# *Gaza children struggle with studies during COVID-19 lockdown*



**In Gaza, high poverty, power cuts, and poor internet service amid Israel's blockade, students' remote learning has been a nightmare.**

Gaza City, October 17 (RHC)-- Israel's crippling 13-year blockade of Gaza has resulted in regular electricity shortages and internet disruption, compounding the education challenges.

In early March, the Palestinian presidency was forced to declare a state of emergency, which included closing all educational institutions, as part of precautionary measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

At the beginning of September, the Gaza-based government decided to reopen the schools.  However, the detection of COVID-19 in the community for the first time led to another shutdown.  There was not

enough time to distribute books to the pupils.

"Remote learning is exhausting as the mobile screen is too small, but there is no other option. The children don't have books and they need to follow up their lessons or they will be uneducated," said Walaa.

Three of her children are in primary school and the other is in kindergarten.  "When my children get homework from their teachers on WhatsApp they write it on paper, I take photos for the answer and then I send to the teacher over WhatsApp to get their evaluation and feedback," she added.

According to the Palestinian Centre for Bureau Statistics, 29 percent of families in Gaza have only one laptop in their household.  In addition, statistics show 73 percent of Palestinian families in the Gaza Strip have basic internet service in their house, while 78 percent households possess at least one smartphone.

"I have had this mobile phone for four years and now it is processing very slow, and with eight hours of electricity outages we can't get it charged fully for the mornings," Walaa said.

Poor internet connections are an additional obstacle. Um Mohammed Abu Amra, 27, from the Deir Al-Balah area of the Gaza Strip, told Al Jazeera she needs to connect to the internet on her phone so her five children can continue their studies, but the internet service is extremely poor in her area.

"Sometimes I lost electricity and I can't connect to the internet from home, so I buy an internet card for 1 Shekel [$0.3] to connect for one or two hours on public access points that are available in the area," she said.

"On other days, if I have electricity, a technical problem at the internet provider can prevent my children from accessing their classes.  This is extremely tiring."

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