**COVID-19 Needs Assessments**

**Education Findings: Schools Closures and Distance Learning**

**July 2020**

**METHODOLOGY**

21 needs assessment reports from 14 country offices, produced as of 28 July 2020 were analysed for education-related findings. Of these, three contained no education-related data. Of the remaining assessments, 16 included primary data collection and two were based on desk reviews. Most were carried out in April and May 2020, during the initial months of school closures.

The assessments include 996 children (427 boys, 569 girls), 4,698 teachers (1,028 male, 3,670 female - all from one large survey in Indonesia), 20,168 caregivers (5,800 male, 14,368 female), 898 caregivers (not disaggregated) and 499 other key informants and community members (not disaggregated) - total of **27,259 adults and children**. This total is somewhat skewed by two large online and telephone surveys in India and Indonesia which included 24,082 teachers and caregivers. The majority of assessments had a sample size of between 100 and 400 children and adults. A range of methodologies were used, including community and focus group discussions, key informant interviews, questions and discussion by WhatsApp and SMS, telephone interviews and online surveys - of these, telephone interviews were the most common.

Most assessments conducted to date have been multi-sectoral, with a focus on the impact of COVID-19 on children and families. Given the scale of school closures, the impact on children’s learning and wellbeing is a common thread throughout the assessments. Since most were conducted in April and May, 1-2 months into school closures, the majority of education findings relate to the impact of school closures, how children are spending their time out of school, and their experience of distance learning. Very little information emerged that relates to the reopening of schools.

**FINDINGS**

**ACCESS TO DISTANCE LEARNING**

*Access to distance learning ranges from just 6% to 81% - in the majority of countries, 40-50% of young people covered by these assessments are not accessing any kind of education whilst schools are closed.*

* Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar host community – 42% parents not heard of any remote learning
* Bangladesh marginalised children – 65% continuing studies ‘a little’, 23% not at all, 12% fully (90% were in school before they closed)
* Bangladesh Rohingya children - only 6% boys/12% girls doing distance learning
* Cambodia children – 55% accessing remote learning – 0% of primary leanings, 60% secondary, 75% high school
* Cambodia children - 44% do not have access to remote learning and 46% don’t have access to learning materials (55% of rural 37% urban don’t have access to materials – 37% high school, 83% primary)
* India most marginalised – 44% children playing with learning – 35% playing without learning – 33% don’t have any educational material at home
* Indonesia teachers and parents – media children are using to learn at home – 75% TV, 60% WhatsApp, 48% online learning app, 32% YouTube, 31% educational website
* Indonesia teachers and parents – leaving behind 9.4% children aged 5-10 who can’t read and write
* Nepal parents – 76% children reading and playing
* Philippines children – feeling bored and unproductive and anxious they won’t be able to go back to school or graduate
* Egypt Syrian and African refugee caregivers – watching some on TV, older children studying alone with school books but can’t afford E-Learning platform
* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian, and Lebanese youth aged 12-24 – only 42% continuing studies at home
* Turkey refugees – 66% Syrian and 73% Afghan young people previously enrolled in school have shifted to distance learning, mostly via TV or mobile app – in another specific survey of Syrian refugees, 81% had adapted to distance learning with 41% accessing more than one medium
* Kosovo – RAE children not always able to access TV or laptops and attendance not monitored – children’s experience dependent on family’s ability to engage in online learning
* Kenya Turkana children – children in rural areas can’t access online platforms, some students don’t have phones or radios for learning
* Rwanda children – encouraged to access courses on radio, TV, YouTube but they don’t have access to the technology, materials, hardware or internet – also a shortage of time due to parents asking them to help out with other activities

**ACCESS TO INTERNET AND HARDWARE**

*Access to the internet and hardware varies according to contexts, communities and households. However, whilst many Ministries have introduced distance learning via TV and online platforms, in every country this has excluded children – particularly marginalised children – without access to the required technology – this includes middle income contexts in the Middle East and Asia. The cost of internet, lack of reliable connections, and access to the specific TV channel are common obstacles for those that do have access. These barriers affect teachers too, limiting the ways in which they can support children’s learning whilst schools are closed. Equally, where access to the internet and TV is high, it does not follow that all children access distance learning (see Cambodia and Turkey).*

* Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar host community –Government initiated TV and internet-based learning but only 37.6% households have internet access and 50.6% has a TV
* Cambodia children – high access to internet and phone (100%) and TV (72%) but only 55% accessing learning
* Indonesia teachers and parents – 75% children use TV as main source rather than online platforms – data packages and poor connection is a barrier – but only 40% using MoE’s daily programme on TV as there’s poor connection to this channel and timing conflicts with school schedule and assignments – some children independently accessing learning material online – cost of internet and data packages main reason for low use of online platforms by teachers and parents, also poor connection in rural areas
* Indonesia teachers – 25% teachers have no computer, smart phone or internet package
* Nepal parents – 57% consider radio most effective teaching and learning tool, 25% TV, 4% books – 68% access radio (34% TV, 16% social media, 10% internet)
* Lebanon – Syrian and Palestinian youth aged 12-24 – 22% don’t have reliable internet
* Lebanon refugee settlement – 90% caregivers have a phone and 96% have access to wifi at home or through friend/neighbour
* Turkey refugees – some households don’t have TV or access to the TRT channel, or wifi connection or computer/tablet (learning is predominantly through TV and apps) – 78% who cannot access distance learning do have internet at home (missed opportunity?)
* Egypt Syrian and African refugee caregivers – Syrian parents can’t afford learning through MoE e-learning platform – poor internet, no computer or smart phone – children watching some educational programmes on TV – MoE requires end of year coursework, but this is a big barrier because can’t afford internet cards to do the research from the learning platform
* Rwanda children – 10% have access to TV, 67% mobile, 74% radio – children highlighted a lot of households don’t have this technology or they don’t know how to use them (Rwanda education board established via e-learning platform, TV, radio)

**VIEWS OF DISTANCE LEARNING**

*Children and caregivers expressed concern over the suitability and effectiveness of remote learning whilst schools are closed, including issues related to the modality, as well as the extent to which learning is taking place, in addition to some decline in children’s motivation over time.*

* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian, and Lebanese youth aged 12-24 - 75% of school children and university students feel studying remotely or online is unsuitable - 19% of females think studying online or WhatsApp is suitable, 33% male
* Turkey refugees – only 40% parents consider set-up for distance learning productive – some struggle to make the shift to distance learning due to lack of TV/access to channel/internet/computer – also concerned that children don’t understand the content, language barrier challenges and not enough lessons
* Bangladesh host community – TV not sufficient for children
* Cambodia children – expressed concern about their learning during the pandemic, 100% of older learners, 67% of primary
* Indonesia teachers and parents – children happy to learn from home at first but changed due to:
  + Too many assignments within tight deadlines
  + Unsuitable learning methods
  + Competing for facilities with siblings
  + Not able to interact/socialize with peers
* Kenya Turkana children – worries about exams and lack of learning and not covering syllabus before they are expected to take the exams – need time to prepare adequately – not able to consult other students on their studies – worried about continuity and learning not taking place – concerned about effectively of MoE lessons that don’t reach all children

**TYPES OF DISTANCE LEARNING**

* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth aged 12-24 – 11% Online teaching, 36% WhatsApp (yet 58% using social media, 49% watching TV)
* Lebanon refugee settlement – caregivers identified video via WhatsApp as preferred method with children using their phones and follow up from SCI staff
* Nepal parents – 80% say radio is most effective form of communication
* Rwanda children – education board established distance learning via radio, TV and e-learning platform

**GENDER INEQUALITIES**

*Many assessments identified an increase in domestic responsibilities for children as a result of school closures, disproportionately impacting girls, with some countries also highlighting that the burden of support to children’s home-based learning falls on women. There is also evidence of boys spending more time outside of the house than girls, in order to find work – and in at least two countries more girls than boys are accessing distance learning.*

* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth aged 12-24 - 19% of females think studying online or whatsapp is suitable, 33% male, probably because domestic duties assigned to girls on top of homework – girls watching siblings whilst mothers doing housework
* Kosovo – women at risk of burnout due to juggling tasks and particularly taking responsibility for online education
* Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar rapid gender analysis – 34% adolescent girls attending learning centres before they closed (67% boys) – risks of dropping out – girls to do unpaid domestic labour, boys to enter labour force
* Bangladesh host community – girls have responsibilities at home
* Bangladesh Rohingya children - only 6% boys/12% girls doing distance learning
* Cambodia children – 74% girls 45% boys reported access to remote learning
* Nepal parents – 30% say workload of girls has significantly increased, compared to 4% boys – 72% girls/54% boys involved in household chores, 59% girls/39% boys caring for younger siblings
* Indonesia parents and teachers – burden of teaching at home falling on women
* Philippines children – girls remaining at home and reporting boys are leaving home, doing more household responsibilities – boys also report doing more household chores but also finding ways to make an income
* Kenya Turkana children – boys more hopeful about future education than girls
* Rwanda children – increased domestic responsibilities, including taking over work of domestic workers that parents can no longer afford – one 16 year old girl reported “in this hard time for staying home, I’m working like a domestic worker, I haven’t time to revise my studies, I clean house, I cook the food, I fetch the water etc, if I make mistake my aunt beats me and tells me aggressive words, it makes me feel like I am worthless”
* Somalia gender – adolescent girls less able to engage in distance learning due to increased domestic responsibilities and at risk of not returning (caring responsibilities, early marriage etc)
* Somalia gender – normally see spike in child marriage during summer holidays – very likely to happen now as a result of closures, and as a negative coping mechanism

