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# BEST PRACTICES ON EFFECTIVE SEL/SOFT SKILLS INTERVENTIONS IN DISTANCE LEARNING

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# CONTENTS

- LIST OF EXHIBITS ..... I
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... II
- ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....III
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... IV
- INTRODUCTION ..... I
  - What is SEL? ..... I
  - Findings..... 3
  - The Importance of SEL in the COVID-19 Response ..... 3
  - SEL, Equity, and Inclusion..... 4
  - Limited Evidence..... 4
  - Recommendation 1: Target Multiple Levels of an Individual’s Social-Ecological Context. .... 5
  - Recommendation 2: Educators’ and Parents’/Caregivers’ Well-Being Should be a Central Component of Remote SEL Delivery..... 9
  - Recommendation 3: Building and Maintaining Positive Learner-Educator and Parent-Educator Relationships is Essential in the Context of Remote-Learning. .... 11
  - Recommendation 4: Contextualize SEL to Meet the Needs of Learners and Communities..... 13
  - Recommendation 5: Multimodal Delivery has the Widest Reach. .... 15
  - Recommendation 6: Provide Opportunities to Practice SEL..... 17
- CONCLUSION.....21
- ANNEXES .....22
  - Annex 1: Common SEL Skills Found in COVID-19 Responses.....22
  - Annex 2: Additional Remote SEL Programs.....24
  - Annex 3: Program Delivery Mode and Target Audiences .....39
  - Annex 4: Annotated List of Relevant Resources and Webinars .....41
- REFERENCES.....45
- ENDNOTES.....49

# LIST OF EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: Common Distance Learning Modalities..... 2
- Exhibit 2: COVID-19-specific resources ..... 41
- Exhibit 3: Other relevant resources for SEL in emergency situations..... 43
- Exhibit 4: Relevant webinars on delivering SEL and education during COVID-19 ..... 44

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CASEL	The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EDC	Education Development Center
HDAK	Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze
HEART	Healing and Education Through the Arts
HECD	Higher Education Capacity Development
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
IYF	International Youth Foundation
PSS	Psychosocial Support
PTS	Passport to Success
RtL	Return to Learning
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SMS	Short Message Service
SRM	Supplementary Reading Materials
TREE	Transforming Refugee Educations Towards Excellence
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WRN	Work Ready Now

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought critical attention to the value and importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) and Soft Skills, in coping with crisis. The purpose of this review is to provide evidence on effective, equitable, and inclusive SEL practices that can be delivered via distance learning modalities in USAID-recipient countries. The scope of this review includes formal and non-formal basic, secondary and higher education programs, as well as workforce development programs, in Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and, to a lesser extent, North America and Europe. Researchers analyzed documents and interviewed key informants from 22 programs offering SEL using distance learning modalities to answer the following:

1. What are the most effective, equitable, and inclusive types of SEL interventions that can be delivered at a distance?
2. Which of these interventions has an evidence base?
3. What are the most relevant principles and best practices that should inform the design and delivery of high-quality, equitable, and inclusive distance learning SEL interventions?

SEL programs and practices were considered at the national, community, and school/home level. Three key findings from these analyses are:

- Currently, there is limited research evidence of the impact of distance SEL programs on participants (children, youth, parents/caregivers and educators).
- Although many different SEL skills were targeted by programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a majority of programs focused on emotional well-being and behavioral well-being in order to manage the pandemic's impact.
- Because stress and anxiety are extremely high across program beneficiaries, with marginalized populations likely experiencing even greater stress and anxiety, many SEL programs incorporated stress management strategies for all participants—not just children and youth.

This review also presents important considerations for teams planning to create new distance learning SEL programs or to pivot existing in-person programs to distance learning modalities. When developing or adapting SEL programs, implementers should consider the following best practices:

1. Target multiple levels of an individual's social-ecological context;
2. Make educators' and parents'/caregivers' well-being a central component of remote SEL delivery;
3. Prioritize building and maintaining positive learner-educator and parent-educator relationships;
4. Contextualize SEL to meet the needs of learners and communities;
5. Use multimodal delivery as it has the widest reach; and
6. Provide opportunities for children, youth, educators, parents, and caregivers to practice SEL.

This review includes a series of case studies of SEL interventions that were developed for, or adapted to, distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each case study highlights programmatic strengths and challenges of implementation or adaptation. Finally, the review provides a list of COVID-19 SEL resources and webinars ([Annex 4](#)).

# INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought critical attention to the value and importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) skills in coping with crisis. The purpose of this review is to provide evidence on effective, equitable, and inclusive SEL practices that can be delivered via distance learning modalities in United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-recipient countries. Distance learning modalities have commonly been used in crisis situations to create a sense of stability and to deliver academic learning content to children and youth, including those who are often excluded from educational programming.<sup>1</sup> Rarely, however, has SEL programming been delivered via distance learning modalities, in part because the nature and content of SEL are interpersonal, requiring both the support of and engagement with others. For this review, effective SEL programs and practices were considered at the national, community, and school/home level.

The scope of this review includes formal and non-formal primary, secondary, and higher education programs, as well as workforce development programs. This review draws from USAID implementing partners' practices and experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and, to a lesser extent, North America and Europe, to respond to the following questions:

1. What are the most effective, equitable, and inclusive types of SEL interventions that can be delivered at a distance?
2. Which of these interventions has an evidence base?
3. What are the most relevant principles and good practices that should inform the design and delivery of high-quality, equitable, and inclusive distance learning SEL interventions?

To answer these questions, researchers analyzed documents and interviewed key informants from 22 interventions offering SEL using distance learning modalities. Data gathered from these analyses and interviews also informed a series of case studies of SEL interventions that were developed for, or adapted to, distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each case study highlights programmatic strengths and challenges of implementation or adaptation.

## WHAT IS SEL?

The terms “social and emotional skills” and “soft skills” refer to a set of cognitive skills (e.g., attention focusing and shifting, impulse control, planning, and goal setting), social skills (e.g., perspective taking, prosocial behavior, and conflict resolution), and emotional skills (e.g., emotion knowledge, emotion regulation, and empathy) that shape how individuals interact with one another.<sup>2</sup> At USAID, the term **“social and emotional skills”** is used in the context of formal and non-formal education programming and the term **“soft skills”** is used in the context of workforce development programs and higher education.<sup>3</sup> **“Social and emotional learning,”** or SEL, is the process by which individuals learn and apply cognitive, social, emotional, and soft skills needed to succeed in educational settings, work, and the community.<sup>4</sup> Specific social and emotional skills noted by USAID include managing emotions, setting and achieving goals, feeling and demonstrating empathy, developing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions.<sup>5</sup> Specific soft skills noted by USAID include higher-order thinking, communication skills, positive self-concept, social skills, and self-control.<sup>3</sup> The term social and emotional learning (SEL), will be used throughout the remainder of the document to refer to both social and emotional skills and soft skills.

# METHODOLOGY

Researchers gathered information from websites of organizations such as USAID, the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and Save the Children, and contacted experts in the field to identify initial resources specifically designed for the COVID-19 response (e.g., INEE COVID-19 technical report). Resources included briefs, reports, and webinars that directly addressed the needs of governments and ministries of education, communities, families and caregivers, educational programming, and educators. The final selection of resources was based on a combination of the following criteria:

- Originally designed for emergency contexts or marginalized groups;
- Clear SEL content;
- Evidence of a shift (or intent to shift) towards remote delivery or compatibility with remote delivery (to a lesser extent); and
- Evidence of effectiveness (e.g., randomized control trial, research linking the program or framework to improvements in the targeted outcomes or related outcomes, or pilot studies describing changes in the targeted behaviors or outcomes) through in-person delivery.

This review uses the four key delivery modalities from USAID’s *Delivering Distance Learning in Emergencies* literature review as a framework for analyzing the delivery of SEL programming in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Exhibit 1 describes the four most common distance learning modalities identified in that review.

Exhibit 1: Common Distance Learning Modalities

MODALITY	PROGRAMMING EXAMPLES	AGE/LEVEL
Audio/Radio	Interactive audio/radio programs, podcasts, and audiobooks delivered via mobile phones, tablets, and/or radios	Pre-primary, primary, non-formal
Video/Television (Digital and analog)	Video instruction and educational television broadcasting delivered via smartphone, tablets, and/or television broadcasting	Pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary, non-formal
Mobile Phone (Voice, text [short message service (SMS)], web-based)	Electronic teaching and learning, educational apps/games, distance tutoring/coaching, virtual teaching and learning delivered via mobile phones	Primary, secondary, post-secondary, non-formal
Online Teaching and Learning (Cloud-based or Internet-dependent)	Virtual classrooms, screen-casting, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and open educational resources delivered via mobile phones, computers, and tablets	Primary, secondary, post-secondary, non-formal

Source: USAID (2020), *Delivering Distance Learning in Emergencies: A Review of Evidence and Best Practice*.

From the initial review of resources, 22 programs were selected for analysis, highlighted throughout the text or in [Annex 2](#), that illustrate the specific recommendations noted in the findings section of this report. Eight programs that were particularly innovative or promising were selected for a more in-depth review. Thirty-to-sixty-minute consultations with experts on these programs were conducted; results from the interviews are described in the relevant recommendations and/or presented as case studies throughout the remainder of this document.

# FINDINGS

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SEL IN THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought critical attention to the value and importance of SEL skills such as emotion regulation, stress management, and relationship building in coping with crisis. [Annex I](#) describes a set of social, emotional, and cognitive skills and competencies that appear consistently throughout SEL programming and that are used in interventions developed and adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Crisis situations, especially those that are prolonged, significantly threaten individuals' social, emotional, and cognitive well-being, as they struggle to adapt to uncertain and often unstable environments.<sup>6,7</sup> Although a majority of children and youth adapt effectively after a crisis situation, some face challenges that can include fear, anxiety, regressive behaviors, and difficulty concentrating and learning.<sup>8</sup> Longer-term impacts include trouble managing typical developmental tasks and emerging mental health concerns.<sup>9</sup> COVID-19, with its immediate as well as long-term economic impact, and the resulting loss of livelihoods, increased poverty, food and housing insecurity, discrimination, and gender inequality, has placed unprecedented levels of stress on families, making children and youth more vulnerable to neglect, violence, and psychosocial distress.<sup>10</sup>

Safe schools and non-formal learning spaces can and do serve as stable, predictable, and safe environments for children and youth during crisis situations.<sup>11,12</sup> However, under COVID-19, more than 90 percent of children and youth around the world have experienced a long-term disruption of formal educational programming from pre-primary through higher education.<sup>13</sup> This, combined with restrictions of movement and stay-at-home orders, have radically changed learners' routines, educational access, and social networks. Such disruptions can significantly exacerbate the impact that crisis situations have on students' learning and well-being, compounding feelings of sadness and anxiety, especially among youth.<sup>14,15</sup> In addition, these disruptions can also lead to extended unsupervised time and thus, to increased engagement in risky behavior and exposure to other dangers, including violence.<sup>16</sup> Distance learning may provide learners and educators<sup>i</sup> with a sense of routine and can offer the opportunity for consistent contact between educators and peers, mitigating some of the negative impacts that school closures can have.

When delivered in person, interventions that aim to support individuals in developing SEL can help mitigate the negative effects of prolonged exposure to stress, adversity, and heightened risks of violence or harm.<sup>17</sup> The benefits of SEL for learners in crisis are widespread and include improved enrollment (or re-enrollment) and attendance in educational programs, increased positive social behaviors, and decreased substance use and violence.<sup>18,19,20</sup> The development of SEL may help individuals become more resilient<sup>21</sup> and adaptive to new environments, as well as overcome personal, social, and economic obstacles. SEL programming also contributes to cognitive development and can help students learn more effectively through non-traditional and distance learning modalities, as well as when they are eventually able to return to more formal academic education or training.<sup>22,23</sup>

Although many different SEL skills are targeted by case study programs, a majority of programs emphasized the importance of emotional well-being (e.g., recognizing and understanding your own emotions and feelings and those of others by addressing questions like “How are you feeling?” “What

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<sup>i</sup> The term “educator” includes teachers, mentors, coaches, and administrators in both formal and non-formal settings.



makes you anxious?”, or “How are your friends doing?”) and behavioral well-being (e.g., managing stress by focusing on your own needs and engaging in self-care activities that address those needs and building/maintaining strong relationship skills through regular interactions with educators, parents, caregivers, and peers) as a means for managing COVID-19.

## SEL, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

In non-crisis situations, SEL can be a powerful equalizer for marginalized children and youth.<sup>24,25,26,27</sup> Crisis situations inherently exacerbate existing inequalities or introduce additional inequalities in learning and school success.<sup>28,29,30</sup> Although distance learning has the potential to reach learners who cannot always participate in face-to-face programming, it can also amplify educational differences. All SEL programs and practices included in this report noted that equity and inclusion were part of their content and comprised a large part of their approach under normal circumstances. Common challenges in equitable distance learning identified through this review included issues of access due to limitations in national or local infrastructure for distance learning; issues of access due to a disability (e.g., hearing or vision); and limited time for education due to additional home responsibilities, including caring for siblings or assisting with farming. Although these were common access issues even before the COVID-19 pandemic, increased food insecurity and reduced household income exacerbated barriers to education, including distance education. Statistics from around the world show that many families do not have access to needed distance learning technology, and a large proportion of families who do have access to this technology are not routinely participating in distance learning programming. In fact, UNICEF found that in 2020 at least 463 million learners were unable to access remote learning and that more than 70 percent of these children were from the poorest households.<sup>31</sup> More details regarding equity considerations by distance learning modalities may be found in *Delivering distance learning in emergencies: A review of evidence and best practice*.<sup>32</sup>

Equity and inclusion considerations are found to be a high priority in the design of remote SEL programming. A well-designed shift to hybrid or fully remote delivery models for SEL may provide a unique opportunity to reach marginalized populations who were previously excluded from or lacked access to such programming.

