



FRAMEWORK FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT: FROM REOPENING TO RECOVERY – KEY RESOURCES

March 2021

Global school closures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted children’s learning, health and wellbeing across the world.

As we enter the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global education community is vocal on the need to ensure that no effort is spared to keep schools open or prioritize them in reopening plans. Lost schooling is now measured in months instead of days. The cost of closing schools – which at the peak of pandemic lockdowns affected 90 per cent of students worldwide and left more than a third of schoolchildren with no access to remote education¹ – has been devastating. The number of out-of-school children and youth is set to increase by 24 million, to a level we have not seen in many of our lifetimes and reversing hard-won gains in the right to education.²

Children’s ability to read, write and do basic math has suffered, as has the development of their skills to reach their future potential. There is emerging evidence not only of learning being stalled, but also regression in basic skills acquisition³. An additional 72 million primary school-age children will be pushed into learning poverty and lifetime earnings of this generation reduced by the equivalent of nearly 10% of global GDP.⁴ Many studies have produced grave findings that children’s health, development, safety and wellbeing are at risk. The most vulnerable boys and girls, as always, are bearing the brunt of these impacts, amplifying a pre-existing learning crisis.

1 UNICEF Remote learning and Reachability Factsheet

2 UN Policy Brief: Education During COVID-19 and Beyond, August 2020

3 Ofsted: Children hardest hit by COVID-19 pandemic are regressing in basic skills and learning- GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and SocArXiv Papers | Learning Loss Due to School Closures During the COVID-19 Pandemic (osf.io)

4 World Bank

COVID-19 depriving 370 million children from school meals and children’s nutrition is worsening.⁵ Without the safety net that school often provides, children especially girls are more vulnerable to abuse, child marriage and child labour, particularly as the economic impact of the pandemic worsens. Without daily interactions with their peers and a reduction in mobility, they are losing physical fitness and showing signs of mental distress. Without the safety net that school often provides, they are more vulnerable to abuse, child marriage and child labour. Although most countries have made significant efforts to put remote learning strategies in place, the quality and effectiveness are varied, and equity issues with regards to access to digital learning have been brought to the forefront.

Why do we need to consider recovery in the education sector?

Recovery in the education sector requires that all children return to school, putting in place quality remedial learning programmes quickly and at scale, as well as comprehensive support to children and youth when they do return so that they are able to learn more effectively than before. Recent studies have found significant learning loss and increased inequality within and between schools, and larger learning losses among students from less educated households.⁶ As children re-enter school, education systems should measure learning, allow for targeted catch up programmes and provide support in the form of multi-sectoral interventions for the most marginalized and the most likely to drop out. Schools, teachers and children should be supported to plan and prepare for future shocks and be provided with relevant teaching and learning skills to be ready to face the global challenges of our times. Without rapid and scaled action, this generation of children and youth might do worse than the previous and future ones.

The **first priority for recovery** when schools reopen is to make sure all children return to school. **We must proactively identify and reach marginalised children**, including the one-in-five children globally who were already out of school before COVID-19⁷, and those who are most at risk to drop out, or we will lose them. Specific tailored support should be provided to ensure that girls and forcibly displaced children and those living in conflict-affected areas return to learning. A concerted effort is required to proactively monitor the return to school.

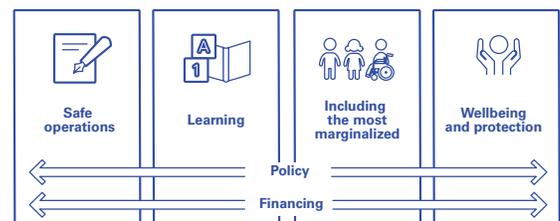
The **second priority is for targeted remedial/catch-up programmes at-scale** to minimise the effects of lost opportunities to learn. The key to this is doing rapid assessments of learning levels of children as they return, and enabling smart and creative school management policies to increase in-person interactions between teachers and students in the coming months, such as extended school days, programs during holiday breaks, and hybrid experiences to extend inclusive learning opportunities. Moreover, educational systems will need to be more flexible and adapt to the student’s needs. Flexibility requires giving teachers and school leaders the tools and support to provide a more personalized and flexible learning experience that ensures that all students learn. That is a critical element to making systems more equitable. Equity also requires ensuring girls, refugees and other vulnerable populations are not left out when resources are scarce. Technology, where feasible, can have a powerful role to play in providing these programmes and complementing the work of the teacher.

