD-Harvard Covid-19 questionnaire, officials in Saudi Arabia confirmed that they planned to adjust the curriculum when schools re-open. Commitment to such an approach is shared by 38% of officials responding from OECD countries and 64% of officials from non-OECD countries. In both samples, around one-quarter of respondents still did not know whether adjustments would be

implemented while others had no plans in this regard. This is an area in need of urgent attention, given the magnitude of the learning gap reported in this study and the limitations foreseen in the reported re-opening of schools. Some two-thirds of all respondents, including those from Saudi Arabia, expected that teachers will need to teach differently after the return to classes, and an additional one-fifth reported they did not know yet.

Over half (52%) of all respondents indicated that the re-opening plans include adjustments to the scheduling and school calendar, with only 38% indicating that they will not include such adjustments. A third (31%) of all respondents indicated that they were considering extending the current school year or adjusting the schedule of the next school year. However, 59% were not considering such adjustments, which risks making learning gaps permanent. Over half (56%) of respondents were planning time to recover learning loss during the evenings, weekends or summer; only 18% have not considered such extensions in learning time.

Table 20. Which of these measures to support teachers and school leaders are part of your re-opening plans?

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Saudi Arabia response
Counselling for teachers	56	0	Yes
Hiring of additional teachers or teaching assistants	18	33	No
Training for teachers before and/or after re-opening of schools	45	0	Yes
Training for school leaders before and/or after re-opening of schools	46	0	Yes
Support from technology experts or companies	29	7	Yes

Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

In contrast to Saudi Arabia where plans are still unsure, half of all respondents indicated that new plans would include adjustments to the graduation criteria and 21% that plans would include adjustments to entry criteria for next year. In Saudi Arabia, as in approximately half of all countries responding to the survey, plans included making adjustments to the school calendar. Approximately one-third of OECD and non-OECD countries are also planning on putting in place catch-up programmes outside of regular school time.

Health and safety measures

Reported re-opening plans include the following activities to promote health: review of health and develop new hygiene standards to promote health, communicate new protocols to students and parents, deep clean school facilities, sanitary facilities and transportation. Re-opening plans can be expected to include training on basic health and hygiene protocols, physical distancing norms, mandatory use of masks and antiseptic gel, for students, teachers, and staff. Comparing the plans of different countries, Saudi Arabia is among the most prudent of nations in its intention to put in place new protocols for health and hygiene before schools are re-opened.

Table 21. How likely is it that the following activities related to health and hygiene will be implemented before schools are re-opened? OECD countries. Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.

Statement	Extremely likely (%)	Somewhat likely (%)	Neither likely nor unlikely (%)	Somewhat unlikely (%)	Extremely unlikely (%)	No answer (%)
Assessment of students' physical health (presence of COVID19-like symptoms, infection history of students and family members during the confinement period etc)	**32**	20	9	15	11	13
Development/review of standards and procedures for school hygiene prior to taking concrete steps	**88**	5	0	0	2	4
Disinfection/deep cleaning of school facilities	**71**	19	0	0	2	7
Disinfection/deep cleaning only of sanitation facilities	58	14	0	4	**12**	11
Disinfection/deep cleaning of public transportation used by students to reach the school premises	**59**	14	9	4	2	11
Procurement of (additional) soap dispensers	**76**	10	9	0	2	3
Procurement of automatic soap dispensers (so that students do not touch any surfaces)?	**36**	25	16	11	0	11
Procurement of masks for students and teachers in school	**31**	36	4	20	7	3
Procurement of gloves for students and teachers in school	**13**	23	21	25	11	7
Procurement of antiseptic gel dispensers to be placed outside/inside each classroom	**45**	31	18	2	2	3
Procurement of antiseptic wipes to be distributed to all students and teachers?	**27**	29	24	15	2	3
Communication about school organisation to parents and students	**89**	5	0	0	2	3

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Table 22. How likely is it that the following activities related to health and hygiene will be implemented before schools are re-opened? Non-OECD countries.

