

# COVID-19 Evidence Gaps

## 2020 Survey Analytics



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INEE would like to thank Dubai Cares for their continued championing of evidence for EiE and commitment to funding research that is truly driven by evidence gaps and needs as identified by people and institutions in crisis-affected contexts.



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Design was provided by 2D Studio Ltd.

For feedback or questions please contact [evidence@inee.org](mailto:evidence@inee.org).

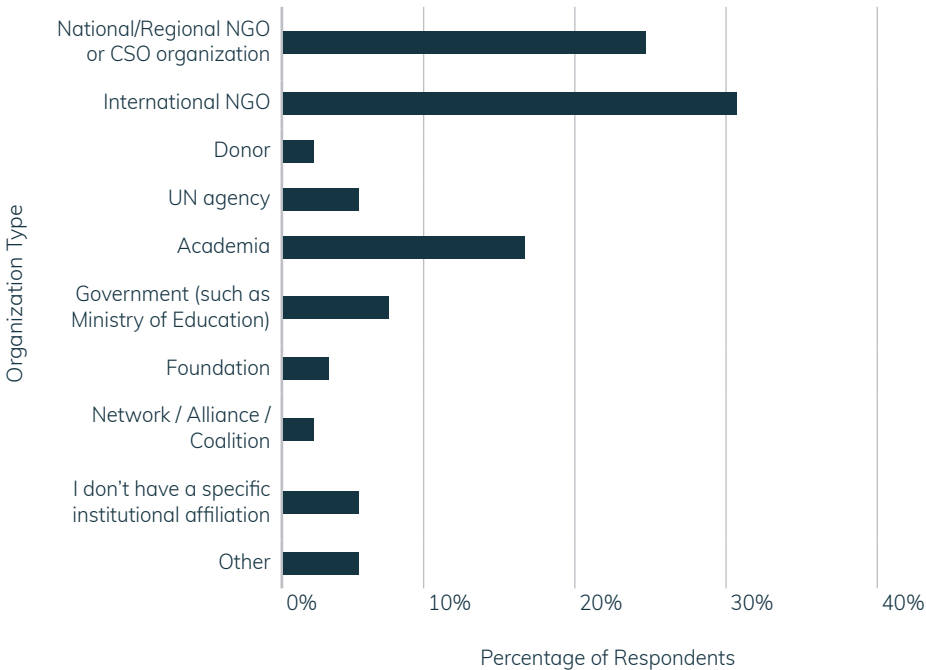
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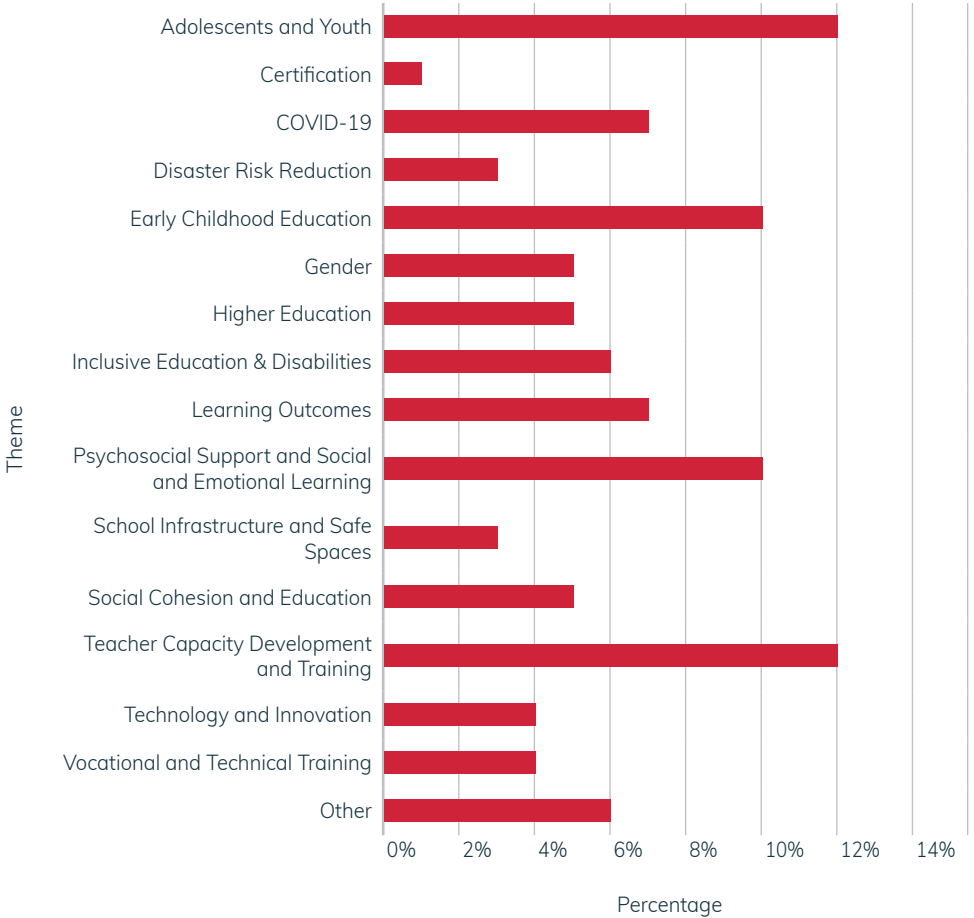
In October 2020, INEE and Dubai Cares engaged the INEE Network in a survey on evidence gaps in light of COVID-19. The survey was disseminated and accessible in all five of INEE’s working languages (English, Arabic, French, Spanish, Portuguese). Data were collected over a three-week period via SurveyMonkey.