The **third priority is to provide comprehensive support** to children and youth through the recovery process and beyond. It is important to use this opportunity to strengthen multisectoral approaches to programming and support bold government actions and investments in comprehensive school health, mental health and psycho-social support, WASH, protection and nutrition. This will require strong partnerships, including supporting communities and parent teacher associations and civil society in the planning, implementation and monitoring of these services.

A recovery that is holistic and aspirational for children will require substantial resources. Governments and the international community must unite to reopen schools, train and support teachers, boost skills development and expand digital connectivity through the provision of adequate policy and financing to invest in children’s futures.

Recovery in the Education Sector

Following from the framework for reopening schools, four key dimensions can be used to inform education sector recovery planning: safe operations, learning, reaching the most marginalized and wellbeing/protection. Policy considerations and financial requirements together create the enabling environment needed to support each of the dimensions. This supplement to the Framework for Reopening Schools⁸ offers a collection of key resources - including policy research, practical guides, and emerging best practices - to help countries in the preparation and implementation of their national education recovery process.



5 WFP and UNICEF COVID-19: Missing More Than a Classroom-The impact of school closures on children’s nutrition

6 From Belgium and the Netherlands

7 UIS UNESCO Fact Sheet 48, February 2018

8 Framework for Reopening Schools and Supplement to Framework for reopening schools: Emerging lessons from country experiences in managing the process of reopening schools

Resources:

School Operations:

Supporting teachers in back-to-school efforts: A toolkit for school leaders

Teachers Task Force

This Toolkit was designed for school leaders to support and protect teachers and education support staff in the return to school following COVID-19 related closures. While aimed primarily at school leaders, the toolkit is also potentially useful for teachers and education support staff to better understand their roles and responsibilities in back-to-school efforts, including new tips and emerging practices.

Ready to Come Back: A teacher preparedness training package

UNICEF MENA

This guide provides practical, concise, crucial information about the impact of COVID-19 on daily teaching practices as well as tips and suggestions to improve safety, learning, well-being and protection, with students in face-to-face or remote settings.

Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19

WHO

Annex to Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19.

Guidance on Safe and Healthy Journeys to School During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

UNICEF, Child Health Initiative and partners

This guidance is to help manage the risks posed by COVID-19, to help ensure the safest, healthiest journeys to school possible. This guidance is for education authorities and policymakers; school administrators, teachers and staff; parents, caregivers and community members; and students.

Safe Back to School: A Practitioner's Guide

Global Education Cluster and the CP AoR

This guide contains concrete actions that can be taken at the community and school levels to operationalize global policy recommendations and help program teams plan an integrated, participatory process for safe school reopening.

Guidance on Reopening Early Childhood Education Settings

UNICEF, the World Bank and UNESCO

This guidance note outlines key principles and practical measures for decision-makers to consider before, during and after the transition from closure to reopening. It focuses on safe operations in ECE settings, staff training and support, child well-being and development, and parental communication and support.

COVID-19: Refugees' Return to Schooling Guidelines

UNHCR

This document draws on the framework for re-opening of schools and provides recommendations on specific steps that organisations can take to support refugees at all levels of education to successfully return to education. The guidelines are drafted so as to be applicable to a range of contexts including where refugees attend host community schools.

Primary target audience: Organisations and donors supporting refugee education, UNHCR, Ministries of Education.

Learning:

COVID-19: Trends, Promising Practices and Gaps in Remote Learning for Pre-Primary Education

UNICEF and UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti

This brief summarizes the key findings and observations from a report on remote learning options – be it online, television, radio, paper- or mobile-based – that countries around the world have made available for pre-primary students and their families while schools are closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 response – Remediation: Helping students catch up on lost learning, with a focus on closing equity gaps

UNESCO Global Education Coalition

The goal of these chapters is to support countries in their K–12 educational response to COVID-19 by providing practices and examples, concrete steps for intervention and tactical action checklists. This particular chapter focuses on the topic of Remediation.