Statement	Extremely likely (%)	Somewhat unlikely (%)	Neither likely nor unlikely (%)	Somewhat likely (%)	Extremely unlikely (%)	No answer (%)
Assessment of students' physical health (presence of COVID19-like symptoms, infection history of students and family members during the confinement period etc)	**33**	8	17	31	0	11
Development/review of standards and procedures for school hygiene prior to taking concrete steps	**86**	0	0	3	0	11
Disinfection/deep cleaning of school facilities	**78**	0	0	11	0	11
Disinfection/deep cleaning only of sanitation facilities	56	14	11	6	**0**	14

Disinfection/deep cleaning of public transportation used by students to reach the school premises	**67**	3	3	17	0	11
Procurement of (additional) soap dispensers	**64**	0	0	25	0	11
Procurement of automatic soap dispensers (so that students do not touch any surfaces)?	**50**	11	8	14	6	11
Procurement of masks for students and teachers in school	**58**	11	14	6	0	11
Procurement of gloves for students and teachers in school	**14**	17	22	36	0	11
Procurement of antiseptic gel dispensers to be placed outside/inside each classroom	**42**	3	0	44	0	11
Procurement of antiseptic wipes to be distributed to all students and teachers?	**19**	11	22	36	0	11
Communication about school organisation to parents and students	**83**	0	6	0	0	11

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Looking at activities related to health and hygiene while schools are operational, responses from Saudi Arabia are compared to the plans of OECD and non-OECD countries in tables 22 and 23. In important areas related to preventing the further spread of the virus within schools (use of face masks, antiseptic gels and wipes, and imposition of social distancing protocols), Saudi Arabian plans are less rigorous than those found in many other countries.

Table 23. How likely is it that the following activities related to health and hygiene will be implemented when the schools re-open? OECD countries.

Statement	Extremely likely (%)	Somewhat likely (%)	Neither likely nor unlikely (%)	Somewhat unlikely (%)	Extremely unlikely (%)	No answer (%)
Mandatory use of gloves for all students, teachers and school staff	**12**	10	14	24	37	4
Mandatory use of masks for all students, teachers and school staff	40	**20**	5	5	26	4
Mandatory use of antiseptic gel by students, teachers and school staff before entering a classroom or the canteen	49	**31**	9	0	2	8
Mandatory use of antiseptic wipes for students and teachers to clean their desks every day	27	**30**	19	11	4	9
Mandatory application of social distancing protocols	81	**8**	0	0	7	4
Closure of all common areas in school (e.g. canteen, gym, library)	**24**	19	22	27	0	9
Installation of additional open-air handwashing facilities outside the school building	**9**	14	37	11	15	13
Training students, teachers and staff on basic hygiene and barrier gestures	**70**	19	0	0	7	4

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Table 24. How likely is it that the following activities related to health and hygiene will be implemented when the schools re-open? Non-OECD countries.

Statement	Extremely likely (%)	Somewhat likely (%)	Neither likely nor unlikely (%)	Somewhat unlikely (%)	Extremely unlikely (%)	No answer (%)
Mandatory use of gloves for all students, teachers and school staff	**0**	39	22	17	11	11
Mandatory use of masks for all students, teachers and school staff	50	**28**	0	11	0	11
Mandatory use of antiseptic gel by students, teachers and school staff before entering a classroom or the canteen	56	**28**	6	0	0	11
Mandatory use of antiseptic wipes for students and teachers to clean their desks every day	19	**31**	31	8	0	11
Mandatory application of social distancing protocols	78	**11**	0	0	0	11
Closure of all common areas in school (e.g. canteen, gym, library)	**39**	33	17	0	0	11
Installation of additional open-air handwashing facilities outside the school building	**28**	50	8	3	0	11
Training students, teachers and staff on basic hygiene and barrier gestures	**69**	19	0	0	0	11

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

For those students who become Covid-19 positive in Saudi Arabia as elsewhere, the re-opening plans in most countries contemplate requiring that those students self-quarantine; in about half of all responses they will require that staff and students are tested. Only in a few instances in OECD countries will the school be closed (13%), but this is a more common response among the non-OECD countries which replied to the survey.

Table 25. What security measures are schools planning to implement if a student or school staff tests positive to COVID-19 after schools re-open (please check all that apply)?