## LIMITED EVIDENCE

Research on the impact on children and youth (or their educators and caregivers) from randomized controlled trials of SEL programs and practices that have developed or adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic is extremely limited. When the pandemic began, programs were forced to quickly pivot to distance learning. Early on, the focus was on delivery, not assessment. Eventually, programs and implementers began to consider the question of how to assess learning outcomes at a distance; however, this remains a considerable challenge, especially for SEL. Several of the experts we spoke with noted that the issue of assessment remains unsolved, although numerous programs are currently gathering data on reach and engagement in distance learning interventions. During interviews, experts raised concerns about (a) how to determine the level of engagement of participants for an assessment and (b) over-stressing learners by giving them tests during this already stressful period.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, they all noted that assessment of learning outcomes was something they needed to consider as their programming developed. Given these limitations, a program was considered “evidence-based” in this review if the content of the program and/or the delivery mode was supported by evidence.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMOTE SEL

In this section, we provide a summary of key recommendations to consider when designing remote SEL programming. We have organized the recommendations in order of relative importance for supporting SEL in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these recommendations work together to respond to the three research questions and address the social and emotional needs of children and youth, their parents/caregivers, and educators. Although the activities highlighted in the following pages focus on distance learning delivery, there is also a wealth of online resources, free for download, that target parents and caregivers to support their own well-being and that of their children and youth (see [Annex 4](#) for a list of resources).

## RECOMMENDATION 1: TARGET MULTIPLE LEVELS OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT.

**Advantages:** Because the majority of learning occurs outside of formal classrooms and non-formal learning spaces and within homes and communities, partnering with parents, caregivers, and community members is critical to the effective delivery of SEL during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents, caregivers, and community members not only deliver content, but also encourage and support children and youth to participate in SEL programming by, for example, developing regular check-in periods to discuss how children and youth are feeling, creating opportunities for children and youth to engage with peers (e.g., via text messages, WhatsApp), or working through SEL activities provided by educators.

**Challenges:** Multi-pronged delivery approaches can be difficult to implement, garner buy-in from multiple people, and require the engagement of individuals who themselves are experiencing stress and demands associated with COVID-19.

**At a Distance:** SEL programming can actively target the broader social-ecological context by creating interactive videos and activities for parents, caregivers, and community members to complete on their own or with their children or youth. SEL materials can be delivered directly to parents, caregivers, and/or community members through the mail or at distribution centers (paper) or through mobile devices (electronic). This can include training instructions and/or verbal guidance (e.g., via an SEL “hotline” or an instructional video) on ways to use the materials. Activities for parents/caregivers to do with children and youth can also be broadcast during a radio program, either as a program itself or as an activity between radio segments.

SEL instruction relies on human interaction. Learners gain SEL skills not only through explicit instruction and explanation, but also through modeling by more skilled individuals (e.g., siblings, peers, or adults) and through practice with others. As school systems shift to distance learning, the responsibility of educational delivery falls more heavily on parents and caregivers. Although parents and caregivers have a central role in educating and supporting their children's SEL, they are not often provided with the support and training necessary to do so effectively.

Parents and caregivers need to know how to support their children and youth’s SEL and to model healthy SEL skills.<sup>34</sup> Collaborating with families and caregivers to align SEL strategies is a critical step in creating safe, supportive, and equitable learning spaces, including distance learning spaces—especially in times of crisis.<sup>35</sup> In-person SEL programs that target multiple levels of the social-ecological context in non-crisis situations have demonstrated reductions in negative behaviors and increases in academic skills.<sup>36,37,38,39,40</sup> When educational programming is now taking place in the home, partnerships between educational programming, families, and communities have become more important than ever, and thus distance SEL programming must also include support for families.

Findings from this review also clearly highlight the centrality of the broader social-ecological context in supporting SEL during the pandemic (see [Annex 3](#) for a summary of target audiences by program). Although some national programs (e.g., *Ahlan Simsim*, by Sesame Workshop and the International Rescue Committee [IRC] and *Tiyende!* by Save the Children) deliver SEL programming directly to children and youth through distance modalities such as video/television, programs such as *Tunakujenga* (Case Study 1) and the *Better Learning Program* (Case Study 2) aim to enhance caregiver well-being and engagement and are examples of targeting all social-ecological levels of the child’s or youths’ environment during a crisis situation. These findings, combined with recommendations to support the well-being of parents/caregivers and educators across nearly all technical and guidance documents by INEE, The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others, make it abundantly clear that SEL delivery is not just about reaching the learner, but also about strengthening the skills of others (e.g., caregivers, educators, community leaders) and the systems around them.

## CASE STUDY 1: TUNAKUJENGA

<b>Implementers:</b> Ubongo and IRC		<b>Locations:</b> Tanzania
<b>Target Groups:</b> Primary school-age children and their caregivers in a refugee camp	<b>Delivery Modalities:</b> Digital videos on tablets and TV broadcast, supplemented by a social media campaign and print materials	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> School readiness, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, perseverance, positive social skills

**Description:** The *Tunakujenga* program aims to promote social and emotional learning for children and youth in refugee camps by empowering caregivers in SEL through fun and engaging videos. Two approaches were used: (1) the Club Model, in which groups of caregivers gathered in churches and other community spaces to watch videos preloaded on tablets; and (2) through TV broadcasts, with videos delivered through a “Game of the Month” model to sustain user engagement and enable caregivers to share their own games with the community. Each video provided instructions for different games caregivers could play with their children and youth at home, as well as information about child development. Easy-to-use supplementary material, such as cards with SEL activities depicted in cartoon graphics (e.g., make a sad face together), were provided for caregivers to take home, and varied social media campaigns aimed to increase uptake and encourage users to remix and share their own stories of play with each other. *Tunakujenga* engaged parents and caregivers, especially female caregivers, in the development and revision of the content of the videos. **By training caregivers to deliver SEL programming to children, the *Tunakujenga* program embodies the recommendation to target the broader-social-ecological context.**

**COVID-19 Specifics:** Although there is no evidence that this program has currently been adapted for use to respond to COVID-19, the approach could be easily replicated and adapted to distance learning. For example, rather than bringing groups of caregivers together to watch videos, pre-loaded tablets could be disseminated to individuals in refugee communities. In fact, IRC intends to create an open-source Android app with videos that

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includes facilitation and training, and to pre-load the videos onto tablets for larger refugee communities. This could also be done for smaller communities as a response to COVID-19.

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**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Television broadcasting infrastructure; access to devices to access show content; capacity to generate show content.

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**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Video content would not be accessible to those without access to a TV or a mobile/Internet-ready device. Because group gatherings are not possible, the Club Model would require a restructuring so that pre-loaded devices were delivered to individuals rather than to groups. Children or youth and caregivers with visual impairments may not be able to access the content without assistance.

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**Evidence and Impact:** The *Tunakujenga* program is wide-spread, currently reaching more than 17 million households across Africa, suggesting the potential for tremendous impact. Although not yet complete, a comprehensive evaluation of the program is currently underway. Results from baseline and endline surveys, however, suggest that children who watched *Akili and Me*, a series which targets both academic and SEL skills, demonstrated higher school readiness scores compared with control children who watched other cartoons. Moreover, caregivers' engagement with their children increased after viewing the program public service announcements, with 12 percent more parents reading to their children compared with those who have not viewed the public service announcements.

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**References:**

- [Equipping Caregivers with Social Emotional Learning Games for Whole Child Development](#)
  - [A Family Learning Program that Empowers Caregivers to be the Best They can Be: Findings from a Pilot Study Conducted between October 2018 – March 2019](#)
  - [Tunakujenga](#)
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## CASE STUDY 2: THE BETTER LEARNING PROGRAM

<b>Implementers:</b> Norwegian Refugee Council		<b>Locations:</b> Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Uganda, Myanmar
<b>Target Groups:</b> Primary school-age children and primary school educators; caregivers	<b>Modalities:</b> Online learning platform; phone calls; WhatsApp; mobile application	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Being able to calm down, a sense of safety and stability, a sense of power to change the situation, connecting with others, re-establishing hope

**Description:** The Better Learning Program aims to improve learning conditions for children exposed to war and conflict. The program reaches out to all learners and provides psycho-education and coping skills by training and supporting educators to deliver a contextually-relevant curriculum. The psychosocial support (PSS) offered by the Better Learning Program aims to provide participants with a sense of safety and stability and a capacity for self-regulation and self-efficacy. The program also works to strengthen collaboration between educators and parents around supporting learners' well-being.

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**COVID-19 Specifics:** While the program was originally designed to be delivered in person, Norwegian Refugee Council has developed a multi-pronged approach to target different members of communities to support children's and youths' learning and development. They created online self-directed learning materials and online activities, are calling caregivers over the phone to assess their well-being and needs, are providing flyers and PSS messages to parents via WhatsApp, and have created a mobile application to train educators and caregivers to enhance the well-being of their students and children and youth. The application can be accessed offline through Android devices, phones, and tablets, in Arabic, English, and Burmese. The mobile app provides content on the basic principles of the Better Learning Program and includes interactive videos for educators, caregivers, and children. Each chapter contains animated video lessons, together with a quiz designed to check

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knowledge and stimulate reflection. Specific content being focused on in response to COVID-19 includes the following: establishing routines (self-management/regulation); staying well together (co-regulation); encouraging parents to ask their children and youth questions about their well-being and daily routine (e.g., what did you eat, what did you do, how are you feeling); relaxation exercises (stress management); studying at home; storytelling; creating a better home environment; and caregiver self-care. **By targeting educators, parents/caregivers, and children, the Better Learning Program illustrates how multiple social-ecological contexts can be engaged in distance SEL programming.**

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**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Internet and telecommunications infrastructure; access to mobile/Internet-ready devices.

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**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Those with visual and auditory impairments may have challenges in fully accessing content.

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**Evidence and Impact:** While there is no evidence yet about the adaptations of the Better Learning Program for the COVID-19 response, there is evidence supporting the program in general. Findings from a 2016 evaluation include that (1) the Better Learning Program has clear and demonstrable impacts when it comes to improving the well-being of participating children by equipping them with skills for coping with the fear, stress, and anxiety of living in a context of continual conflict; and (2) the Better Learning Program supports conditions for children to better succeed in school by improving their ability to focus/concentrate in class, strengthens connections between them/their parents and school actors, improves their ability to complete homework, and increases their overall enjoyment of school (although the program's actual contribution to learning outcomes—as measured by academic achievement or attendance—is difficult to measure, and existing data does not support such linkages); and (3) the Better Learning Program also strengthens the home and school environment for students by improving the capacity of these duty bearers to acknowledge, respond to, and address the symptoms of traumatic stress (although the program, on its own, may not fully address the critical need for children to be protected at and on their way to/ from school).

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**References:**

- [Distance Learning during COVID-19: Continuing Education in Low Resource and Low Tech Environments](#)
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## RECOMMENDATION 2: EDUCATORS' AND PARENTS'/CAREGIVERS' WELL-BEING SHOULD BE A CENTRAL COMPONENT OF REMOTE SEL DELIVERY.

**Advantages:** Attention to educators' SEL and well-being can reduce stress, improve teaching, foster co-regulation among educators and learners, and strengthen the learning community. Further, because SEL programming is often being delivered by parents and/or caregivers during COVID-19, attention to their SEL and well-being can help them model healthy SEL skills, including effective emotion regulation and positive stress management practices.

**Challenges:** Because educators are not teaching in formal classrooms and non-formal learning spaces reaching them in their communities or homes and engaging them in self-care may require additional time and program staff. Moreover, for programs that were not already targeting parent or caregiver SEL, new materials that focus specifically on the needs and challenges of these beneficiaries may be time-consuming and may require additional staff, perhaps with the knowledge of how to engage parents and caregivers remotely.

**At a Distance:** SEL programming can attend to educators', parents', and caregivers' well-being by delivering regular reminders and strategies for self-care via social media platforms like WhatsApp or via text messaging or phone calls. Phone calls from school leaders and/or program staff to check on educators and parents/caregivers, and to provide them with an opportunity to talk about their feelings and experiences in a stigma-free environment, can also foster the well-being of those delivering remote SEL programming.

The creation of a safe and supportive learning space—either in person or at a distance—relies heavily on the social and emotional well-being of educators. Educators' SEL competencies play a critical role in developing and maintaining high-quality, emotionally supportive classrooms.<sup>41</sup> Educators need support for their own well-being to help facilitate their teaching (e.g., well-designed group work that successfully builds communication, collaboration, and confidence), with evidence suggesting that this is the most effective way to support learners' development of SEL even when there is no separate SEL content in the curriculum.<sup>42</sup> Educators must feel connected to and supported by their administrators and colleagues as they return to teaching—in person or via distance learning modalities. Educators who are anxious, worried, or stressed are less effective at modeling positive coping skills and tend to have more negative interactions with their learners.<sup>43</sup> Depression among educators is negatively associated with emotional support and instructional quality.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, educators who do not feel confident in their skills to deliver content or engage children and youth in learning through unfamiliar media, including new distance learning modalities, are less likely to achieve good results.<sup>45</sup> Findings from this review suggest that beneficial SEL programs and practices must emphasize the well-being of educators. Distance SEL programs that create regular opportunities for educators to check in with one another or with administrators and that offer encouragement and support for teaching practices may have a greater impact on learner SEL than programs that do not. Educators, parents, and caregivers who engage in positive self-care practices, such as spending time in activities he/she enjoys, sharing teaching responsibilities with others (e.g., other educators, siblings, other



adults in the household), or engaging in mindfulness activities (e.g., deep breathing and meditation), are more likely to co-regulate with their learners in ways that help them manage and express their emotions during stressful times. These programs must be stigma-free so that educators, parents, and caregivers feel comfortable seeking support and assistance.