From Schooling to Learning for All: Reorienting Curriculum and Targeting Instruction

Pershad, D., Comba, R., & Bergmann, J. Save Our Future

This paper was written to provide background information to assist in drafting the Save Our Future white paper Averting an Education Catastrophe for the World's Children. Save our Future

Learning (*continued*):

[Simulating the Potential Impacts of COVID-19 School Closures on Schooling and Learning Outcomes: A Set of Global Estimates](#)

World Bank Group Open Knowledge Repository

Policy Research Working Paper presenting the results of global simulations of the potential impacts of COVID-19, considering length of school closures and effectiveness of remote learning.

[Learning Poverty in the Time of COVID-19: A Crisis within a Crisis](#)

World Bank

Policy brief summarizing the potential impacts of school closures on learning poverty globally.

[Realizing the Future of Learning: From Learning Poverty to Learning for Everyone, Everywhere](#)

World Bank

This report describes the World Bank's vision for the future of learning and a strategic approach that lays out the lines of actions needed for education systems to move forward in accelerating learning improvement.

[Cost-Effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning: What does recent evidence tell us are 'smart buys' to improve learning in low- and middle-income countries. Recommendations of the Global Advisory Panel](#)

World Bank, FCDO and BE2

This note is intended to be helpful for technical staff in Ministries of Education, donor agencies, local education groups and non-profit organizations in thinking through appropriate interventions to improve learning. The global evidence it presents should be used alongside context-specific analyses and system diagnostics.

[Promising Practices in Remote Learning. Emerging Lessons from 127 Countries](#)

UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti

The massive scale of school closures has laid bare the uneven distribution of the technology needed to facilitate remote learning. It has also highlighted the lack of preparedness and low resilience of systems to support teachers, facilitators and parents/caregivers. Using data on access to technology from household surveys and information on national education responses to school closures gathered from UNICEF education staff in over 120 countries, this brief explores potentially promising practices for equitable remote learning.

[Accelerated Education](#)

Accelerated Education Working Group

The Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) is made up of a number of education partners supporting and/or funding AE programming. The AEWG aims to improve the quality of AE through developing guidance and tools to support a more harmonised, standardised approach to AE provision. The guidance and tools are available in Spanish, French, English and Arabic.

[COVID-19 Pathways for the Return to Learning: Guidance on Condensing a Curriculum](#)

Accelerated Education Working Group

This guidance document provides recommendations to policy makers, curriculum developers, teachers and programme implementers on the principles that should guide efforts to condense curricula to ensure that core skills are covered.

[COVID-19 Decision Tree and Brief](#)

Accelerated Education Working Group

The decision tree and brief will help education planners identify the appropriate education options to help learners catch up on missed learning during school closures.

[Investing in Learning: The Case for Strengthening the Collection and Use of Learning Assessment Data in EiE Contexts](#)

INEE – Key Resources

This policy paper is for EiE sector donors, both in humanitarian and protracted crisis contexts, national governments and humanitarian and development agencies. It provides guidance on how to increase and improve the measurement of holistic learning outcomes for crisis-affected learners.

[INEE Measurement Library](#)

INEE – Key Resources

The Measurement Library is a collection of measurement tools to assess children's learning and holistic development and service provider quality in crisis contexts. The tools are meant to help education practitioners generate high-quality data to inform program planning and review.

[Teaching at the Right Level: Strengthening foundational skills to accelerate learning](#)

INEE – Key Resources

Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) is an evidence-backed educational approach that helps children develop basic reading and mathematics skills, opening doors to a brighter future. The approach, pioneered by Indian NGO Pratham, targets the root of the learning crisis by transforming the structures that lead to it. The approach works by dividing children (generally in Grades 3 to 5) into groups based on learning needs rather than age or grade. When TaRL is successfully implemented, learning outcomes improve.