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Saudi Arabia response
The school will be closed	13	44	Yes
The classroom will be closed	22	64	Yes
The affected students or teachers will be required to quarantine	76	86	Yes
All students and staff will be tested	40	72	Yes
None	0	0	No

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source*:* Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Lessons learned

The final tables from the second OECD-Harvard Covid-19 questionnaire explore preparation for greater school closures that may well occur if further waves of the coronavirus occur. In Saudi Arabia as elsewhere, the re-opening plans contemplate making time to analyse the lessons learned during the lockdown, identify effective mitigation strategies for future closures, learn from the experience of other countries, update emergency planning for large-scale closures and adopt protocols to address cases of infection in the school community.

Re-opening plans also envisage procuring devices for students and teachers to support e-learning in the future, investing in the creation of effective e-learning platforms and providing professional development to teachers for effective e-learning instruction.

Table 26. Are there any plans to do any of the following to reviewing emergency readiness?

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Saudi Arabia response
Analyse the lessons learned during lockdown within the country	75	89	Yes
Identify effective mitigation measures for future school closures	66	86	Yes
Undertake research into what other countries have done and engage in international peer learning	70	89	Yes
Update existing emergency planning for school facilities to account for large-scale school closures	75	89	Yes
Consider re-purposing school buildings for use as temporary quarantine facilities or hospitals	9	25	Yes
Adopt protocols for schools to follow in the event that a new case of infected student, teacher, school staff or parent is reported	71	89	Yes
Designate a space in the school as an isolation room	32	39	Yes

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Table 27. Do the plans for school re-opening include building capacity for e-learning?

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Saudi Arabia response
Procurement of devices and equipment for students and teachers to facilitate e-learning	61	83	Yes
Invest in updating or creating effective e-learning platforms and content	66	89	Yes
Deliver targeted training for teachers on effective e-learning and assessment	66	89	Yes
Ensure that all teachers and students are equipped with suitable devices for e-learning	61	86	Yes
Secure internet connectivity for all teachers and students (e.g. through partnerships with internet providers to	70	81	Yes

Statement	OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Non-OECD countries (% agreeing 'yes')	Saudi Arabia response
secure lower rates for students and teachers)			
Develop alternative modes of instruction for students without internet connectivity (e.g. radio, TV, instant messaging, and other tools)	53	89	Yes

Note: Responses from Saudi Arabia in bold.
Source: Database of responses to OECD-Harvard COVID-19 second global survey undertaken 25 April-7 May 2020.

Annex A.

'A checklist to sustain education continuity in the second phase of the pandemic' from *Schooling disrupted, schooling rethought – how the Covid-19 pandemic is changing education* (OECD-Harvard Graduate School for Education, 2020)

https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=126_126988-t63lxosohs&title=A-framework-to-guide-an-education-response-to-the-Covid-19-Pandemic-of-2020

1. **Prepare**. Challenging as providing educational continuity during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic has been, the coming years may be even more challenging. Educational leaders need to prepare their institutions for more rapid change and even greater volatility. Schools, school districts, municipalities, states, and nations, will need to develop dynamic strategies of educational continuity that adjust rapidly and have close feedback loops with learners, educators and the societies around them.

2. **Learn from the first phase of the pandemic**. A rapid exercise of stock taking can codify the lessons learned during the first phase of the pandemic. These should make visible shortcomings, challenges, needs as well as silverlinings. Until there is a vaccine there is a possibility that further school closures may be necessary. A contingency plan to continue learning remotely should be developed, building on what was learned from the plan advanced during the first phase.

3. **Develop protocols to maintain physical distancing in schools and in school operations and build capacity to implement them**. There are significant demands to operate schools safety following guidelines of public health authorities, implementing those effectively will require a process of design which needs to be responsive to the conditions of each school. This process of school-based design needs to include professional development for all staff, and for students and parents.