In total, 286 responses were recorded across 86 countries. Roughly one-third of respondents worked in technical program roles (31%) while just under one-fifth of respondents were in senior management positions (19%). In addition to practitioners, 17% of respondents were academics or researchers. Over half of respondents work for NGOs, with 30% working for international NGOs and 24% working for national or regional NGOs or CSOs as displayed in Chart 1. The top regional contexts that respondents worked in include Middle East (14%), West Africa (11%), and East Africa (10%). Additionally, respondents were asked to select up to three organizational thematic priorities as displayed in Chart 2.

**CHART 1: ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS OF RESPONDENTS (N=286)**



**CHART 2: THEMATIC ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES (N=711)**



After translation, all qualitative responses were read and analyzed through an informal open-coding process. Emerging and salient themes were noted and grouped. Some responses provided were beyond the scope of EiE data and evidence, such as data on the efficacy of hand washing and face masks. While such data are important research themes, they have been omitted here.

### CHART 3: USEFUL EVIDENCE IN ADAPTING TO COVID-19

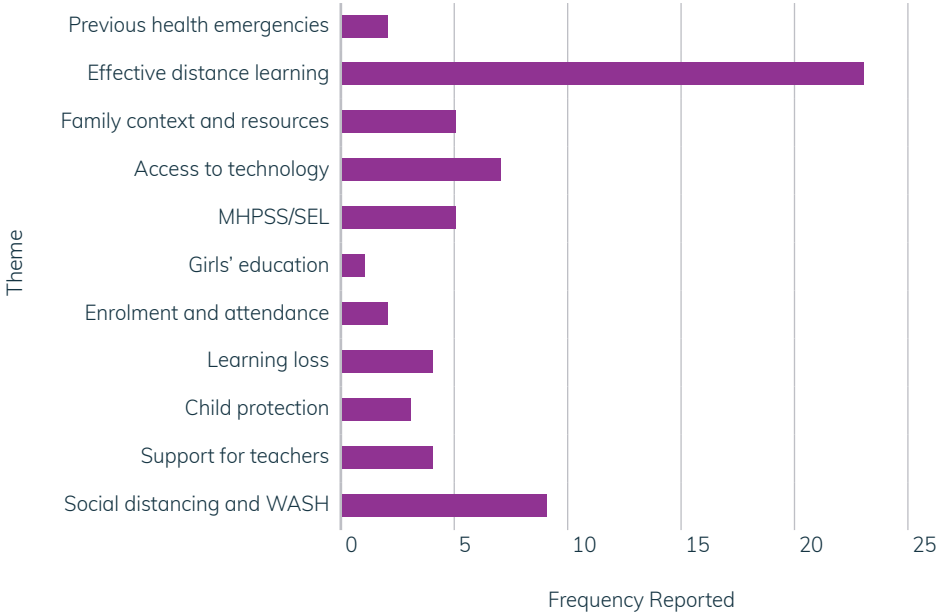
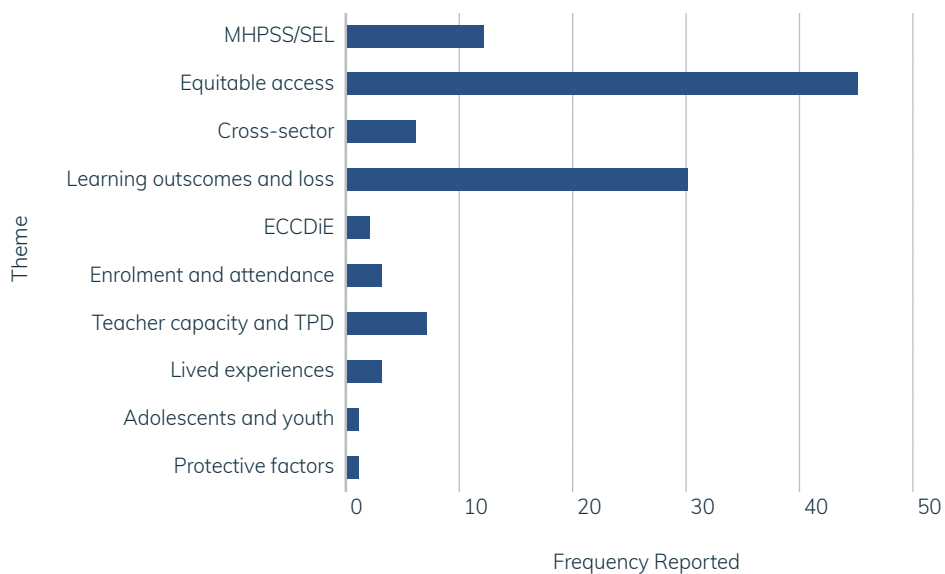