Learning (*continued*):

Support the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

OECD

The overall goal of this series is to facilitate the rapid design process and implementation of adaptive responses to emerging education challenges, and to protect young people's educational opportunities during and following the pandemic.

Guidance on Distance Learning Modalities to Reach All Children and Youth During School Closures

UNICEF ROSA

This guidance on continuity of learning during school closures draws on the key lessons learned from the COVID-19 education response around the world. It was developed for government policymakers and education staff of national and international organizations involved in the education response during school closures.

Defining, monitoring and improving quality: Guidelines for stronger quality assurance systems in ECE

ECE Accelerator

These guidelines offer a deeper understanding of options and avenues governments can take to ensure quality ECE systems.

Guidance note on using learning assessment in the process of school reopening

World Bank

This note provides key steps that countries with different availability of resources should consider in developing their plans for learning assessment activities to support learning recovery in the context of school reopening.

How to ensure that everyone can continue learning amid the coronavirus situation: Connected education – resources, considerations and guidance

UNHCR

This document provides guidelines on how to best utilise online educational resources to support learning during school closures. These materials can also be used as schools reopen to provide additional opportunities to supplement school-based learning and to speed up mastery of content. The document provides information on resource collections curated by a range of actors in a number of different languages. The primary audience for this document is policy makers and teachers.

Wellbeing and Protection:

Safe to Learn during COVID-19: Recommendations to prevent and respond to violence against children in all learning environments (translations in Arabic, French, Portuguese and Spanish)

Safe to Learn

The Safe to Learn initiative has developed recommendations on preventing and responding to violence against children in and through all learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reopening Schools Safely: Recommendations for building back better to end violence against children in and through schools (translations in Arabic, French, Portuguese and Spanish)

Safe to Learn

These recommendations aim to support governments to integrate and strengthen measures to prevent and respond to violence against children in and through schools, as they move towards school reopening.

Supporting schools to provide a safe online learning experience (translations in Arabic, French, Portuguese and Spanish)

Safe to Learn

Guidance for education ministries outlining how schools can mitigate online risks and promote positive online experiences for children when learning online.

Integration of Child Protection in Return to School – Tips for Teachers and School Management

UNICEF EAPRO COVID-19 Package

These are tips for teachers and school management as students return to school to identify and respond to child protection concerns, identify and respond to mental health concerns, ensure support is available and accessible for students, and promote the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of teachers.

Integration of Child Protection in Return to School – Advocacy Brief

UNICEF EAPRO COVID-19 Package

This advocacy brief highlights the impact of school closures and other containment measures on children's protection and wellbeing and key actions that can be taken by governments, schools and teachers to ensure that the needs of children are addressed in plans and policies for reopening schools.

Integration of Child Protection in Return to School - Messages for Children and Adolescents Returning to School

UNICEF EAPRO COVID-19 Package

These messages support communication, primarily with children and adolescents, on violence, abuse and student well-being.

Wellbeing and Protection (*continued*):

Integration of Child Protection in Return to School - Template for Child Protection Referral Pathway between Schools and Other Child Protection Services

UNICEF EAPRO COVID-19 Package

This guidance document provides a broad, step by step process for schools to follow when (1) there is suspicion that a student (child or adolescent) has experienced child abuse (violence, exploitation or neglect), or (2) there is a disclosure that a student has suffered child abuse, wherever that abuse has taken place. It was developed by UNICEF EAPRO, with UNICEF NYHQ support, and inputs from the Global Education Cluster and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility.

Global Programmatic Framework & Benchmarking Tool: From Call to Action to Programme Responses

Safe to Learn

As many schools reopen, this document will be crucial to ensure schools provide the safe and supportive space that children need. It provides guidance in translating the Safe to Learn “Call to Action” into practical actions; highlights technical resources to assist in the design of interventions and sets out a suggested framework for monitoring and tracking results.