4. **Create an effective delivery system for remote learning**. The strategies for education continuity implemented in many jurisdictions revealed significant shortcomings and inequities in access to technology and skills to use them. Addressing these shortcomings should be a priority not only because it is indispensable to execute a possible Plan B over a protracted period, but also because it is essential to help students develop the skills they need to thrive and participate in tomorrow's world. Reimagining the education delivery system requires to rethink roles. Teachers and school staff should be declared 'first responders' and their need for professional development, emotional support and protection are critical. The role of families in supporting the education of their children has changed considerably and they need professional support to play a more direct role as learning coaches of their children. Students themselves should be seen as agents of their own learning, and their roles in learning should be reimagined to leverage and cultivate their agency, purpose, self-direction and independent learning.

5. **Strengthen an expanded learning ecosystem**. Education during the first phase of the pandemic was possible to the extent that remote learning was possible and home environments were ready to serve as learning environments. Enabling this required new alliances and partnerships, for example with technology and telecommunications companies, with television and radio stations. This ecosystem should be maintained and strengthened. 6. **Sustain and deepen teacher professional development**. Educational continuity was possible because systems of teacher support and collaboration were quickly developed to

provide just in time knowledge and skills for teachers to embrace new pedagogies but also to assume new functions beyond teaching in order to support students and their families. Ongoing professional development needs to become a much more integral part of the work organisation in education, and ensure that teachers have a deep understanding not only of the curriculum as a product, but also of the process of designing a curriculum and the pedagogies that will best communicate the ideas behind the curriculum. Finding out which pedagogical approaches work best in which contexts takes time, an investment in research, and collaboration so that good ideas spread and are scaled across the school system. Achieving that will require a major shift from the current industrial work organisation to a truly professional work organisation for teachers and school leaders, in which professional norms of control replace bureaucratic and administrative forms of control.

7. **Develop capacity for blended learning that incorporates face to face learning and teaching in schools.** The re-opening of schools should not be understood as merely resuming the operation of schools, but to creatively integrate the spaces, time, people and technologies into an ecosystem of learning. These approaches need to achieve an adequate balance between standards and guidelines and responsiveness to local conditions in schools and communities. It is likely that an important proportion of learning time will remain online, increasingly depending on and cultivating student agency and independent learning.

8. **Assess student needs and outcomes.** It is essential to assess where students are academically, and what their emotional needs are. Many of them will have experienced trauma as a result of the impact of the pandemic on them or their families. This assessment should especially take note of students who do not reengage with school, who do not return, or who return but were very minimally engaged with school work during the pandemic. It will be essential to develop individualised strategies to retain the engagement of those students and their families.

9. **Recover learning loss**. The majority of students were unable to learn what the curriculum expected them to learn during the first phase of the pandemic. Additional learning time will be necessary to minimise the long-term impact of those losses. Creating expanded learning opportunities might involve extending the duration of the school day, extending the number of days of instruction per week, or work during the summer and other school holidays.

10. **Rebalance the curriculum**. The instructional priorities for the coming year must respond to the needs of students and to the different conditions in which it will be necessary to teach, in the modified school environments that health guidelines will create, and at home and the expanded learning ecosystem that will be essential to sustain education. In most cases, schools will be more restricted environments than they normally are, increasing the amount of time necessary for handwashing and hygiene, for instance, reducing the possibility of collaborative work, sports or other extracurricular activities which require close physical contact in others. This will require redesigning learning and teaching in order to provide students the best opportunities possible to learn, making optimal use of each of the elements of the new blended learning ecosystems. Those plans should balance the constraints that will be inevitable in the use of physical spaces, with the possibilities offered by collaborative and independent work remotely and at home. Ensuring an effective infrastructure to allow collaboration online should be a priority because of the possibility of interactivity it enables. The exercise of rebalancing the curriculum should begin with a whole child view of the essential competencies students need, including cognitive, social and emotional domains. It should identify opportunities created by the new conditions, for example, the need to foster greater student agency as a significant portion of their learning will require these. This will require greater attention to executive functioning, time management and self-monitoring and self-direction and the curriculum should explicitly cultivate these essential intrapersonal skills. At the same time, learning under the conditions created by the pandemic has created new emotional needs which must be addressed. Similarly, essential social skills which are ordinarily cultivated as students collaborate with peers in schools, will now

require imagination and design in order to develop them through a variety of blended approaches. This work in curriculum rebalancing is an opportunity not just to respond to the immediate conditions which the public health crisis has created, but to address the important task of building 21st century schools accelerating progress in addressing gaps which learning during the first phase of the pandemic has now made more visible.