### CASE STUDY 3: TRANSFORMING REFUGEE EDUCATION TOWARDS EXCELLENCE (TREE)

<b>Implementers:</b> Save the Children and the Jordanian Ministry of Education, in partnership with Community Jameel, Dubai Cares, Jameel World Education Lab, and Hikma Pharmaceuticals		<b>Locations:</b> Jordan
<b>Target Groups:</b> Educators	<b>Modalities:</b> Online meetings and resources	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Emotions and feelings, empathy and compassion, social awareness

**Description:** Launched in 2019, TREE aims to benefit 1,350 educators and reach 745,000 individuals over 5 years through a system-wide teacher-training program centered on incorporating compassion into education. This teacher professional development approach integrates the Compassionate Systems Framework in K-12 education throughout Jordan to support educators’ and learners’ well-being. This framework offers models of thinking and teaching that combine contemplative SEL, systems thinking, and compassion. It establishes a set of practices that help educators and learners apply these skills to important issues inside and beyond the classroom. TREE aims to help educators develop the skills they need to manage their classrooms in the current conditions—in which many children and youth are experiencing extreme adversity, classrooms are full, and many schools have double shifts every day—to accommodate the educational needs of refugee children and youth, as well as Jordanian children and youth.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** Although the program was originally designed to train educators in person, Save the Children and its partners have developed online learning resources for educators that focus on their professional development and well-being. They are now conducting online meetings with educators, principals, and counselors, with a focus on enabling and equipping educators with tools and resources to use online and distance learning with their learners and community. **By holding regular meetings that focus on what educators need to implement distance learning and manage their virtual classrooms under the current conditions, the TREE program is an example of how SEL programs can attend to educators’ well-being in a distance learning situation.**

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Internet infrastructure; access to an Internet-ready device.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** As distance learning modalities have yet to be established for this program, it will be important to consider how common distance learning challenges, including access to various modalities and the development of inclusive practices, will affect educators, learners, and families. Consideration of gender norms and how to ensure equal engagement of male and female education will also be necessary.

**Evidence and Impact:** None yet, although some case studies on the Compassionate Systems Framework are available.

**References:**

- [Transforming Education in Jordan](#)
- [Save our Education: Protect Every Child’s Right to Learn in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery](#)
- [Introduction to Compassionate Systems Framework in Schools](#)

## RECOMMENDATION 3: BUILDING AND MAINTAINING POSITIVE LEARNER-EDUCATOR AND PARENT-EDUCATOR RELATIONSHIPS IS ESSENTIAL IN THE CONTEXT OF REMOTE-LEARNING.

**Advantages:** Positive learner-educator and parent-educator relationships predict better learning and social outcomes across the lifespan. Because the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the social worlds of children and youth, as well as adults, with increasingly higher rates of reported loneliness and social isolation, attention to building and maintaining strong relationships at a distance is essential for positive youth development.

**Challenges:** With the closure of formal and non-formal learning spaces and inconsistent access to phones or digital platforms, regular contact with learners and families can be challenging. Additionally, families who are experiencing significant levels of stress or struggling to provide for their children and youth may be less willing or comfortable engaging with school personnel.

**At a Distance:** Common distance learning practices for strengthening relationships with and among learners include creating regular check-ins (via digital platforms, social media platforms, text message, or phone calls), greeting learners by name when they enter a digital learning space or answer the phone, offering a safe place to express feelings and emotions (verbally or nonverbally, through art or music, for example), encouraging youth to consider how others are feeling by asking them about their peers' well-being, and creating spaces for learners to interact with one another through project-based learning and group-work using virtual platforms (e.g., Google Meet, WhatsApp, Zoom).

The importance of SEL programs in building strong and positive relationships with others and maintaining strong relationships with children and youth—as well as with families and communities—to reduce feelings of isolation, loneliness, anxiety, and depression was highlighted in every program and practice we reviewed. One of the critical practices suggested by CASEL (2020) for working through the pandemic is to take the time to cultivate and deepen relationships with learners and families.<sup>46</sup> Programs that emphasize regular contact between educators and families as a means to share information or teaching strategies, offer support, and discuss instructional content, are likely to leave parents/caregivers feeling more empowered to deliver SEL programming. Engaging parents and caregivers in the planning and implementation of SEL practices also enhances the chances of effective practices.

### CASE STUDY 4: ACCESSING QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION IN IRAQ II

<b>Implementers:</b> Catholic Relief Services (CRS)		<b>Location/s:</b> Iraq
<b>Target Groups:</b> Teachers/Educators; Students/Caregivers	<b>Modality(s):</b> WhatsApp/other mobile messaging (Viber, Facebook); Paper materials	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> CASEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making)



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**Description:** This program works with Internally Displaced People and returning populations of students displaced by conflict in Iraq, serving about 17,000 primary and secondary students in total. The SEL component of this project aims to mainstream psychosocial support in classrooms through teacher training, in-school teacher support and observations, and monthly teacher learning circles. Teachers are taught classroom management and positive discipline and are provided with activities they can lead and integrate into their daily routines and lesson plans to support SEL in the classroom.

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**COVID-19 Specifics:** Teacher trainings take place in November, so these were not immediately affected by school closures due to COVID-19. However, in response to school closures and the lack of substantive online learning developed and delivered by the Ministry of Education, the program began a remote intervention in order to reinforce the SEL support that learners had been receiving in school. One piece of this remote intervention is a weekly text messaging program, whereby CRS staff share a text message with head teachers via WhatsApp or Viber groups. These teachers then forward the messages to the families they serve via the locally preferred communication platform (e.g., WhatsApp, Viber, Telegram, Facebook). These weekly text messages include a greeting, words of encouragement, and a suggested activity that children can do at home on their own or with a sibling or caregiver. The activities in these text messages are pulled from the resources the program had already developed and are rewritten to be appropriate for the text message format. CRS has also developed primary- and secondary-level handbooks that are printed and distributed to families. These handbooks are developed by in-country staff and include prompts for songs, activities, games, and self-reflection that children can do at home with a minimal need for participation by other people. These handbooks utilize the CASEL framework and include locally known or familiar activities related to all five competencies. **By sending messages that include greetings and words of encouragement first to educators, then to parents/caregivers, and then to children or youth, this program not only embodies essential practices for building positive relationships, but it also highlights the importance of consistent messages and interactions across beneficiaries.**

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**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Mobile phone access for teachers and families; contact information for families.

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**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** When schools closed, CRS was able to build on the networks that CRS staff had already developed with school staff (teachers and administrators) and that school staff had formed with students and their families. CRS had already implemented WhatsApp or Viber group chats with the school staff in each school where they worked, and teachers already had the phone numbers for the families at their schools. Second, because school closures occurred after teacher training was complete and children had experienced some SEL activities, CRS did not have to build relations with teachers, and base knowledge of the content already existed. In the fall, when CRS begins a new cycle of this program with a new cohort, building trust, relationships, and knowledge virtually will present a new challenge. CRS has found it much harder to measure reach or gather immediate feedback about the intervention. Another risk is access to technology. In this program, mobile phones have been shown to be a technology that most families can access. However, there are always students and families who lack connectivity or that staff cannot reach to deliver printed materials.

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**Evidence and Impact:** There has not yet been any formal evaluation of the remote SEL intervention, nor does CRS intend to do formal monitoring. Instead, they are tracking how many students and caregivers receive their weekly messages (roughly, based on estimates of reach made in consultation with school staff), and how many students receive their printed materials. CRS plans to collect qualitative data on the engagement with and relevance of the weekly text message and SEL handbooks. CRS is planning to conduct phone surveys with a random sample of students to ask their opinions on the interventions, including their interest in and desired frequency for the shared activities. Early anecdotal evidence from families that have received a similar psychosocial support-focused handbook delivered through another CRS education project in Iraq indicates that families appreciate the quality and variety of activities and find them to be relevant and interesting.

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**References:**

- [Program Approaches to SEL for Education in Emergencies \(EiE\) Response, Recovery, and Rebuilding](#)
  - [Global Education Learning Series: Program Approaches to SEL for EiE Response, Recovery, and Rebuilding](#)
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## RECOMMENDATION 4: CONTEXTUALIZE SEL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LEARNERS AND COMMUNITIES.

**Advantages:** Culturally and contextually sensitive programming not only enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of the program, but also aids significantly in buy-in and support from educators, parents, caregivers, children, and youth. This is particularly true when the number of competing demands for individuals' attention is great—as is the case with the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Challenges:** Developing a deep understanding of the national and the local culture and context is critical but time-consuming—and sometimes resource intensive. The limited access to communities due to COVID-19 may further complicate efforts to develop the knowledge necessary to create effective distance SEL programming. For programs that do not already include an SEL component but that need to pivot quickly, incorporating culturally and contextually sensitive programming may be challenging, but work the extra time and effort.

**At a Distance:** Distance SEL programs should draw on the specific experiences and values of local communities to guide program content (e.g., communities that were hit hard by COVID-19 might focus on helping children and youth deal with grief; communities that value collective learning experiences might focus on creating and maintaining peer groups for both academic and SEL programs) but also consider community infrastructure and preferences for distance learning modalities (e.g., in communities where social media is not highly regarded, or where the Internet is not readily available, programming should be adapted for other distance learning modalities, including radio, television, or print).

Although a growing number of studies demonstrate the effectiveness of SEL programs, the majority of research on effectiveness is based on Western models. Moreover, many SEL program components (although not all) are grounded in research based on Western cultures and contexts. Some organizations, however, are building programs based on local understandings and interpretations of SEL.

For example, work by Jukes and colleagues<sup>47</sup> to determine the SEL skills fostered and exhibited in Tanzanian classrooms suggests that a sense of unity and group belonging guided educator practice; educators were reluctant to use small-group activities in their classrooms because they did not want to upset that unity. With this in mind, the *SEL and School Climate Project (Case Study 5)* has worked with educators and administrators to co-construct a social classroom that includes small-group activities with which educators are comfortable. By grounding practice in the local context, programming may be more relevant, effective, equitable, and sustainable, and has the potential to enhance the continuity of learning and development once formal and non-formal learning spaces re-open.<sup>48</sup>

### CASE STUDY 5: SEL AND SCHOOL CLIMATE PROJECT: A LEARNING JOURNEY, AND THE VIRTUAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY

**Implementers:** USAID/Tanzania's *Tusome Pamoja* Project, implemented by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International

**Location/s:** Tanzania

<b>Target Groups:</b> Educators (and ward education officers)	<b>Modalities:</b> WhatsApp; Cell-Ed (audio/video recordings, SMS messaging)	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Relationship skills, communication, educator confidence
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**Description:** Broadly, the *SEL and School Climate Project*, a component of Tanzania’s *Tusome Pamoja Project*, aims to create safe schools and classrooms, and enhance SEL in an effort to reduce violence in schools and promote learning among primary school children. In particular, the program was designed to support social classrooms through pair/group work, SEL by enhancing listening skills, and school climate by enhancing learner-educator relationships and developing positive discipline plans. At the start of COVID-19, the program quickly adapted to a virtual delivery - The *Virtual Support Activity* – to allow educators to continue to co-create innovative activities that foster safe and supportive environments for all children and youth, and that promote positive interpersonal relationships among colleagues, between educators and learners, and among learners when they return to the classroom.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** At the start of the pandemic, educators had just completed a week-long co-creation session and were about to begin implementing their practices when educational programming closed. During this co-creation session, educators raised several conceptual issues regarding the activities they were co-creating and expressed hesitation in their ability and willingness to implement these new activities. To maintain continuity, the program adapted to virtual support, first through WhatsApp and then Cell-Ed, and extended the collaborative learning from co-creation to be virtual. Throughout a 10-week period, the team took specific issues raised by educators during co-creation and turned them into virtual lessons and group brainstorming opportunities. Each week, educators received new content through Cell-Ed - a digital learning platform that offers teaching, coaching and tracking across multiple platforms (e.g., tablets, computers, apps. etc.). While working through the content, they were prompted to reflect, journal, and join a breakout discussion group. Each week of content included a series of questions to which the educators would respond. This allowed the program team to gauge educators’ understanding of the content and growing confidence to eventually implement the activities in their classes. Discussion of lessons and content occurred through mobile phones.

**SEL programs that are co-created with the relevant beneficiaries (in this case, educators) create greater buy-in and subsequently greater fidelity to implementation because they are contextually relevant.**

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Internet infrastructure; access to mobile/Internet-ready devices.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Although there were no major infrastructure challenges because most educators participating in the program have smartphones, accountability was a challenge. The program had a 100 percent participation rate when it was delivered using WhatsApp, where participants are not anonymous. When delivery shifted to Cell-Ed, participation rates were somewhat lower, potentially because participants were anonymous and thus felt somewhat less accountable.

**Evidence and Impact:** Although there is no evidence yet on the impact of the adaptation of the SEL and School Climate Project on learner outcomes, and there has been no formal evaluation of the program, there is monitoring evidence to suggest the program is having a positive impact on educators. Cell-Ed has a built-in monitoring component that allows users to track information such as the number of participants in each lesson and an estimate of average engagement. Educators were also asked to rate their confidence in conducting group activities (92 percent were “very confident”) and in developing positive relationships with their learners following the program (89 percent were “very confident”). As educators returned to their classrooms, more than 60 percent reported using the lessons they had received in one to four of their classes.

**References:**

- [Co-Creation of Teaching Activities during COVID-19](#)
- [Journeys: Activity Handbook for Teachers and School Staff](#)

## RECOMMENDATION 5: MULTIMODAL DELIVERY HAS THE WIDEST REACH.

**Advantages:** A multi-modal approach to delivery offers greater accessibility and exposure across ages, geographic regions (e.g., rural versus urban), and marginalized groups (e.g., girls or individuals living with disabilities) by putting content directly in the hands of individuals. Some modalities (e.g., smartphones or tablets) may open up the opportunity to deliver more content through a single mode, while others may reach more learners simultaneously (e.g., social media). It is possible that a multi-modal distance learning delivery approach will reach more children and youth than other educational programming as it can be flexible and work around other obligations individuals might have.

**Challenges:** A multi-modal approach to delivery may require more resources in the form of additional tablets, more staff to reach out to learners or to build relationships with radio and television networks, for example, and may also depend on a stronger national infrastructure that reaches not just urban communities but also rural communities. A multi-modal delivery approach, like a single delivery approach, will not reach everyone.