Diagnostic Tool and its complete set of [methodological resources](#)

Safe to Learn

This tool and resources aim to inform country-level collective dialogue with national counterparts by assessing the quality of national efforts to prevent and respond to violence in schools. Developed before the COVID-19 pandemic, these resources can be crucial to support governments to build back better.

Position Paper: The importance of Investing in the well-being of children to avert the learning crisis

UNESCO, WFP, UNICEF, and WHO

A joint position paper focusing on how improved school health and nutrition programmes are critical to address the current learning catastrophe and leave no one behind.

Stepping Up effective school health and nutrition: A partnership for healthy learners and a brighter future

UNESCO, FAO, GPE, UNICEF, UNSCN, World Bank Group, WFP and WHO

Drawing from solid evidence and years of experience, the partners behind this coalition have identified core elements of effective and scalable school health and nutrition programmes (see box 1), which provide a basis from which individual countries can develop their own age-specific strategies to match their needs.

Reaching the most marginalized:

Gender-responsive Education in the Context of COVID-19: Framework and Progressive Standards for South Asia

UNICEF

This document outlines ‘evidence-informed progressive standards to support gender-responsive actions that address the unique needs of girls and boys at risk of not engaging in education, training or employment.’ Primary target audience: Ministries of Education, UNICEF COs and implementing partners in the region.

Building Back Equal: Girls Back to School Guide

UNESCO, UNICEF, Plan, UNGEI, Malala Fund

This document outlines targeted recommendations to ensure continuity of learning while schools are closed, and to establish comprehensive, timely and evidence-based plans for reopening schools in a way that is safe, gender-responsive and child-friendly. Primary target audience: policymakers and practitioners in ministries of education and their partners.

Inclusive School Reopening: Supporting the Most Marginalized Children to go to School

UNICEF

This document outlines proposals that can be considered in planning for better school reopening so that the needs of the most marginalized children to get back to school and stay in school are met. Primary target audience: UNICEF Country Offices and government partners.

Overview of COVID-19 Education Technical Guidance: Ensuring an Inclusive Return to School for Children with Disabilities

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Region COVID-19 Technical Guidance

This document provides guidance on critical considerations and actions that should be undertaken to ensure an inclusive return to school for children with disabilities, as children return to school after the temporary closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evidence on efforts to mitigate the negative educational impact of past disease outbreaks

K4D Health Desk

This document is a rapid review of efforts to mitigate the educational impact of previous disease outbreaks, concentrating on school-age learners.

Addressing the gender dimensions of COVID-related school closures

UNESCO

This technical brief highlights the gender dimensions of COVID-related school closures. It shares lessons from past practices and the current crisis, as well as practical tips for designing policy interventions.

Financing:

[The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Education Financing](#)

World Bank

This brief identifies the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to affect the availability of funding for education. It summarizes evidence on the negative impact that the pandemic is likely to have on education financing and identifies some policy responses to mitigate this impact.

[Education Finance Watch 2021](#)

World Bank, UNESCO

Joint World Bank-UNESCO report on trends in global education financing and the impacts of the global downturn caused by COVID-19 on education budgets.

Policy and Overarching:

[The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to Education and Policy Responses](#) (translations in [French](#) and [Spanish](#))

World Bank

The COVID-19 pandemic has already had profound impacts on education by closing schools at all levels almost everywhere; now, the damage will become even more severe as the health emergency translates into a deep global recession. This note describes the shocks hitting education systems and outlines how countries can respond to them.

[Simulating the Impact of Covid-19 on Education Systems by 2023](#)

GPE

Based on analysis of actual and foreseen challenges, this report synthesizes the discussions and inputs from simulating the potential impact of COVID-19 on education systems by 2023. The report also shares ideas from the simulation sessions on how the global community, and GPE, could help mitigate disruption in service delivery and sustain learning outcomes.

[Blogs on World Bank Education Response to COVID-19](#)

World Bank

A collection of the World Bank's blogs on Education written during its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Act now: Reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the cost of achieving SDG 4](#)

UNESCO Policy Paper

This paper outlines the costs of achieving SDG 4 as assumed in 2015, as well as the revised costs projected before the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020.