11. **Develop an effective communication system**. Communication of the strategy among all stakeholders in schools, always important, has now become critical to ensure the coherence of an expanded blended learning eco-system that includes not just students, teachers and staff, but also parents and other members of the community. An effective communication system, which includes opportunities for feedback from multiple constituencies, is a key pillar of the implementation of an education continuity strategy. Communication should not be confused with broadcasting of messages from leadership. If messages are not received, if they are not processed, if they are not understood or accepted, communication remains ineffective. Technology affords extraordinary possibilities for more inclusive, participatory and interactive forms of communication than are normally deployed in schools and systems. Learning to use them effectively should be integral to the essential leadership development to manage the current adaptive crisis. It is imperative to create more opportunities to listen to the voice of students, in assessing their experience, in taking stock of how schools have adjusted to the pandemic, in including their views in the design of a new expanded blended ecosystem for learning, and in providing them more agency and autonomy in directing their learning going forward. It is essential to create opportunities to consult families on what kind of education they prefer for their children, as they know their circumstances best.

12. **Build capacity to lead adaptively and support innovation**. Sustaining education during the pandemic brought to the surface new leadership, from those in formal positions or authority and beyond. It also revealed the limitations of existing leadership. Those who were able to create alliances, to build collaborations across stakeholders in the public and private sector, to use rapid feedback cycles to guide their work with knowledge of conditions on the ground, to engage with peers to rapidly mobilise knowledge, and to revise and adjust regulations to quickly support essential adaptations to new conditions were able to foster the necessary innovation, collaboration and flexibility to sustain educational opportunity. Associations of principals, of school superintendents, schools of education in universities, and organisations that focus on professional development can play a critical role in creating the future leadership development infrastructure.

13. **Differentiate autonomy and support to reflect conditions of each school**. An appropriate balance is essential between autonomy and support to schools in mobilising the capacity for an effective educational continuity. Capacities in schools should be fostered to the greatest possible extent, providing support as requested and needed by the schools. Some schools, however, have very limited institutional and financial capacity and will require more guidance and support from education authorities. There are also actions which are beyond the reach of schools, for example, establishing partnerships with technology or telecommunication companies, where government can play an important facilitating role. There are actions, such as deciding whether it is safe for students to all attend school every day or how to use school transportation where those leaders and teachers in the school are best positioned to make the decisions in the best interest of students.

14. **Unleash innovation**. Educational continuity during the first phase of the pandemic was the result of sometimes extraordinary levels of innovation resulting from broad based participation of students, teachers, parents, civil society, and education leaders. Innovation and creativity will remain critical assets to face the daunting challenges that sustaining education in the coming year will require. Leadership and organisation, at all levels of the education system, can and should support ongoing innovation. Leadership to foster innovation should depend on strategic clarity on goals and great flexibility on means. Regulations,

norms, graduation requirements, exams, timetables, class sizes, school schedule and curriculum should all be understood for what they are, as means to an end and not an end in themselves. Looking forward, the strategic clarity on ends should begin with what competencies should be gained by students, then thinking creatively and flexibly to devise means that are fit for purpose, given the financial, institutional and human constrains of schools. Education leaders must make decisions in an expeditious and timely manner on options for next year early, for the sake of having the necessary time to develop education approaches which are developed as offline and online, rather than attempts to translate the face to face model in a distant model. It should be clear that most past efforts have been a stop gap measure using remote resources, not efforts designed to fully leverage what quality online instruction can deliver.

15. **Mobilise resources**. The pandemic has exerted a significant financial toll on societies and a period of financial austerity is to be expected in the immediate aftermath, to absorb the costs incurred to address the health emergency. Education must a priority as an investment during the immediate aftermath to the pandemic. In particular, if the education responses to the pandemic involve redesigning a more capacious and effective education delivery system in preparing students with the full breath of skills essential to invent the future, financial resources will be essential.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