**At a Distance:** SEL programs that are delivered using multiple modalities may provide learners with different needs with the opportunity to access content more readily or through a modality that is more comfortable. Further, the use of multiple distance learning modalities, including print materials to deliver a single program may enable a program to reach distant communities, those without Internet, or those with a disability that prevents them from accessing one mode of delivery. It is also possible that delivering a program in multiple ways can increase exposure by providing more opportunities to engage with the same material.

Although distance learning is commonly described in terms of separate learning modalities, this review suggests that a multi-modal delivery approach has the greatest potential for reaching the widest audience (e.g., different ages, geographical locations, education levels, learners with disabilities, genders) and for delivering SEL programs and practices that maximize SEL outcomes. Of the 22 SEL programs and practices highlighted in this report, 11 were delivered via multiple modalities (radio, TV, telephone, computer, or tablet, as well as through traditional paper-based materials; see [Annex 3](#) for a summary of modalities by program). For example, when FHI 360's *Education in Emergencies* program pivoted to distance delivery, they began reaching parents, caregivers, children, and youth through radio, SMS, phone calls at home, and interactive voice recordings that parents could access on their own by calling a dedicated number; this gave families the opportunity to engage with the literacy and SEL materials in the way that was most comfortable and accessible for them. Preliminary monitoring data indicates the program has reached more than 300,000 children and youth and families. Program staff noted that low-tech delivery (e.g., radio, telephone, and interactive voice recordings) were far more effective in reaching families than other modalities.<sup>49</sup>

## CASE STUDY 6: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN EMERGENCIES

<b>Implementers:</b> FHI 360's Education in Emergencies		<b>Locations:</b> Djibouti, Ghana, Jamaica, Nigeria, and Senegal
<b>Target Groups:</b> Children, youth, parents, caregivers, and school stakeholders	<b>Modalities:</b> Primarily text messages and radio, but also Internet platforms and television	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Emotion regulation, perseverance, conflict resolution, executive functions

**Description:** FHI 360 provides conflict-sensitive interventions that focus on displaced learners' well-being by establishing safe education and classroom environments, providing SEL activities for learners, caregivers, and school personnel, and offering comprehensive professional development to educators and school leaders. Rather than creating a stand-alone program, FHI 360 integrates SEL into existing reading instruction and play-based recreational and extracurricular activities. Lessons are contextualized and designed to meet the specific needs of the beneficiaries. Programming is delivered via text messaging, phone calls, interactive voice recordings, and in-person outreach to caregivers a couple of times per week and to the child once a week.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** Programming aims to integrate health messaging relevant to the communities in which they operate. During COVID-19, that includes messages about washing hands, wearing a mask, and maintaining physical distance, plus information on curfews, market hours, and other community information. SEL programming focuses specifically on addressing concerns and anxieties about the uncertainty associated with COVID-19. Programming was moved to multiple modes of delivery following COVID-19, including radio, SMS, phone calls home, and interactive voice recordings. Staff reach out to parents/caregivers a couple of times per week and speak with the children and youth once a week. **Although content is delivered primarily through text messaging and radio, FHI 360 also uses television, phone calls, and the Internet to maximize the number of children and families they reach and to provide access to individuals with different needs.**

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Radio broadcast infrastructure; telecommunications infrastructure; access to radios and/or mobile phones; capacity to generate and broadcast content. Strong leadership and empowered administrators are also essential for a widespread program during COVID-19.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Limited literacy levels of families drove programming to radio and text messaging (SMS). Issues of student/family mobility, budget constraints, and consistency of delivery affect the impact of programming.

**Evidence and Impact:** None yet; they are trying to figure out how to assess learning gains in literacy, numeracy, and SEL delivered via distance modalities.

**References:**

- [Social Emotional Learning in Emergencies](#)
- [A Secondary Impact of COVID-19: FHI 360 Supports Students Through Pandemic](#)

## RECOMMENDATION 6: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE SEL.

**Advantages:** Giving children and youth a range of opportunities to practice and apply SEL skills in different contexts or situations (e.g., with families, siblings, peers, or community members) increases the likelihood that learners not only understand *what* they are learning but also *how* they can use it in a variety of situations. Moreover, providing educators, parents, and caregivers with opportunities to practice the SEL lessons they will be delivering likely enhances their sense of confidence and efficacy in delivering those lessons.

**Challenges:** During a time when physical distancing is crucial for global health and well-being, finding safe ways for groups of children and youth to have in-person interactions outside their family will be challenging. Limitations in access to technology may also limit learners' ability to practice lessons or receive feedback on SEL skills.

**At a Distance:** Distance SEL programming that offers opportunities for children and youth to practice the skills they are learning allows learners to actively engage with the SEL content. Examples can include games played with parents, caregivers, siblings, peers, and educators; skits or dance routines that illustrate their feelings; or art or music that they can share with others.

It is limiting to simply teach SEL skills and competencies; it is just as important that learners have opportunities to practice and apply the SEL skills they are learning in real-life situations and be recognized for using these skills across a variety of settings.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, it is important that, in addition to the delivery of SEL content, actors working in the COVID-19 response focus on supporting parents, caregivers, and educators to create opportunities for their children or youth and learners to safely interact with others in order to practice and apply what they are learning. For example, online platforms such as USAID's Youthlead.org, UNICEF's Voices of Youth<sup>51</sup> and U-Report<sup>52</sup> have been designed to allow youth to interact and socialize with one another virtually around common interest areas, applying skills related to socialization, self-efficacy, self-confidence, responsible decision-making, respecting others, and empathy.

Additionally, it cannot be assumed that children and youth will naturally pick up SEL skills and competencies by watching a TV program, listening to a radio script, or reading a book; they must have interactive opportunities to apply and practice what they read, watch, and hear. Several resources evaluated as part of this study focus on supporting parents and caregivers to interact with their children and youth in ways that will allow them to practice and apply SEL skills. For example, tips for parents and caregivers generated by the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Network and Save the Children<sup>53</sup> encourage parent/child interactions and activities that give children and youth a sense of control and empowerment. Right To Play's PLAY @ Home Games (Case Study 7) guide<sup>54</sup> provides numerous examples of how children and youth can interact with each other and adults through play in order to practice SEL skills outlined in Right To Play's life-skills framework.

For youth in particular, experiential learning and reflection are critical to positive development.<sup>55</sup> The common soft skills of higher order thinking, self-control, and positive self-concept have been found to lead to improved long-term outcomes across the fields of workforce development, violence prevention



and reproductive health.<sup>56</sup> Research also recommends addressing these skill developments in combination to improve learning. Lastly, reinforcing positive adult and peer relationships for youth fosters safe spaces for youth to practice their newly learned soft skills.

## CASE STUDY 7: PLAY @ HOME: GAMES FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

<b>Implementers:</b> Right To Play		<b>Locations:</b> Various
<b>Target Groups:</b> Pre-primary and primary school-age children; caregivers	<b>Modalities:</b> Images, videos, and messaging via social media; radio and TV broadcast; distribution of paper leaflets; and free online content and resources	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-discipline, perseverance, sense of agency, relationship-building, respect for others, empathy, accountability, teamwork, gender, communication, goal setting, concentration, and responsible decision making

**Description:** Drawing from the evidence available at the time on the health and psychosocial concerns for children arising from COVID-19 and Right To Play’s own framework of life skills that support psychosocial well-being, the group developed a framework of skills that integrate both topics and turned these into messages for children and families, reinforced with games that could be easily simplified and adapted into short steps from Right To Play’s games database. This content was then turned into infographics, short videos, leaflets, radio spots, and resource manuals for distribution by educator networks, community coach networks, Right To Play social media platforms, and local partners. This resource contains the same content in the form of infographics for global reach that can be adapted for local use. Included in the resources are 35 games for children to play at home. The resource has lessons and activities focused on the following skills: “I can respect and value people who are different”; “I respect and value people who are sick”; and “We can respect women and girls in our family.” The images and infographics are culturally neutral, gender-neutral, and inclusive of those with a range of abilities. This approach is intentionally multi-modal to reach a wide audience. **Play at all ages offers an opportunity for children and youth to practice the SEL competencies they are learning. Programs like those implemented by Right To Play that create fun and engaging games and activities for learners and their families/caregivers provide active learning opportunities for everyone.**

**COVID-19 Specifics:** This intervention was developed specifically for the COVID-19 response and uses a variety of modalities to reach a wide audience. Infographics have been shared via social media; content has been converted into videos and leaflets for distribution; messages are being delivered through radio and television; and in Palestine, it has been converted into e-cards that parents can download from the Internet.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Depending on the mode of delivery—Internet infrastructure; radio broadcasting infrastructure; TV broadcasting infrastructure; printing and distribution infrastructure; access to a mobile/Internet-ready device.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Those with auditory and visual impairments may not be able to fully access content without assistance.

**Evidence and Impact:** A 2015–2016 baseline evaluation informed the development of the life skills framework that forms the basis for the content of this resource. Evidence for this iteration is currently being collected and will be available in 2021.

**References:**

- [Play @ Home: Games for Health and Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [Play for the Advancement of Quality Education: Program Baseline Evaluation Report](#)
- [Providing PSS-SEL Support for Learners During COVID-19](#)

## CASE STUDY 8: INJAZ

<b>Implementers:</b> Chemonics		<b>Location/s:</b> Northeast Syria
<b>Target Groups:</b> Learners ages 6-17 in formal and informal Internally Displaced People camps, as well as out-of-school children with disabilities	<b>Modality(s):</b> Video lessons shared through WhatsApp (primarily)	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Five core competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making); skills to counter extremism such as building a positive future outlook; COVID-19 awareness and health behaviors

**Description:** The Injaz project supports school rehabilitation, psychosocial support for students, and remedial literacy education. As a part of their psychosocial support programming, they train teachers to identify signs to stress, trauma, and anger in children and to better understand the role of schools and teachers in providing psychosocial support. Teachers are trained to help students form positive identities, foster a sense of community, and strengthen their emotional resilience through classroom activities and by creating a routine in the classroom that encourages productivity and participation. The project also engages community-based organizations, parents, and community members in games and groups activities that help break down the stigma around psychosocial support.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** When in-person programming halted in March 2020, the Injaz team worked with teachers in internally displaced persons camps to develop short video lessons to distribute to children. These videos were created to guide children in activities that provide psychosocial support, such as creating a personal “ID card” that highlighted their best qualities or choreographing a dance to a song about COVID-19 with their siblings or friends in the camp. Children would send a picture or video of their work to the teachers, who would respond with feedback. For those families with Internet access, these videos were shared through WhatsApp groups or Facebook pages. For those without regular Internet access, other methods to access the material were developed. In camps where Injaz has installed the low-cost solution of an intranet, teachers could walk from tent to tent and share the videos over Bluetooth. In addition, Injaz identified an existing Arabic-language app that created virtual classrooms that allowed learners to access the videos without connecting to the Internet. Teachers among Injaz’s local partners developed video lessons in Arabic sign language in order to include deaf and hard-of-hearing learners in their distance learning programming. **The development of activities that require children and youth to illustrate their learnings in some way (e.g., through dance, art, music, skits) not only reinforces the learning through practices but also offers an opportunity for educators and/or program staff to assess learners’ understanding of SEL concepts and competencies.**

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Internet access or offline downloading ability, contact information for families, video production ability, installation of a camp-wide intranet with an app that created virtual classrooms.

**Evidence and Impact:** The team conducted a child survey to assess the children’s interest and engagement in the video lessons. A Google Form was shared with families with Internet access. Parents were asked to deliver the questions to their children and type their answers into the form. For those without Internet access, if in a camp where teachers were present, teachers would walk around and ask the questions to children and record their answers in the form. The survey had over 400 respondents. This survey indicated that children enjoyed the video lessons and wanted more. Upon returning to in-person learning, children took a placement test to determine their education levels after the suspension of in-person classes. The results showed that those children who regularly accessed the video lessons with psychosocial support activities and had a teacher in their camp showed improvement in their learning. On the other hand, children who did not access the video lessons or did so infrequently did not show the same improvement. Some of these learners showed regression. A few of these learners showed such high levels of distress that they were unable to answer any of the placement test questions. For these children, Injaz asked partners to hold 2-3 day psychosocial bootcamps before re-doing the placement test. Results showed that children did better on the placement test after the bootcamp.



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**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** One of the biggest challenges to distance learning is access to technology. The Injaz program made a large effort to offer different ways of accessing their videos in order to include as many children as possible. However, some children still are not able to access mobile devices or the Internet/intranet. While working to develop sign language videos, the team realized the need to verify what sign language and which dialect learners in their area are familiar with. Many of the learners that Injaz supports are illiterate, and many have not had exposure to a structured learning environment for several years. Therefore, Injaz has developed content that relies on a facilitator rather than written instructions for the student. Facilitators are trained to work with non-readers. This team has also found gender inequalities in access to distance learning. In families with mobile phones, girls are less likely than boys to be given access to the phone, or when there are multiple children, may be given the phone last.

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**References:**

- [Chemonics Project Description](#)
  - [Opinion: Psychosocial support for children counters the legacy of violent extremism in Syria](#)
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# CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented, this review concludes that there are a range of SEL interventions that can be delivered through a variety of distance learning modalities. However, additional research is needed to determine the effectiveness of these interventions to increase the social-emotional skills of learners and ensure equity and inclusion in education when delivered through distance learning modalities. Implementers are more likely to effectively reach marginalized populations by incorporating key recommendations outlined in this review when designing new or adapting existing SEL interventions. For example, based on this review's case studies and interviews with key informants, an intervention that targets learners, educators, and parents/caregivers (Recommendation 1) using multi-modal distance learning delivery approaches (Recommendation 5) has the potential to reach the widest audience and to demonstrate impact on SEL.

