

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
Ignition - Primary Space Education (1)

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IMPACT OF ONLINE SCHOOL IN ACADEMIC EVOLUTION AND INVOLVEMENT IN STEAM  
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF CHILDREN AGED 7 TO 14 YEARS OLD IN THE UNITED  
KINGDOM, EGYPT, ROMANIA AND PAKISTAN

**Abstract**

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, at international level, the educational environment experienced the direct transition to digitalisation, academic studies being migrated to the virtual environment. According to official UNESCO data presented by Statistics, 23rd March 2020, more than 1.4 Billion students globally have been affected by the partial or total closure of educational institutions. (Statistics, Mar 2020) With the closure of schools, both students and teachers started the journey to the New Education - The Online School. But the main problem was yet to be clearly assessed as “children are not the face of the pandemic.” (UN Policy Brief, April 2020). Thus, three questions were asked to mitigate the implications of the official governmental decision, the assessment of digital educational preparedness and examples of activities conducted that led children of three nations to be inspired by Space Scientists. From spending an average 2 to 4 hours a day in the digital environment, to perform homework and use social media channels, the direct time added for The Online School has doubled, and even tripled. On average children started to use computers for over 10 – 12 hours. Vulnerability and differences increased, access to quality education has decreased considerably due to weak computer skills, but the most important fact studied has been the activities conducted to keep children engaged in their educational development. Whether we’re talking about the connection pupil-pupil or pupil-teacher, or about the ability to continue extra-curricular activities in the digital environment, there was a lack of consultation and involvement of students in decision-making, lack of creating interactive projects and dedicated support groups in behalf of authorities. This case study analysed the effects of the Online School on social interaction and presents the activities conducted in collaboration with Space Generation Advisory Council in Egypt, by creating the initiative The Egyptian Space School, currently having over 3000 followers on social media and 200 children aged 7 to 11 years old enrolled, 4wardfutures UK regis-

tered charity activities, project called “Visualising and Constructing a Life on Mars”, enrolling over 200 British students, and Romanian Science Festival charity programs that created “Invite a Science Mentor at class” boosting teacher-children-Research Academia collaboration.