**LACK OF MATERIALS (NON EDTECH)**

*A lack of learning and recreational material at household level emerges as a common theme and one of the top requests from children and families. This includes textbooks, workbooks, books, stationary, play material, and creative arts material. Some communities don’t have any creative or recreational material, whilst others requested textbooks and exam preparation.*

* Bangladesh Rohingya children - Requested home-based recreational materials (53% - 2nd top request after access to medical support)
* Bangladesh host community - do not have enough playing material, children’s books, colouring books, colour pencil and also other relevant materials
* Cambodia children – 46% don’t have access to learning materials at home
* India most marginalised – 50% have current session books, 33% have nothing to learn from, 17% have more than current session books
* Nepal parents – 71% have materials at home – 29% don’t – of which 100% have textbooks for grade of exams they just completed, 81% have writing material, 15% story books/songs/other materials, 17% drawing book/colours/playing material – lack of creative and playing materials
* Philippines children – requesting educational materials including books, workbooks and internet to stay connected to friends
* Egypt syian and African refugee caregivers – requesting recreational and educational material and ideas for activities to do at home
* Turkey refugees – 41% reported needing additional educational material – stationary, coursebooks, test books for exam prep – in another survey of Syrian refugees by SCI, 81% reported educational materials at home are insufficient – need textbooks, exam prep material and notebooks
* Rwanda children – lack of learning materials at home including books, pens and paper

**PRIORITISATION OF EDUCATION**

*Where respondents were asked to prioritise their concerns and needs, education was one of the top responses, in some cases even above health related concerns. The economic effect of the crisis on households was also a common theme.*

* Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar host community - no access to education listed as one of top 5 problems by adults
* Bangladesh marginalised children – 67% family income completely stopped, 64% households in food crisis
* Bangladesh Rohingya children - Distress over closure of learning and child protection facilities emerged as one of top three concerns related to COVID (48%, just after fear of getting infected 64%)
* Cambodia children – main concern regarding the impact of COVID-19 – top = ‘My education’ – 81.3% - followed by health – 60.6%
* Indonesia parents and teachers – 55% prioritise info/materials/device for home learning (behind basic needs distribution and above 45% soap/sanitizer/masks
* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth aged 12-24- economic situation is top concern
* Turkey refugees – top need identified as cash/material assistance, food kits, hygiene kits, followed by PSS for young people – in a specific survey of Syrian refugees, household finances and unemployment identified as biggest concerns

**REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT**

*Educational materials to support children’s home-based learning was one of the most common requests for support in needs assessments, in addition to recreational material, TVs, radio and internet bundles, and psychosocial support for parents and children.*

* Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar host community - Support to continue children’s education (home-based materials and other materials for engaging the children at home) identified as one of top priorities for support
* Bangladesh Rohingya children – recreational materials at home 2nd most requested support
* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth aged 12-24 – 40% 15-18 year olds asked for PSS
* Egypt Syrian and African refugee caregivers – requesting recreational and education materials plus ideas and tips for how to handle children’s anxiety
* Philippines children – request for educational materials (books, workbooks, internet), internet to connect with friends, and leisure activities to avoid boredom
* Kenya Turkana children – request free internet bundles to access learning platforms, for more learning materials , and ensure Gov cover syllabus once schools reopen
* Rwanda children – requesting radios, TV and solar so they can follow lessons, also for food, and water points and for parents to stop overloading them with tasks

**SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS**

*Whilst support to children and caregivers from teachers whilst schools are closed only featured in a minority of assessments, where this theme was included, it’s clear there are big gaps, including a lack of regular communication, follow-up and feedback from teachers and schools. In one survey which included several thousand teachers, they raised their own concerns including a lack of materials and devices, and low student participation. Whilst there are big gaps in support to distance learning, in some contexts teachers have played a key role providing information on COVID-19.*

* Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar host community – 60% no regular communication from school
* Bangladesh marginalised children – 90% school has never followed up on their studies 10% ‘sometimes’
* Indonesia parents and teachers – teachers delegating tasks to parents or parents taking on when there’s no guidance (burden on women) – insufficient support from schools to teachers
* Indonesia teachers and parents – 80% teachers using instant messages to provide assignments (60% parents receive assignments via whatsapp) – 63% giving tasks online – 36% teachers facilitating class using video conferencing (3% doing nothing)
* Indonesia teachers and parents – both teachers and parents with higher levels of education more likely to use different approaches and media for home learning
* Indonesia teachers and parents – top constraints for teachers – 77% report students not all participating, 32% distractions teaching from home, 29% less support from parents, 25% no computer/smartphone/internet package
* Indonesia teachers – half teachers don’t regularly check their students’ participation and only 59% provide feedback on assignments
* Indonesia teachers – MoE says schools allowed to use operation funds for distance learning/school cleaning etc but only 30% teachers say school has used funds for this – lack of coordination and communication with teachers
* Nepal parents – only 14% parents and children in communication with teachers – huge gap in communication (maybe because of lack of internet and digital mediums to establish virtual connection)– but they expect more – 73% expect to receive teaching and learning materials, 4% want support to teach at home, 22% expect them to teach through phone.
* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese 12-24 year olds - only 41% studying at home – 50% Syian and Palestinians said schools unit don’t require them to continue studying
* Cambodia children – 24.1% heard about the virus from their teachers
* Indonesia teachers and parents – difficult for non-formal centres that serve the most deprived and marginalised but limited data – 18% schools don’t have access to internet
* Indonesia teachers – assistance needed – 70% request materials and devices to support distance learning, 58% online applications and technology skills, 49% handwash station and disinfection, 40% study materials on covid, 32% knowledge for PSS
* Kenya Turkana children – 62% receive info on COVID through teachers (above all other info sources) but no contact from teachers to correct their studies – teacher on TV doesn’t use Swahili to expand on points they don’t understand in English

**SUPPORT FROM PARENTS/CAREGIVERS**

*The extent to which parents and caregivers have been able to support children’s learning whilst schools are closed varies significantly according to the context, from as low as 0% to as high as 90%. A lack of material and supporting devices, not knowing how to support children’s activities, and illiteracy are some obstacles flagged by parents and caregivers.*

* Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar host community – 38% parents no continuous educational support to children in lockdown – 50% aware of children’s education but they don’t have the material to support
* Bangladesh marginalised children – 91% nobody in their household is helping them study, 4% parents are helping, 5% another household member is helping
* Indonesia parents - parent support to children’s learning – 42% children’s motivation to study is decreasing, 26% inadequate teaching materials, 23% not enough time to support, 22% do not have supporting devices, 15% limited knowledge to support. What parents are doing to address constraints – 65% are flexible with children’s study time – 45% provide supporting device for home learning, 34% obtain materials from teacher/online source, 6% do nothing.
* Nepal parents – 61% supporting studying, 41% playing with them, 45% interacting with them, 11% don’t care about children – of those supporting studying, 75% are teaching from textbooks 40% telling stories/poem/song, 23% doing drawing or other creative activities
* Lebanon – Syrian and Palestinian youth aged 12-24 – 11% parents can’t help because they don’t have enough education
* Lebanon refugee settlement – 23% caregivers illiterate and 54% have a literate family member who can support children’s learning
* Lebanon refugee settlement – 95% will allow children to use their phone to support learning for average 2.6hrs a day
* Egypt Syrian and African refugee caregivers – 50% Syrian trying to do family activities but running out of materials and ideas for activities – African parents ‘not doing anything with their children and no idea how to utilize the time
* Rwanda children – enjoying spending more time with parents (because parents aren’t working), asking them questions and interacting

**CHILDREN’S WELLBEING**

*Parents, caregivers and children themselves reported the negative impact of school closures and the wider COVID crisis on their wellbeing, including anxiety, stress, sadness and fear. Boredom is also a common theme, including a decline in motivation the longer schools are closed. Some concerns relate to the virus itself, whilst others relate to feeling disconnected from friends and missing out on learning whilst schools are closed, as well as the uncertainty of when schools will open and when exams will take place. As a result of the economic impact on households, some children and adults reported girls and boys going hungry, and several assessments note an increase in psychical violence and humiliating punishments against children.*