Table 1 and Chart 3 display the frequency of key themes reported in response to the question: **“As you/your organization have been adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic, what kind of evidence has been most helpful to you? How have you utilized existing evidence in your work?”** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 9 respondents reported evidence on social distancing and WASH programming to be useful. Additionally, 27 respondents reported evidence on effective distance learning strategies to adapt to new learning modalities. With increased attention on EdTech and ICT solutions, 7 respondents reported evidence on access to technology that proved helpful in programmatic decisions. Considering the impact of COVID-19 on education and face-to-face learning, these top three themes reflect the evidence used to craft effective responses.

**TABLE 1: USEFUL EVIDENCE IN ADAPTING TO COVID-19**

THEME	FREQUENCY
Previous health emergencies	2
Effective distance learning strategies	23
Family context and resources	5
Access to technology	7
Impact of crisis on MHPSS/SEL	5
Impact of crisis on girls' education	1
Impact of crisis on enrolment and attendance	2
Impact of crisis on learning loss	4
Child protection	3
Support for teachers	4
Social distancing and WASH programming	9

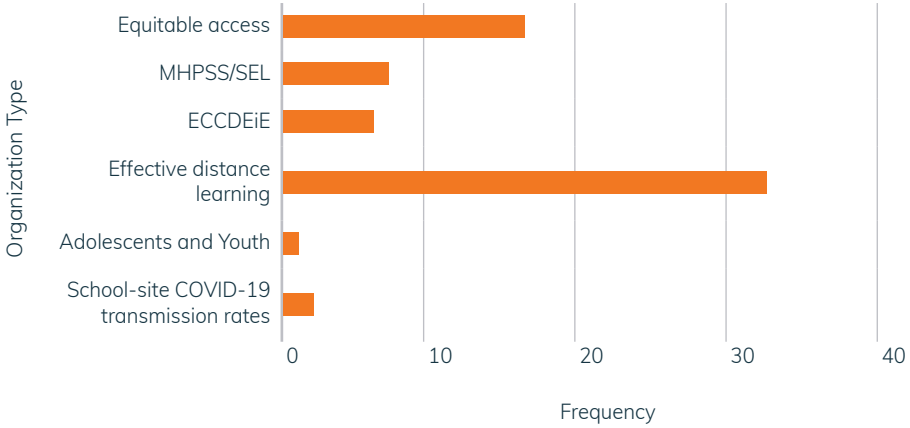
**CHART 4: EVIDENCE GAPS AMIDST COVID-19**

While practitioners have strived to ensure that the COVID-19-response is evidence-based, existing research and evidence is limited. Respondents identified evidence gaps in light of or compounded by the pandemic. Table 2 and Chart 4 display the frequency of key themes reported in response to the question: **“Based on observations from your recent work, what evidence gaps for EiE have emerged (or been compounded) by the COVID-19 pandemic?”** 45 respondents identified a gap regarding the effects of COVID-19 on equitable access to education across various populations, including girls, children with disabilities, and fewer home and family resources which is further disaggregated in Table 2. In addition to access, 30 respondents identified a gap in evidence on learning outcomes considering the shift in modalities and strategies, or lack thereof, in response to COVID-19.