In the context of COVID-19, where uncertainty about the future remains high and in-person interactions are limited, it is essential to help young children understand their feelings and emotions—some of which they will not have experienced before and thus not understand. It is also important to provide opportunities for all children and youth—not to mention parents, caregivers, and educators—to process their feelings and emotions. Stress and anxiety are extremely high across constituencies, with marginalized populations likely experiencing even greater levels of stress and anxiety. Thus, effective distance SEL programs should incorporate stress management strategies for *all* participants—not just children and youth. Moreover, because the physical distancing necessitated by COVID-19 is likely particularly challenging for youth, programs that emphasize maintaining positive relationships with peers, parents, and educators alike will be important for preventing mental health problems and maintaining school engagement.

There is currently no strong evidence of the impact of SEL programs that have been developed or adapted in response to COVID-19 on program participants (children, youth, parents/caregivers, and educators). This is not entirely unexpected, given the short time that has elapsed between the closure of formal and non-formal learning spaces and the rapid pivoting of programs to distance learning modalities, and the time of this review. Moreover, assessment of learning outcomes in any domain has proven challenging in the context of COVID-19, making it even more difficult to determine impact. Additional research is needed to understand the effectiveness of distance SEL interventions.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX I: COMMON SEL SKILLS FOUND IN COVID-19 RESPONSES

Domain	Skill	Relevance to COVID-19 <sup>ii</sup>
<b>Emotional:</b> Reflects the basic skills needed to recognize, express, and control one’s own emotions; understand their impact on others and empathize with others.	Identifying emotions	Being able to identify emotions can help individuals to better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting them so they can identify positive ways to cope with difficult emotions.
	Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over personal motivations and behavior. This is especially important to help individuals regain a sense of control and stay productive in order to mitigate the uncertainty of the pandemic.
	Stress management	Crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic can increase stress, anxiety, and fear, which can be overwhelming for children, youth and adults. Stress management techniques can help individuals positively regulate emotions and support the mind and body to adapt to adverse situations. Ongoing stress management can foster long-term resilience and support individuals to remain healthy, calm, and productive, which is essential for continued learning and development.
	Empathy	Empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of others—can help individuals become sensitive to what others are experiencing, mitigate feelings of isolation through feelings of connectedness, and promote healthy cooperation, collaboration, and co-regulation.
<b>Social:</b> Reflects the basic skills needed to interpret the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others, make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions, and establish and maintain positive relationships with diverse individuals and groups.	Respect for others	In the context of COVID-19, there is a global responsibility of individuals to protect the health, safety, and well-being of others by adhering to public health recommendations (e.g., physical distancing, wearing a face mask, staying home). Respecting others by following public health recommendations may not only help to save lives but also is needed for individuals to become conscious, caring, and active members of their families, communities, and societies.
	Relationship-building	Relationships are very important during crises like COVID-19, as they can help individuals manage stress, feel less isolated, and receive the care and support they need. Healthy and nurturing relationships between caregivers and children and youth are essential for healthy child development and continued learning; healthy relationships between co-parents are crucial for mitigating domestic violence and abuse; and healthy relationships between peers are necessary to apply and practice other social and emotional skills, as well as to develop a social network and social capital. These are all protective factors during crises.

<sup>ii</sup> Relevance is based primarily on existing literature for SEL in emergency contexts and conversations with experts concerning the programs highlighted in the case studies.

Domain	Skill	Relevance to COVID-19 <sup>ii</sup>
	Co-regulation	Co-regulation is the interactive process of regulatory support between two individuals. It is especially important for caregivers to co-regulate with their children or youth during crises such as COVID-19. Global crises can cause fear and anxiety and result in a lack of access to critical services such as education and healthcare; effective co-regulation can promote self-efficacy and help children and youth feel safe, secure, and supported, which is essential for healthy child development and continued learning. Co-regulation between co-parents is another important factor in mitigating instances of domestic violence and abuse, in addition to promoting healthy family dynamics and long-term resilience.
	Conflict resolution	In the context of COVID-19, school closures, restrictions of movement, stay-at-home orders, disrupted routines, loss of income, and a lack of access to critical services can lead to increased instances of conflict at the individual, family, and community levels. While other social and emotional skills can help prevent conflict, conflict-resolution skills are needed to address and defuse active conflict at all social-ecological levels. Conflict-resolution skills are essential for maintaining physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as supporting continued learning and future success.
<b>Cognitive:</b> Reflects the basic cognitive skills needed to focus attention and direct behavior in order to achieve a goal. The cognitive domain cuts across all aspects of SEL.	Attention control	In the context of COVID-19, learning is often taking place in more unstructured settings where learners of different ages are engaging in different activities at different times, and where distractions like the radio or television may be more prevalent. In these situations, the ability to focus attention and control the desire to attend to distractions rather than on the lesson at hand is essential and may be more likely to lead to positive learning outcomes—SEL or academic.
	Communication	Communication skills are essential for individuals to be able to express their emotions and needs to others in order to receive adequate care and support. This is especially important during a global crisis like COVID-19, when heightened levels of stress and anxiety can cause extreme emotions and affect needs in unexpected ways. Being able to listen well can also help others feel cared for and supported. Communication skills are also essential for continued learning during crises.

# ANNEX 2: ADDITIONAL REMOTE SEL PROGRAMS

## NATIONAL LEVEL

### AHLAN SIMSIM

<b>Implementers:</b> Sesame Workshop and IRC		<b>Locations:</b> Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon
<b>Target Groups:</b> Children ages 3–8	<b>Modality(s):</b> National TV, supplemented by storybooks, educational materials, and caregiver training/support	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Emotional regulation, positive social skills, conflict resolution, perseverance, cross-cutting themes

**Description:** “Welcome Sesame” in Arabic offers a warm and joyful welcome to early learning to young children across the Middle East, especially those affected by displacement. The first half of each *Ahlan Simsim* episode is a comedic story segment, during which characters experience emotions in situations relatable to young children, like fear of the dark during a movie night or frustration when friends do not play by the rules of a game. The characters learn to manage their feelings by practicing concrete strategies such as counting to five, belly breathing, and expression through art. The fun continues in the second half of each episode during a variety show segment, when real kids and celebrity guests join the characters to play games and sing songs that reinforce the episode’s educational content.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** Content of the show has been adapted to include: 1) COVID-19 Knowledge Prevention – focused on COVID-19 awareness for children and caregivers, including key facts and preventative measures like handwashing; 2) Caregiver and Child Well-being – messages and activities focused on the importance of well-being and stress management, drawing on mindfulness strategies like belly breathing that caregivers can use themselves and teach to their children; 3) Early Childhood Development Awareness Raising – focused on the importance of play for children in contributing to the development of cognitive, social, and emotional skills; 4) Activity-based Programming – messages guide caregivers through simple in-home Early Childhood Development activities focused on language, social and emotional, cognitive, and motor and physical health development domains, and are linked to the *Ahlan Simsim* TV show, reinforcing messages children receive watching the show.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Television broadcasting infrastructure; access to devices to access show content; capacity to generate and film show content.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Show content would not be accessible to those who do not have access to a TV or mobile/Internet-ready device and/or are not able to attend a learning space that has access. Children with visual impairments would not be able to enjoy the full experience of the show. Would need to consider who in a household has access to a TV or mobile/Internet-ready device to ensure both male and female children have equal access.

**Evidence and Impact:** No evidence available yet. Over the course of five years, independent evaluators will measure *Ahlan Simsim*’s impact on children’s social and emotional skills as well as the impact of our direct services for both children and caregivers.

**References:**

- [Ahlan Simsim](#)
- [Responding to the Crisis of Care and Learning: ECD and COVID-19](#)

## TIYENDE!

<b>Implementers:</b> Save the Children		<b>Locations:</b> Malawi
<b>Target Groups:</b> Children ages 4-5	<b>Modality(s):</b> Radio/Audio and mobile phone, supplemented by in-person lessons	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making

**Description:** Meaning “Let’s Walk!”, *Tiyende!* delivers 100 pre-recorded lessons through radios and mobile phones that are based on the national Early Childhood Development curriculum. The lessons engage children in fun activities and aims to prepare them for primary school. Since most children in the program do not have radio access at home, this program attracts them to community-based child-care centers in order to participate. At the child-care centers, children sit together and listen to the *Tiyende!* radio program, which helps them learn shapes, numbers, and the alphabet, while listening to fun and lively audio prompts. Radio sessions are a half hour long. Children also have access to educator-guided lessons that stimulate their physical, social, language, and cognitive development. In addition to the interactive radio programming, these centers offer colorful learning materials and storybooks to help children get excited about learning, along with educators trained in other interactive, child-friendly teaching methods. Lessons include an introduction activity, SEL activity, literacy and numeracy learning, plenary on literacy and numeracy learning, reading of a storybook, comprehension questions, and parental messaging.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** To support interactive radio instruction (IRI) like the *Tiyende!* program and general remote delivery of education and SEL content during the pandemic, Save the Children has developed an SEL Distance Learning Activities Pack, including new IRI scripts focusing on SEL and mindfulness, as well as adapted SEL content into workbooks for children that are meant to accompany the IRI scripts. Much of the content developed for IRI has come from Save the Children’s Return to Learning program, which explicitly focuses on SEL for children affected by crises and who are in transit.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Radio broadcast infrastructure; telecommunications infrastructure; access to radios and/or mobile phones; capacity to generate and broadcast content.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** The audio component of this approach would not be accessible for children with auditory impairments. Would need to consider who in a household most likely has access to radio and/or mobile phone devices to ensure both male and female children have access.

**Evidence and Impact:** A 2017 study demonstrated significant impact on learning outcomes. 800,000 children reached per year.

**References:**

- [Tiyende! Let’s Walk!](#)
- [Distance Learning During COVID-19: Continuing Education in Low Resource and Low Tech Environments](#)

## HUGUKA DUKORE AKAZI KANOZE

<b>Implementers:</b> Education Development Center		<b>Location(s):</b> Rwanda
<b>Target Groups (i.e. age):</b> Children, youth, and young adults ages 16-30	<b>Distance Learning Modalities:</b> Interactive Audio Instruction;	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Personal development - assessing skills and qualities, goal setting, developing a professional/personal development plan; customer service; teamwork; problem solving; work place behaviors and attitudes; leadership;

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**Program Description:** USAID Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (HDAK) is a 5-year youth employment project (2016- 2021) that builds on successes and lessons learned from the USAID Akazi Kanoze Project. It provides 40,000 out-of-school youth with market-relevant employability skills leading to new or better employment by scaling up workforce development interventions that have proven successful across 25 districts nationwide. Youth learn transferable soft skills, technical vocational skills and lessons in entrepreneurship to help prepare them to successfully enter the workforce. They also learn important family planning, reproductive health and social inclusion concepts. In addition, the HDAK program helps link youth to agriculture value chain opportunities, saving and loans services and financial service providers. HDAK supports the government and local organizations in strengthening the workforce development delivery system to better be able to serve youth.

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**COVID-19 Specifics (i.e. pivots):** The COVID-19 context and constraints to the usual training delivery mechanism challenged HDAK to find alternative ways of maintaining youth engagement and learning, and advancing their personal employment and self-employment goals. Considering EDC's long experience in e-learning and audio instruction specifically, HDAK pivoted quickly to adapt an Interactive Audio Instruction approach and materials for the context of Rwanda to reinforce work readiness content, attitudes and behaviors among HDAK youth.

The Work Ready Now (WRN) Audio Program consists of 41 sessions (or episodes), each of which is 10 to 15 minutes long. Episodes are sequentially developed, following a story of young men and women that takes place in Rwanda. The story evolves throughout the episodes while reviewing and reinforcing transferable skills that are relevant in wage and self-employment contexts. These skills include planning for future wage or self-employment, communication with others, teamwork, positive workplace behavior, staying healthy at work and managing money. Episodes are directly linked to HDAK's WRN training and serve as a refresher for HDAK youth. The fact that these occur in real-life settings (in the story) and engage youth in assignments, require them to apply the skills on their own lives and context (practical assignments).

In addition to the WRN Audio Program, HDAK also did 'Motivational Telephonic surveys' with 200 Youth Leaders, which served the multi-purpose of (1) re-engaging youth leaders with the project since face-to-face gatherings have not been possible, (2) checking on the status, progress and struggles of youth groups, (3) motivating youth to re-ignite their youth groups by helping them identify the benefits of the group and help them set small achievable goals in the coming weeks. This initiative has led HDAK to come up with the 'YLA Virtual coaching' which is intended to supplement the youth leadership and accompaniment (YLA) program remotely, through a sequence of phone calls to youth leaders to address specific content of their YL Manuals and coach them to move forward with the support they give to their youth groups. This initiative directly addresses soft skills – primarily leadership and all related skills such as teamwork, communications, planning and goal setting,

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**Resources and Capacity Needed:** HDAK had to develop the capacity of their staff to be able to write, record and edit the Interactive Audio Instruction scripts. The main resource needed was the time of staff – writing, reviewing and translating scripts, acting, creating awareness of the program, following up with sample youth, etc. With the youth leadership and accompaniment coaching program, staff will need to be trained in how to coach telephonically rather than through face-to-face meetings.

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**Evidence and Impact:** None provided

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**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Understanding the situation of youth and clarifying their access to technology was an important first step. When it became clear that WhatsApp was not going to be a viable channel in which to run the WRN Audio Program, the project switched to sending episodes to youth via SMS.

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**References:**

- [USAID Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze](#)
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## OPPORTUNITY 2.0

<b>Implementers:</b> Education Development Center (EDC), Department of Education, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority		<b>Location(s):</b> Philippines
<b>Target Groups (i.e. age):</b> Youth and young adults ages 15-24	<b>Distance Learning Modalities:</b> Self-directed learning packets, interactive radio, e-learning/blended learning (planned)	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Personal development, assessing skills and qualities, goal setting, communication, leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, work place behaviors and attitudes

**Program Description:** Opportunity 2.0 is a five-year \$37.5 million program that will strengthen national and local capability to provide out-of-school youth with quality education and learning experiences, inspiring life-long-learning and leading to improved livelihood or employment.