* Bangladesh – marginalised children - 47% report increase in physical punishment, 69% scared, sad or worried (increase in calls to child helplines nationally)
* Bangladesh Rohingya children – recreational materials at home 2nd most requested support
* Bangladesh Rohingya children – closure of schools led to them not accessing all the other services provided there – also see closure of schools as 2nd biggest protection concern (after getting infected)
* Indonesia parents – children started off excited to learn but last 2 weeks 72% report children are bored
* Indonesia parents – 40% haven’t done anything to protect children online – 75% household incomes reduced – likelihood of increases in child labour, early marriage and drop out
* Indonesia parents – children skipping learning to support parents in farming jobs,
* Nepal parents – 77% say children are afraid of COVID and its affect on family, 39% of children are stressed, 12% lonely, 16% concerned about school, only 10% not affected psychologically
* Nepal parents – 37% say incidents of violence against children has increased
* Philippines children – feelings of worry, fear, sadness and hunger – also report that families are irritable – also feeling disconnected from friends sand anxiety over not being able to go back to school or to graduate
* Egypt Syrian and African refugee caregivers – request psychological tips to handle children’s anxiety – children bored, stressed and afraid of getting sick
* Turkey refugees – identified PSS for children and young people as second highest need, and parents fear child labour and child marriage increasing
* Kenya Turkana children – most children worried about not going back to school – behind fear of the death toll and spread of the disease, children fearful about the postponement of exams and uncertainly of schools reopening – also worried about over aging, not knowing when schools will reopen, repeating class, poor performance once schools reopen, difficult exams, forgetting learning. Also concerned about parents loss of livelihood and impact his will have on their schooling (some already affected by drought)
* Rwanda children – hunger is a big barrier to studying at home – “la ventre affame n’a pas d’oreilles” –parents aren’t working and so can’t afford food. Children have begun begging and doing work to find food
* Rwanda children - aren’t interacting with friends or able to exchange ideas with them. Children also reporting increase in physical punishment and humiliation if they’re not able to fulfil the new domestic responsibilities and increase in tasks

**PARENT/CAREGIVER AND TEACHER WELLBEING**

*In addition to the economic impact of the crisis on households, cited in the majority of assessments, several assessments noted the specific impact on the wellbeing of adults.*

* Bangladesh host community – school closures and continued work and isolation causing distress amongst caregivers
* Kosovo – women at risk of burnout due to juggling tasks and particularly taking responsibility for online education
* Turkey refugees – almost half of adult respondents accepted offer of remote PFA
* Indonesia teachers and parents – 35% ECCD teachers lost all income (rely on tuition) and 13% have had a reduction despite 92% doing distance teaching

**OVERCROWDING AT HOME**

*Overcrowding is a key concern in several assessments, highlighting the lack of space conducive for home-based learning.*

* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth aged 12-24 – most live in overcrowded households, don’t have quiet space for studies
* Cambodian children - 57% have only one room for the whole family – 55% live in household in single room with more than 4 family members
* Philippines children - stress due to overcrowding, too hot to stay inside, this is bored and unproductive time

**HOW CHILDREN ARE SPENDING THEIR TIME**

*Assessments highlighted the range of ways children are spending their time whilst schools are closed, including domestic chores, playing with siblings, watching TV, spending time on social media, and ‘hanging’ out, passing time idly.*

* Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar host community = children passing time idle on Facebook and messenger – can’t go outside and play with friends
* Bangladesh – marginalised children – 92% helping parents in household work, 72% watching TV, 49% looking after other family members, 31% using mobile phones – 11% studying
* Bangladesh Rohingya children - 70% boys/68% girls playing with siblings, 36% boys/66% girls supporting doing household chores, 21% boys/30% girls doing storytelling, 6% boys/12% girls doing distance learning
* Lebanon – Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth aged 12-24 – 77% playing with siblings, 58% using social media, 49% watching TV)
* Kenya Turkana children – children ‘just sitting at home’ ‘bored’, ‘wasting their education’, ‘forgetting English’
* Rwanda children – fetching water, domestic activities, taking care of livestock, revising lessons, reading books and notebooks. Some children taken over responsibilities of domestic labourer because family can’t afford to keep them
* Nepal parents – 76% playing and reading, 56% doing housework, 34% hanging out and roaming around
* Philippines children – they are bored, view this as unproductive time

**OTHER**

* Nepal parents – 67% schools used as quarantine centres
* Nepal parents – 48% ready to send children back to school with certain measures in place – 75% of these cited disinfection of schools,76% water and handwashing stations