**TABLE 2: EVIDENCE GAPS AMIDST COVID-19**

THEME	FREQUENCY
MHPSS/SEL needs of children	8
MHPSS/SEL needs of parents/caregivers	4
Barriers for vulnerable children	7
Access to education for children with disabilities	3
Gender and girls’ education	7
Child protection	6
Equitable access to education, particularly ICT	18
Home/family resources and support	4
Cross-sector approaches	2
WASH facilities	4
Learning outcomes	5
Learning loss	8
Effective remote learning strategies, particularly ICT	16
Effects of screen time on children	1
ECCDiE	2
School attendance, enrolment, and retention	3
Teacher capacity and training	7
Lived experiences of children	3
Adolescents and Youth	1
Protective factors	1

## CHART 5: DESIRED EVIDENCE AMIDST COVID-19



In addition to evidence gaps, key themes in desired evidence are displayed in Table 3 and Chart 5 in response to the question: **“Considering these additional evidence needs, what kind of evidence would be most helpful to you/your organization’s work in your response to COVID-19?”** Whereas more respondents identified evidence gaps in equitable access (45) in comparison to learning outcomes (30), effective distance learning emerged as the most frequently reported theme of desired evidence by 32 respondents. Evidence on equitable access, however, is still an important theme as the second most reported theme by 16 respondents.

Of the 286 respondents, the most common thematic priorities by organization were adolescents and youth (12%), teacher capacity and education (12%), psychosocial support (PSS) and social and emotional learning (SEL) (10%), and early childhood education (10%). In contrasting organizational thematic priorities and reported evidence priorities, adolescents and youth was only reported as desired evidence by one respondent. Teacher capacity and education was identified as a gap in evidence but was not explicitly reported by respondents as desired evidence. PSS/SEL was consistently reported as the third emerging theme in both gaps and desired evidence, corresponding with organizational priorities. Early childhood education was only reported as a gap in evidence by 2 respondents whereas 6 respondents would like evidence generated regarding early childhood education. One reason for such results could be that effective distance learning strategies is a cross-cutting issue that extends beyond previous organizational priorities.

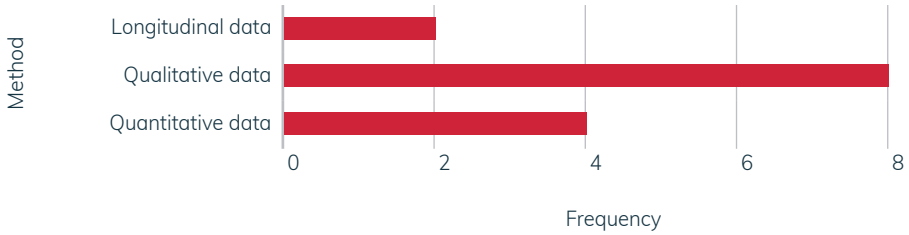


**TABLE 3: DESIRED EVIDENCE AMIDST COVID-19**

<b>THEME</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
Vulnerable children	5
Barriers to access	2
Access to education for children with disabilities	2
Gender and girls' education	4
Child protection	3
MHPSS/SEL	7
ECCDiE	4
Playful learning	2
Effective distance learning strategies	6
Effectiveness of ICT solutions	8
Access to ICT	9
Effectiveness of home learning	5
Distance learning assessment tools	1
Share good practices	3
Adolescents and Youth	1
School-site transmission rates	2
Policy-needs gap	1
Longitudinal data	2
Qualitative data	8
Quantitative data	4

While not a discrete question, some respondents commented on desired research methods for evidence captured in Chart 6. 8 respondents reported qualitative data as an important source of understanding the lived experiences of children amidst COVID-19. 2 respondents highlighted the importance of longitudinal data to consider the long-term effects of COVID-19 on learners' learning and life outcomes.

## CHART 6: DESIRED RESEARCH METHODS AMIDST COVID-19



The effects of COVID-19 will remain for an indefinite amount of time and additional research is needed to respond to gaps in evidence created and/or exacerbated by the pandemic. While some evidence from previous health crises and EiE at large has proven useful, there is insufficient evidence to properly address current gaps and there is a need to intentionally build an evidence base for future global pandemics.

As donors award funding, researchers design studies, policy makers set strategic priorities, and practitioners implement programs, all stakeholders can consider the following expressed priorities:

1. Effective distance learning strategies in relation to learning loss and learning outcomes;
2. Understanding and ensuring equitable access to education prior to and during the pandemic, with particular emphasis on home learning resources, girls' education, and children with disabilities; and
3. Responding to the psychosocial and developmental needs of children and caregivers.

While these priorities are not mutually exclusive nor exhaustive of the expressed needs of survey respondents, these themes provide direction for stakeholders to build back more equitable and quality education systems.



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