Working in 10 cities across the Philippines, Opportunity 2.0 supports the Philippines' Department of Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, as well as local governments, to provide quality education, skills, and opportunities to over 180,000 out-of-school youth with diverse skill profiles, education levels, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Opportunity 2.0 strengthens links between education, markets, and local communities to provide youth with a second-chance education and support in seeking employment. The program will work with more than 2,000 teachers and 2,200 employers to build partnerships between the education system, industry, community leaders, and government agencies who provide services to youth. Program participants develop key employment skills such as teamwork, customer service, decision-making and problem-solving.

**COVID-19 Specifics (i.e. pivots):** The Philippines has taken a careful approach with COVID-19, implementing strict restrictions and physical distancing. The project started just as the pandemic was impacting the region. The team worked closely with the government of Philippines counterparts to pivot life skills instruction from face-to-face delivery to distance learning, using approaches already tested in the Philippines. After an assessment of the situation (see below under challenges), the life skills materials and other training materials are being adapted for three delivery modes along a technological spectrum:

1. Self-directed learning (no tech): Youth use paper packets for self-directed learning. Mobile teachers go to their communities to check-in, drop off new handbooks and collect completed work. Youth are prompted to share learning and do some activities with family members. This is an approach that has a long history in the Philippines.
2. Interactive Audio Instruction (low tech): Interactive audio activities are being developed to complement the life skills courses. They use a storytelling format.
3. Blended Learning E-learning (high tech). EDC will work with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and ALS to develop a concept for virtual learning (while physical distancing restrictions are in place), moving towards a blended learning model. The life skills modules will be used as a proof of concept to demonstrate what this approach will look like and outline the structures that must be in place to support learners and teachers. While some instruction will be self-paced on an e-learning platform, there will always be a facilitator with an assigned group of learners that will meet whether in person or virtually. The facilitator plays a critical role in building community, supporting learning, and minimizing attrition rates.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** While the government's master instructors are not new to self-directed learning, many are new to life skills in this format. The team emphasized how to convey consistent messages in the cascade approach.

**Evidence and Impact:** None provided



**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Understanding the situation of youth, teachers, and clarifying their access to technology was an important first step. While the government was interested in e-learning, the limited access to devices and internet drove the decision to start with paper-based self-directed learning modules.

**References:**

- [Opportunity 2.0](#)
- [Youth and Workforce Development](#)

## HIGHER EDUCATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

<b>Implementers:</b> Education Development Center (EDC) and 5 HEIs		<b>Location(s):</b> Lebanon
<b>Target Groups (i.e. age):</b> 18-24 (higher education)	<b>Distance Learning Modalities:</b> Virtual classroom, asynchronous assignments, some e-learning	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Personal development, skills, qualities, goal setting, communication, cross-cultural communication, learning styles, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, job seeking, workplace behaviors and attitudes

**Description:** The Higher Education Capacity Development (HECD) program strengthens the human and institutional capacity of selected higher education institutions in Lebanon. The five-year (2019-2024) USAID activity enables higher education institutions with improved job readiness and work-based learning programs, and delivery of in-demand practical and soft skills, to better prepare university graduates to be successful in the labor market in Lebanon, the MENA region, and globally.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** Higher education institutions in Lebanon pivoted to remote learning in late 2019 in response to disruptions caused by national protests and economic crisis. The need for remote learning became more acute due to physical distancing restrictions enforced by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic and major disruptions caused by the traumatic Beirut blast. HECD had initially adapted the Work Ready Now (WRN) life skills and employability skills program for face-to-face delivery within the Lebanese higher education context. All 62 HECD WRN activities were adapted into the format of “distance learning supplements”. Each activity was broken into synchronous portions which would be taught in a virtual classroom and asynchronous activities that did not require a collaborative environment. Some WRN activities were re-worked into e-learning activities. Although teachers had experience with remote teaching, few had previous professional development in this area. EDC’s team carefully laid out the mechanics of each lesson – how to use breakout rooms, collaborative discussion techniques, polls, etc. in order to preserve the essence of the learning goals and minimize technology potentially disrupting learning.

The training of trainers was also pivoted to a virtual format that entailed extensive design and adaptation work by the EDC training team. The end training of trainers product prepared university instructors to deliver the curriculum in both face-to-face and virtual settings, which was especially appreciated by HEI leadership who sought to maintain high-quality program delivery despite the unprecedented challenges facing Lebanon’s higher education teaching and learning environment. In addition, HECD has provided psychosocial support for university staff and instructors along with proven psychological strategies for supporting students’ learning ability during times of high stress. **By implementing many of the previous recommendations in a higher education or workforce development context and by training educators to deliver the WRN curriculum in their classrooms (face-to-face or virtual), the HECD program offers an excellent example of the critical role that higher education can play in supporting SEL (soft skills).**

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Ensuring a group of dynamic instructors who are willing to take creative risks to adopt such a new, activity-based teaching and learning initiative. Similarly, stimulating student interest and buy-in through effective promotion of the new course are key. Having all instructors in an institution using the same video conferencing software and institutional tech support is important. They should have licensed versions so they are not constantly working around the limitations of free software. Otherwise, the experience is very disjointed for teachers and students. Capacity is needed around how to engage students and create a sense of community, and safety in a remote environment. Learning techniques to keep the sessions participatory and fun is key.

**Evidence and Impact (optional):** The WRN course has been adopted by 5 HEIs as a 3-credit course. Embedding soft skills into higher education and benefiting students all over Lebanon shows the trust of the HEIs in this kind of work.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** The main challenge in adapting the materials was to figure out how to preserve the sense of a student peer learning community, with the accompanying collaboration and confidence-building which is especially conducive to WRN’s activity-based learning and skills development. Furthermore, it was a challenge to ensure that learning objectives would be attainable when the classroom activities were less interactive within the setting of remote learning. Additional challenges included high student dropout rates as universities pivoted to online instruction and students perceived the new mode of instruction to be of lesser quality. This challenged the project to both create a program that could serve as an exemplar of high-quality distance learning, and to promote this effectively to discerning university instructors and students, many of whom were not fully comfortable with the notion of activity-based learning delivered through online teaching. Lastly, Lebanon’s unstable internet and frequent electricity cuts were a constant challenge to HECD’s online teaching initiative. Lastly, high stress associated with Lebanon’s economic crisis, Covid-19 pandemic, and the aftermath of the devastating Beirut Blast continues to be one of the main challenges for university staff, instructors, and students.

**References:**

- [USAID/Lebanon Higher Education Capacity Development Program](#)
- [Higher Education Capacity Development Program LinkedIn](#)
- [Higher Education Capacity Development Program Facebook](#)
- [In Lebanon, Trainings Move Online During COVID-19 Crisis](#)

## COMMUNITY LEVEL

### SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES: MANUAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID & DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

<b>Implementers:</b> Plan International		<b>Locations:</b> Lebanon
<b>Target Groups:</b> Humanitarian aid & development workers, education personnel, caregivers and anyone else supporting children	<b>Modality(s):</b> Print materials; online learning/training platform; audio guides; video; social media	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Communication, self-discipline, self-regulation, stress management, cooperation, social awareness, creativity

**Description:** The content of this manual aims to help individuals create a warm, safe, and nurturing atmosphere that is supportive to the children’s well-being and conducive to their creativity and growth. Content includes

information and instructional guidance for those caring for children, as well as activities that focus on being present and wakeful; creativity; calming down and relaxing; strengthening cognitive abilities; and improving self-confidence and cooperation in groups.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** While it was originally planned to train staff and personnel on this manual in person, Plan International is designing remote training via online platforms for Plan International staff, educators, and caregivers in Lebanon. They are also in the process of creating audio guides of the manual that will be available online and will be creating short videos with key messages from the content, potentially delivered by Lebanese celebrities. These will be available online and will be distributed through social media.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Internet infrastructure; access to an Internet-ready device.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Must consider who the main actors and caregivers of children are and who in families has access to digital devices to ensure equal participation of male and female actors and caregivers.

**Evidence and Impact:** No evidence yet, but there is a plan to use satisfaction surveys to measure the self-care aspect of the guide and content.

**References:**

- [Supporting Children Who Have Gone Through Difficult Experiences](#)
- [Providing PSS-SEL Support for Learners During COVID-19](#)

## NORTHERN EDUCATION INITIATIVE PLUS

<b>Implementers:</b> USAID and Creative Associates International		<b>Locations:</b> Nigeria (Bauchi and Sokoto States)
<b>Target Groups:</b> Formal school children 6-9 YO PI-3, Non-formal younger learners 6-11 & adolescents 12-17, Parents, Teachers, Head Teachers, School Support Officers, Women Groups, Community Coalitions	<b>Modality(s):</b> Radio, Interactive Voice Response (IVR), WhatsApp, Facebook, SMS and ZOOM Training workshops	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Self-awareness & self-management, Social awareness & relationship skills, Responsible decision making, Empathy, respect and emotions, Communication and teamwork

**Description:** Commencing in 2015, the five-year Northern Education Initiative Plus (the Initiative) project is strengthening the ability of Bauchi and Sokoto states in Nigeria to provide greater access to basic education—especially for girls and out-of-school-children—and to significantly improve reading outcomes for more than 1 million school-aged children and youth.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** The Initiative has embedded SEL messages via Radio, TV, WhatsApp and Interactive Voice Response. These include:

- Seventy (70) SEL messages embedded into instructional radio/TV and IVR lessons.
- SEL messages embedded in a 24-episodes radio drama
- Radio family story time with SEL messages
- Virtual Continuous Professional Development with contents on supporting pupils' Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Other online contacts: WhatsApp, Facebook
- Virtual TLM development incorporated elements of SEL skills in texts writing. A session was devoted to SEL skills and how this can be incorporated in stories for children.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Reading team members curated/scripting of SEL messages for parents, SSOs, teachers, pupils; validation and review of messages; transformation of messages to radio/TV/IVR/SMS format; voice over activities; sound engineering; ability to cover cost of radio/TV broadcasts, IVR messages and SMS; evaluation and assessment of impact

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Non-availability of structured support for parental support for learning at home; contextualization of messages to meet the cultural and religious expectations in the communities; difficulty in getting feedback on parental support for learning at home; limitations imposed by family social economic situations; inconsistency in broadcast schedule by radio stations and difficulty of getting listenership data; limited data on parental readiness to support learning at home

**Gender, Inclusion, and Equity Focus:** In this programming, both male and female voices are used in broadcasting messages and story characters and there are positive images and representations of both boy and girls and women and men. The Initiative works to ensure cross gender message appeal and gender balance in messages. Roles are assigned equitably, inclusively, and are devoid of stereotypical language. Additionally, neutral terms and phrases are used in messages.

**Evidence and Impact:**

1. Through community coalitions and women groups, and during their interaction with parents, feedback reported included: children are willing and excited to learn, especially with their parents; many parents built their schedules around the lesson broadcasting schedules to ensure that they could support their children/wards; parents became acquainted with their children books and pace in learning; and listening to lesson by radio became another platform for the children to bond with their parents;
2. Routine Field based monitoring found that community members demanded continuation of the radio program even after school re-opens
3. More than 90% of homes possess radios while less than 20% have TVs Feedback shows that Community Coalition and Women Group members are willing to mobilize/support parents and teachers, parents better equipped to manage themselves and their children.

**References:**

- [Northern Education Initiative Plus](#)
- [Psychosocial Support and Emotional Learning](#)
- Project based field-based monitoring report of instructional radio/TV lessons (NEI Plus 2020)

## ROOM TO READ: LITERACY AND GIRLS' EDUCATION PROGRAMS

<b>Implementers:</b> Room to Read		<b>Location/s:</b> Sixteen countries worldwide
<b>Target Groups:</b> Primary school aged children; early adolescent and adolescent girls; educators	<b>Modalities:</b> Radio, TV, telephone/smart phone	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Relationships, emotions

**Description:** Room to Read aims to create positive change for millions of low-income communities by focusing on literacy and gender equality through education. The *Girls' Education Program* provides local mentors to help girls succeed in and complete secondary school by offering life skills lessons, mentoring, as well as opportunities for family and community engagement. Additionally, through government and local partnerships, the *Literacy Program* provides regular professional development for educators, creates context-relevant books and curricula, and establishes local libraries to support literacy development among primary school-aged children.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** While these programs were designed to be delivered in person, Room to Read has rapidly adapted to COVID-19 using a multi-phase approach that delivers both life skills and literacy content through multiple modalities. In phase 1, they focused on uploading local language storybooks and read-alouds developed as part of the *Literacy Program* to a digital platform ([literacycloud.org](http://literacycloud.org)). For the *Girls' Education Program*, Room to Read's social mobilizers (local mentors) reached out to the girls that either had phones or could gain access to them (through family members, friends, or others) to offer one-on-one mentoring, focused primarily on well-being but also encouraging continued engagement in academics. Mentoring sessions tended to last no more than 15 minutes because many girls were using borrowed phones. In phase 2, Room to Read, in partnership with ministries of education and local radio and television stations, delivered literacy broadcasts (e.g., literacy lessons, read-alouds, literacy tips for caregivers, and life skills lesson broadcasts). In some cases, they reached out directly to stations themselves. During phase 3, Room to Read used a range of distribution channels to deliver hard copies of materials (books, worksheets, and self-guided lessons) focused on both literacy and life skills lessons. Individual mentoring via smartphone or telephone for the *Girls' Education Program* also continued. Now in phase 4, Room to Read is looking to deepen the use of interactive radio/audio programming and other distance learning methods to deliver literacy and life skills content to participants. Room to Read is also integrating more SEL into their books and literacy interventions. **The strong emphasis that the Girls Education Program continues to place on mentoring using local social organizers provides support for the importance of building and strengthening relationships during a time of crisis.**

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Infrastructure for digital delivery of literacy and life skills resources and access to a phone (preferably a smartphone) for the *Girls' Education Program*. Infrastructure for radio or TV broadcasting and online learning.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** The greatest challenge Room to Read faced was accessing participants—especially the girls in the *Girls' Education Program*. Not all children and youth are able to access digital resources to obtain storybooks or lessons, and not all girls have access to a phone for sessions.