[Global education monitoring report 2020: Gender report, a new generation: 25 years of efforts for gender equality in education](#)

UNESCO GEM

The GEM Gender Report looks at progress made since 1995, when the international community made a landmark commitment to advancing women's rights by adopting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Report also shows where progress has faltered, and where difficulties risk being exacerbated by the current health crisis.

[Lessons for Education during the COVID-19 crisis](#)

World Bank

To support countries, the Harvard Global Education Innovation Initiative, HundrED, the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills and the World Bank Group Education Global Practice are combining their expertise to provide the countries with information and resources from around the world on technology in the education response to the crisis.

[Education Sector Recovery, Disaster Recovery Guidance Series](#)

Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

This note provides practical guidance to national governments about key priorities for the education sector following a major disaster or crisis. It specifies a set of considerations and actions to help ensure that the education sector can (1) maintain its core functions in the midst of a crisis, (2) allow for streamlined recovery from shocks, (3) minimize disaster and conflict risks and (4) improve the sector's adaptation and resilience to future crises.

[Comprehensive School Safety: A global framework in support of The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector and The Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools](#) (currently under revision)

UNISDR and GADRRRES

Comprehensive School Safety is addressed by education policy and practices aligned with disaster management at national, regional, district, and local school site levels. It rests on three pillars: (1) Safe Learning Facilities, (2) School Disaster Management, and (3) Risk Reduction and Resilience Education. The foundation of planning for Comprehensive School Safety is multi-hazard risk assessment.

Policy and Overarching (continued):

COVID-19 and the global education emergency: Planning systems for recovery and resilience

G20 Insights

This brief recommends crisis-sensitive educational planning with a strong equity focus to ensure education continuity, predicated on comprehensive health measures. It suggests actions for the G20 countries and donors to rebuild and support resilient education systems, moving from first response to recovery.

Analysis and Planning Toolkit

ECE Accelerator Toolkit

This resource can be helpful to support countries with planning their recovery efforts for ECE by Strengthening Early Childhood Education in Education Sector Planning Processes.

Case Studies on School Reopening (filter by area of work)

UNICEF Education

A collection of global case studies on reopening schools. Each case study underpins the School Reopening Framework, and documents important lessons and insights into the process.

Education in Global Health Emergencies: COVID-19

Global Education Cluster

Protecting children and teachers to ensure safe schools and learning spaces is a priority in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key resources and additional information on support from the Global Education Cluster available to country coordination teams and partners are contained in the toolbox.

Education Sector Recovery

Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

This Note provides practical guidance to national governments about key priorities for the education sector following a major disaster or crisis. It specifies a set of considerations and actions to help ensure that the education sector can: (1) maintain its core functions in the midst of a crisis, (2) allow for streamlined recovery from shocks, (3) minimize disaster and conflict risks and (4) improve the sector's adaptation and resilience to future crises.

Issue note 1.3: Building Back Resilient: How can Education Systems Prevent, Prepare for, and Respond to Health Emergencies and Pandemics?

UNESCO

This paper lays out concrete recommendations to build resilient education systems through actions that address prevention, preparedness and response to health emergencies and pandemics.

COVID-19 Response Toolkit

UNESCO Global Education Coalition

Eight chapters developed by UNESCO and Coalition partners provide COVID-19 education response frameworks, country practices and examples, concrete steps for intervention, and tactical action checklists to support governments. These approaches can be used regardless of response stage; the kit is modular and each chapter can be used in a standalone manner.

Guidance for Governments on mitigating the impact of the pandemic on the food and nutrition of schoolchildren

WFP, FAO and UNICEF

This joint note from WFP, FAO and UNICEF is aimed at providing preliminary guidance to national and local authorities, school administrators and staff and implementing partners on how to take short-term measures to support, transform or adapt school feeding programmes in their efforts to safeguard the food security and nutritional status of school-aged children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020

WFP

This publication provides an analysis of the state of school feeding in 2020, describes the impact of COVID-19 on school feeding around the world and presents what can be done to restore this global safety net.