**Evidence and Impact:** Although there is no evidence yet about the impact of the COVID-19 adaptations on learner outcomes, monitoring data gathered through June 2020 suggests that Room to Read has attained a 70 percent coverage rate in the *Girls' Education Program*, meaning that 70 percent of pre-COVID-19 participants (children or youth and girls) have received either literacy or mentoring support since COVID-19 began (weighted average across countries). More than 72,000 mentoring sessions with more than 28,000 girls have occurred through the *Girls' Education Program* (all girls have received at least one session and many have received two or more). Additionally, Room to Read has reached primary school children with literacy interventions during this period. Like other programs, Room to Read is beginning to consider strategies for assessing learning outcomes across both programs but has not yet begun this work with learners. Nevertheless, its extensive reach and engagement through digital platforms, one-on-one mentoring, radio, and TV are promising.

**References:**

- [2018 Research, Monitoring, & Evaluation Report: Literacy Program](#)
- [2018 Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Report: Girls' Education Program](#)

## PASSPORT TO SUCCESS TRAVELER – LIFE SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

<b>Implementers:</b> International Youth Foundation (IYF)		<b>Locations:</b> More than 50 countries in English, Spanish (Latin America), Hinglish (Hindi in Roman characters), and Modern Standard Arabic (Fall 2020).
<b>Target Groups:</b> Youth 16-24 or youth 16-35 most broadly;	<b>Modality(s):</b> Mobile phone,	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> The course aligns with several personality and life

<p>Passport to Success (PTS) Traveler has been designed for the unique experience of young women in the workplace but is able to support the learning goals of all genders.</p>	<p>tablet, or computer; online through Learning Management System</p>	<p>skills frameworks, including IYF's Life Skills Framework, HEXACO Personality Inventory, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, US Common Core Standards, and CTE Employability Skills.</p>
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**Description:** Passport to Success® (PTS) Traveler is an online, mobile-optimized, game-based course that serves thousands of young people each month through this exciting, engaging online modality. This course, a partnership through IYF and PepsiCo Foundation, helps bridge the life skills gap between current employment opportunities and young jobseekers.

Youth travel the world to exciting new places as they learn about different jobs and build their career skills. As learners progress through the program, they earn stamps on their PTS—encouraging them to continue their global journey of life skill development. In total, PTS Traveler represents 10+ hours in online course material. To date, the course has been tested with 1,000+ young people and has been met with a positive response. More than 83% of testers indicated they found the course helpful, 85% said they enjoyed the course, and 82% would recommend the course to a friend.

PTS Traveler is designed to bring innovative game-based learning to young people and to classrooms. The modular design and interactive nature of PTS Traveler allows teachers to vary instruction in the classroom through blended learning, which combines in-person instruction and online materials. The course is accessible through IYF's Learning Management System, Atlas, along with trainer support materials for facilitators using a blended learning approach. For young people using PTS Traveler in self-guided learning environments, the course is customizable to allow for personalized learning.

In addition to the modern design of PTS Traveler for online and blended learning, the PTS Traveler units were designed in alignment with the pedagogy of the PTS in-person curriculum. PTS is rooted in positive youth development principles, experiential learning, and the constructivist approach to learning. PTS Traveler incorporates positive youth development by seeing young people as the drivers and directors of their learning.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** More than a dozen of IYF's in-person programs elected to pivot to using the virtual version of PTS to meet the skill development needs of young people while face-to-face engagements were paused. IYF staff has accelerated the creation of resources to support distance learning blended scenarios. The tool now serves as a plug and play resource for programs, partners, and youth participants as they look to bridge distance learning needs.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** PTS Traveler is available for free to the direct end user and/or organization. Additional resources such as reporting, assessment, user management, and beyond are available for an additional rate. In order to access PTS Traveler, users must have a smartphone, tablet, or laptop/desktop device and consistent access to a live internet connection. Users should have a basic understanding of technology devices – swiping, tapping, dragging – and a 7<sup>th</sup> grade or equivalent reading level.

**Evidence and Impact:** PTS Traveler was built on the 15+ years of data that informed instructor-led PTS, as well as, IYF's previous distance learning engagements over the last 5 years. In fall 2020, IYF will begin a detailed evaluation of the course and has been excited to date to hear early findings from projects using PTS Traveler. PTS Traveler has been used by more than 12,000 learners since its launch in January 2020. Approximately half of these users are through IYF-managed projects with the other half accessing as a direct youth or practitioner.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** PTS Traveler requires users to have a basic understanding of digital tools, a live Internet connection, and a smartphone, tablet, or laptop/desktop device. While PTS Traveler has a completion rate double the industry standard, more opportunities should be explored to improve participant completion rates.

**Gender, Inclusion, and Equity Focus:** PTS Traveler is designed to be gender smart and feature representations of women in nontraditional industries and in positions of power. Specific content, such as the



Gender Ambassador unit, deal with topics around gender dynamics in the workplace and at home. The course is inclusive of representations of different genders, races, religions, ages, and abilities. PTS Traveler sought to ensure approximately 10% of the characters have physical or nonphysical disabilities, showcase countries and characters from those countries in both developing and developed countries, and include a cast of characters that felt authentic to those countries in each unit.

**References:**

- [Passport to Success Traveler](#)

## RETURN TO LEARNING

<b>Implementers:</b> Save the Children		<b>Location(s):</b> Arauca & Cali, Colombia
<b>Target Groups (i.e. age):</b> Venezuelan refugee and Colombian host community children ages 4-15	<b>Distance Learning Modalities:</b> Paper-based materials for children and caregivers; Podcasts and audio messages (sent via WhatsApp)	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Prosocial communication; Emotional regulation

**Description:** The Return to Learning (RtL) program is a short-term (six weeks) bridging program that provides quick access to education as longer-term opportunities are identified. With the goal of reducing the amount of time that forcibly displaced children have without access to education, the program aligns with the goals outlined in the United Nations’ 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, which calls on countries to provide refugees with access to education within three months of arrival. In rapid onset emergencies, RtL is implemented in any safe community space, while in protracted crises, it is often implemented as an after-school remedial program to support displaced and host community children who are enrolled in formal school but need catch-up support, and those at risk of dropping out. The program includes toolkits of play-based learning activities to support basic literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional skills. There are three activity packs designed for varying developmental levels: Emergent (ages 4-6), Foundational (ages 7-11), and Advanced (ages 12-15). RtL includes the Holistic Assessment of Learning and Development Outcomes, which gives community-based facilitators an overview of children’s literacy, numeracy, and SEL skills in an effort to help them make informed programming decisions tailored to children’s learning and wellbeing needs. Over the past year, we have been using this program as a remedial intervention with Venezuelan migrant and at-risk host community children in several communities in Colombia.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** In response to COVID-19 school closures, Save the Children in Colombia rapidly adapted the RtL program to remote implementation to reach children in Arauca and Cali at home. The program materials for remote implementation include: (1) A paper-based child activity pack for self-learning (with caregiver support), (2) An accompanying paper-based caregiver guide to help caregivers support children’s learning at home, and (3) A Positive Parenting Podcast series called *Yo crio con Amor/I grow with Love* that is shared with caregivers via WhatsApp. In addition to positive parenting strategies, the podcasts include health and hygiene messages related to COVID-19 and other disease prevention and stories that caregivers can listen to with children. Save the Children trained caregivers on how to use the paper-based, self-learning materials via WhatsApp videos. For families who do not have smart phones, in-person training was conducted with strict compliance to physical distancing measures. Save the Children also adapted to a remote monitoring and evaluation approach that includes baseline-endline assessment and weekly check-in calls with caregivers via WhatsApp.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** RtL materials must be culturally appropriate and conflict sensitive to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of children. The program materials are currently available in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Hausa. We plan to contextualize and translate the materials into French, Portuguese, Kurdish, and other languages prevalent in displacement settings. In recognition that school closures due to COVID-19 may

continue to affect children into 2021, Save the Children plans to create additional RtL activities for each of the activity packs. This will ensure that children who experience longer delays in re-entering long-term non-formal and formal education opportunities are able to continue participating in the RtL program while they remain out of school.

**Evidence and Impact:** Save the Children measures children’s prosocial communication and emotional regulation while they engage in RtL activities. We also monitor children’s learning via weekly check-in calls and comprehension questions based on activity content. During the calls, caregivers are asked to engage their child in a simple learning activity with a comprehension question and report whether their child responds correctly to the question. Comprehension questions address basic literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional skills. During the weekly calls, we also measure children’s and caregivers’ engagement with the learning content, and collect children and caregivers’ perspectives on the content and remote approach. Emerging program results are contributing to an increased understanding of how to adapt remote learning content and implementation modalities to best meet the learning and wellbeing needs of displaced and out-of-school children while building caregivers’ capacity as frontline educators. Save the Children has completed a report with results from the first and second cohort of children who participated in the pilot program. We used the Social-Emotional Competence Scale to measure change in children’s wellbeing outcomes (as measured by prosocial communication and emotional regulation) from baseline to endline. All children (n=120) reported gains in emotional regulation skills, as reported by caregivers. Overall caregiver engagement in the learning content was high; 81% of caregivers in cohort one and 90% of caregivers in cohort two reported helping their child with at-home learning content. Parental engagement, measured by number of times caregivers report using at home content with their children, was directly correlated with higher wellbeing outcomes. To measure whether programming is equitably reaching children, we analyzed results of the Social Competence Scale and the learning checks based on age, sex, socio-economic status, nationality, and location.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** One challenge the team has encountered is the availability of caregivers to engage children in the learning activity and comprehension questions during weekly check-in calls. The RtL facilitators addressed this challenge by adapting to make calls outside of work hours to better meet caregivers’ availability. Another challenge is that some caregivers are illiterate, making it difficult to support their children’s learning. This challenge has been addressed by sending videos and voice notes over WhatsApp and making in-person visits to caregivers when necessary. A risk to consider with any remote/at-home education programming is that children’s home environment may not be protective and conducive to learning. The adapted RtL program is addressing this with the Positive Parenting podcast series and regular check-ins with caregivers. In addition to providing caregivers with positive parenting tips, we are also asking what other types of support caregivers need to help them provide support to children’s learning and wellbeing at home.

**References:**

- [Save the Children Program Google Drive Folder](#)
- For more information, contact Emily Varni ([evarni@savethechildren.com](mailto:evarni@savethechildren.com)) or Ayse Kocak ([Ayse.Kocak@savethechildren.org](mailto:Ayse.Kocak@savethechildren.org)).

## SCHOOL/LEARNING SPACE LEVEL

### INEE PSS/SEL TEACHER TRAINING MODULE

<b>Implementers:</b> INEE Partners		<b>Locations:</b> Various
<b>Target Groups:</b> Teachers and Educators	<b>Modality(s):</b> Zoom (online)	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making



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**Description:** This module outlines 3 hours (180 minutes) of training activities and materials related to psychosocial support (PSS) and social and emotional learning (SEL) in emergency contexts. It includes supplementary activities to further understanding of PSS-SEL concepts, for an extended duration of 5 hours (270 minutes). The Facilitator Guide provides the materials, facilitator notes (including main ideas and activity instructions), and a suggested script for the accompanying presentation. Facilitators are encouraged to first review the instructions prior to training, which provide guidance for contextualization of the training resources.

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**COVID-19 Specifics:** INEE is currently piloting delivery of the INEE Minimum Standards training through Zoom. In addition to this, they are planning to deliver thematic training, which will include a PSS & SEL session. While the session will be based on the PSS-SEL training module mentioned above, they are hoping to make each online training more targeted, depending on the audience.

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**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Internet infrastructure; access to an Internet-ready device.

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**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Challenges of access and quality of Internet connection.

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**Evidence and Impact:** While some pilots of the INEE PSS-SEL module have been conducted, outcomes and impacts remain internal at this time.

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**References:**

- [INEE PSS-SEL Training Module](#)
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## BANGLADESH EDUCATION PROGRAM (BEP) - HOME-SCHOOL

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<b>Implementers:</b> BRAC		<b>Locations:</b> Bangladesh
<b>Target Groups:</b> Children ages 0-12 and teachers/educators	<b>Modality(s):</b> Phone	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> empathy, compassion, caring for others, maintaining relationships

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**Description:** BEP was initially launched as BRAC Non-Formal Primary Education in 1985. The program is currently active in five major areas: non-formal primary education, pre-primary schools, adolescent development, multi-purpose community learning centers, and mainstream secondary school support. All learning is aligned with national curricula.

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**COVID-19 Specifics:** The BEP developed a home-school learning group approach in which the national curriculum is adapted for a home-schooling environment. Teachers are remotely trained by phone and then call students in learning groups of 3-4 once or twice a week for 15-20 minutes at a time. The content of these weekly lessons includes psychosocial support and COVID-19-related content (e.g., physical distancing, hygiene), as well as key subjects such as Bangla, English, and mathematics. Children in the learning groups are able to both receive information as well as interact with each other through group calling technology.

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**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Telecommunication infrastructure; access to phone.

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**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Shorter learning time and less teacher-student contact; poor network connections in remote locations; talk time cost.

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**Evidence and Impact:** While there is no evidence on this new approach, there is ample evidence on the BEP program in general.

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**References:**

- [Keep Children Learning – Part 1: Distance Education in No \(Low\) Digital Areas](#)
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- [BRAC Education Programme, Bangladesh](#)

## AFGHAN CHILDREN READ

<b>Implementers:</b> Creative Associates International		<b>Locations:</b> Afghanistan: Kabul (including Kabul city), Laghman, Nangarhar, and Herat
<b>Target Groups:</b> Grade 1-3 students and their parents and their teachers	<b>Modality(s):</b> Interactive Voice Response (IVR)/SMS; radio; social media; phone calls; supplementary reading materials (SRMs)	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children: executive function - “brain building,” emotion regulation, social support, responsible decision making, perseverance, cultural and social identity</li> <li>• Parents: positive discipline, positive coping, modeling, mindfulness</li> <li>• Children &amp; Parents: mindfulness, self-care</li> </ul>

**Description:** Afghan Children Read is a USAID-funded primary education initiative designed to improve equitable access to education and generate measurable improvements in reading outcomes for girls and boys in Afghanistan. The project supports education service delivery through building the capacity of the Ministry of Education of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to provide an evidence-based early grade reading program (in Dari and Pashto) for students in Grades 1 to 3 in both formal and Community-Based Education schools.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** This initiative uses Facebook posts to send tips to parents and help them to support their children’s early grade reading and social and emotional learning; SRMs in response to COVID-19 are scheduled to be posted on digitally on the Ministry website

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** SEL expertise and early grade reading expertise, particularly pedagogy and curriculum development; technological capacity to send IVR/SMS and access for target populations to receive them; infrastructural capacity to print and distribute SRMs.

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** Lack of access to mobile technology or internet services; inability to reach girls/women in target communities due to cultural taboos; challenges of distribution during the pandemic; difficult for a large-scale effort to ensure SEL reflects diversity of needs among families and communities.

**Recommendations:** Continue to incorporate SEL into early grade reading materials – both for in-school and at-home learning. As in the classroom, SEL skills can be learned simultaneously with reading and writing while at-home and distance learning is in place. All distance learning in an environment such as Afghanistan needs to acknowledge the realities of access to any form of distance modalities, to security related to internet monitoring and to the ability of women to access IVR/SMS or direct phone calls because of close monitoring by male family members and adapt with culturally effective approaches.

**Gender, Inclusion, and Equity Focus:** Critical consideration of how to reach populations that may not have access to chosen communication channels due to social and cultural restrictions

**References:**

- [Working in Afghanistan to Support Education During COVID-19](#)

# FAMILY LEVEL PROGRAMS

## HEALING AND EDUCATION THROUGH THE ARTS (HEART)

<b>Implementers:</b> Save the Children		<b>Locations:</b> Various
<b>Target Groups:</b> Children ages 3-18 and caregivers	<b>Modality(s):</b> Radio	<b>SEL Domains/Skills Targeted:</b> Self-regulation, co-regulation, stress management, creativity

**Description:** Through painting, music, drama, and many other art forms, the HEART program aims to help children affected by serious or chronic stress find new ways to share their feelings and experiences. The program trains teachers, facilitators, and caregivers on how to lead and support children in these various activities.

**COVID-19 Specifics:** The program has been adapted into a radio series with short activities for children and caregivers to do together or alone to help relieve stress during lockdown. The activities are designed to be done in small homes and at no cost and are broadcast on national and local radio and recorded with children themselves to encourage others to take part.

**Gender, Inclusion and Equity:** This particular approach specifically addresses the digital divide by ensuring that children who do not have access to the Internet, an Internet-ready device, or TV can still access learning through basic radio communication.

**Resources and Capacity Needed:** Radio broadcast infrastructure; access to a radio

**COVID-19-related Challenges and Risks:** As the program is focused on supporting children experiencing adversity, this must not be treated like an art-therapy program or clinical/specialized Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Network approach. Content would not be accessible to individuals with auditory impairments without assistance.

**Evidence and Impact:** There is no evidence on this new iteration, however evidence does exist to support the HEART program in general.

**References:**

- [Healing and Education Through the Arts \(HEART\)](#)
- [Save our Education: Protect Every Child’s Right to Learn in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery](#)
- [Malawi ELM & HEART Endline Analysis](#)

## ANNEX 3: PROGRAM DELIVERY MODE AND TARGET AUDIENCES

Program Name and Implementer	Delivery Modes	Primary Target Audience
<b>INEE PSS/SEL Teacher Training Module</b> INEE Partners	Online (Zoom)	Educators
<b>Transforming Refugee Education towards Excellence (TREE)</b> Save the Children and the Jordanian Ministry of Education in partnership with Community, Jameel, Dubai Cares, Jameel World Education Lab, and Hikma Pharmaceuticals	Online	Educators
<b>Injaz</b> Chemonics	WhatsApp	Child and youth age 6-17
<b>SEL and School Climate Project: A Learning Journey and specifically the Virtual Support Activity</b> USAID/Tanzania <i>Tusome Pamoja</i> Project	SMS messaging WhatsApp Online audio/video	Educators
<b>Ahlan Simsim</b> Sesame Workshop and International Rescue Committee	National television Storybooks Educational materials Caregiver training/support	Children ages 3–8
<b>Tiyende!</b> Save the Children	Radio/audio Mobile phone In-person lessons	Children ages 4–5
<b>Bangladesh Education Program (BEP) – Home-school</b> BRAC	Phone	Children and youth ages 0–12 Educators
<b>Better Learning Program (BLP)</b> Norwegian Refugee Council	Online Phone calls WhatsApp	Primary-school-age children Educators Caregivers
<b>Social and Emotional Learning in Emergencies</b> FHI 360, Education in Emergencies	Text messaging Radio Online Television	Children and youth Parents and caregivers School stakeholders
<b>Tunakujenga</b> Ubongo and IRC	Tablets Television Social media Print materials	Primary-school-age children Caregivers
<b>Play at Home Games for Health and Well-Being during the COVID-19 Outbreak</b> Right To Play	Social media Radio Television Print materials	Pre-primary and primary school-age children Caregivers
<b>Supporting Children who have gone through Difficult Experiences: Manual for Humanitarian Aid &amp; Development Workers</b> Plan International	Online Audio guides Video Social media Print materials	Humanitarian aid and development workers Education personnel Caregivers Anyone else supporting children

<b>Program Name and Implementer</b>	<b>Delivery Modes</b>	<b>Primary Target Audience</b>
<b>Room to Read</b> Room to Read	Radio Television Phone/smartphone	Primary-school-age children Secondary-school-age girls
<b>Accessing Quality Basic Education in Iraq II</b> Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Social media WhatsApp Internet (Bluetooth or local cloud) Print materials	Children Educators
<b>Northern Education Initiative Plus</b> Creative Associates International	Radio IVR WhatsApp Facebook SMS Zoom	Formal and informal learners Caregivers Educators School stakeholders
<b>Passport to Success Traveler</b> International Youth Foundation	Mobile Phone Tablet Computer	Youth
<b>Afghan Children Read</b> Creative Associates International	IVR SMS Radio Social Media Phone	Primary school-age children Caregivers Educators
<b>Healing and Education Through the Arts</b> Save the Children	Radio	Children and Youth Caregivers

## ANNEX 4: ANNOTATED LIST OF RELEVANT RESOURCES AND WEBINARS

Exhibit 2: COVID-19-specific resources

Resource Title	Link/s to Resource	Brief Description of Resource
INEE Technical Note on Education During COVID-19	<a href="https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/INEE%20Technical%20Note%20on%20COVID-19%20EN%202020-04-23.pdf">https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/INEE%20Technical%20Note%20on%20COVID-19%20EN%202020-04-23.pdf</a>	This living document offers guidance and resources for how to respond rapidly to the changing situation presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the goal of effectively supporting the well-being and learning opportunities of children and youth. Strategic response planning guidance is also provided for practitioners in both formal and non-formal learning spaces. The first step in response guidance is self-care.
Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) Interim Briefing Note: Addressing MHPSS Aspects of COVID-19 Outbreak VI.5	<a href="https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/IASC%20Interim%20Briefing%20Note%20on%20COVID-19%20Outbreak%20Readiness%20and%20Response%20Operations%20-%20MHPSS_0.pdf">https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/IASC%20Interim%20Briefing%20Note%20on%20COVID-19%20Outbreak%20Readiness%20and%20Response%20Operations%20-%20MHPSS_0.pdf</a>	This document highlights key considerations around mental health and psychosocial support during COVID-19. Specific recommendations include attending to the broader context in the response to COVID-19, coordinating services and practices in all response activities, building on local infrastructures, and creating protective environments.
CASEL COVID-19 Resources page	<a href="https://casel.org/covid-resources/">https://casel.org/covid-resources/</a>	This page offers a set of guidelines for educators, parents, and caregivers for keeping SEL front and center during COVID-19. There is also a range of COVID-19-specific resources around topics like SEL at home, self-care strategies, distance learning, actions for equity, and talking with children about COVID-19.
INEE COVID-19 Resources page	<a href="https://inee.org/covid-19/resources">https://inee.org/covid-19/resources</a>	This site is designed to provide practical and technical support to practitioners who continue to provide education and support to children and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic. The site includes resources around mental health and psychosocial support, distance education and distance education platforms, and gender and inclusion, among others.
Reunite, Renew, and Thrive: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)	<a href="https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SEL-ROADMAP.pdf">https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SEL-ROADMAP.pdf</a>	This resource guide offers school leaders and administrators a set of critical SEL practices designed to promote equity and healing as schools prepare to re-open. Recommendations are centered around building

Resource Title	Link/s to Resource	Brief Description of Resource
Roadmap for Reopening School		strong relationships and on existing strengths of school communities.
Learning Must Go On: Recommendations for keeping children safe and learning\ during and after the COVID-19 crisis	<a href="https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Learning%20must%20go%20on%2C%20COVID-19%20advocacy%20brief_v20200409.pdf">https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Learning%20must%20go%20on%2C%20COVID-19%20advocacy%20brief_v20200409.pdf</a>	This document provides recommendations and resources for governments and donors on delivering distance learning and offering safe and inclusive learning for all children. In particular, protecting individual well-being, addressing the needs of marginalized children and youth, and supporting teachers and parents are emphasized.
Save the Children's COVID-19: Interactive Radio & Audio Instruction (IRI): Implementation Guidance	<a href="https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17890/pdf/learn_covid-19_tool_interactive_radio_and_audio_instruction_implementation_guidance.pdf">https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17890/pdf/learn_covid-19_tool_interactive_radio_and_audio_instruction_implementation_guidance.pdf</a>	This document offers guidance for program administrators and implementers on the implementation of interactive radio instruction (IRA) and the use of radio programming for education in the context of COVID-19.
Save the Children Save our Education Report	<a href="https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17871/pdf/save_our_education_0.pdf">https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17871/pdf/save_our_education_0.pdf</a>	This report discusses evidence of the likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and describes several steps that governments and donors should take to overcome the crisis, including developing and implementing an education plan, investing in education, delivering education to all children, making sure all children are safe and healthy both in and out of school, and tracking both the implementation and outcomes of actions.
Technical Note: Protection of Children during the Coronavirus Pandemic V2	<a href="https://alliancecpha.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/the_alliance_covid_19_tn_version_2_05.27.20_final_2.pdf?file=1&amp;type=node&amp;id=37184">https://alliancecpha.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/the_alliance_covid_19_tn_version_2_05.27.20_final_2.pdf?file=1&amp;type=node&amp;id=37184</a>	This technical note offers guiding principles for responding to COVID-19, with particular attention to the socio-ecological impact. Recommendations include a focus on the best interest of the child, engagement of all levels of the child's context, continuity of care and protection across formal and non-formal contexts, and measurement of progress.



Exhibit 3: Other relevant resources for SEL in emergency situations

Resource Title	Link/s to Resource	Brief Description of Resource
INEE Guidance Note on PSS and SEL	<a href="https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/INEE_Guidance_Note_on_Psychosocial_Support_ENG_v2.pdf">https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/INEE_Guidance_Note_on_Psychosocial_Support_ENG_v2.pdf</a>	This document offers strategies for incorporating psychosocial support and social and emotional learning in crisis settings. Strategies are categorized in five domains and include resources and information on foundational standards, attention to access and learning environments, teaching and learning, teachers or other education personnel, and education policy.
USAID Delivering Distance Learning in Emergencies	<a href="https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/DELIVERING%20DISTANCE%20LEARNING%20IN%20EMERGENCIES.pdf">https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/DELIVERING%20DISTANCE%20LEARNING%20IN%20EMERGENCIES.pdf</a>	This review describes distance learning modalities for continuity of education during emergencies and offers key considerations as well as evidence of effectiveness for each modality. The review concludes with a set of nine strategic recommendations around stability, resumption of in-person learning, and multi-modal delivery approaches.
SEL and PSS Measurement and Assessment Tools in Education in Emergencies: Identifying, Analyzing, and Mapping Tools to Global Guidance Documents	<a href="https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/SEL%20and%20PSS%20Measurement%20and%20Assessment%20Tools%20in%20Education%20in%20Emergencies.pdf">https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/SEL%20and%20PSS%20Measurement%20and%20Assessment%20Tools%20in%20Education%20in%20Emergencies.pdf</a>	This report offers a review of measurement tools, frameworks, and program approaches to understanding and assessing SEL, PSS, and academic learning in emergency situations.
Save the Children's Social Emotional Learning Distance Learning Activity Pack	<a href="https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17890/pdf/sel_distance_learning_resource_pack.pdf">https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17890/pdf/sel_distance_learning_resource_pack.pdf</a>	This resource provides a set of activities intended to support distance learning opportunities for children and youth, with a particular focus on SEL activities in radio education programming. Suggestions for measuring learning and well-being are also provided.

Exhibit 4: Relevant webinars on delivering SEL and education during COVID-19

Resource Title	Link/s to Resource
INEE Webinar: Providing PSS-SEL support for learners during COVID-19	<a href="https://inee.org/resources/providing-pss-sel-support-learners-during-covid-19">https://inee.org/resources/providing-pss-sel-support-learners-during-covid-19</a>
INEE Webinar: Ensuring Inclusive Education during COVID-19	<a href="https://inee.org/resources/ensuring-inclusive-education-during-covid-19">https://inee.org/resources/ensuring-inclusive-education-during-covid-19</a>
INEE Webinar: Distance learning during COVID-19: continuing education in low resource and low-tech environments	<a href="https://inee.org/resources/distance-learning-during-covid-19-continuing-education-low-resource-and-low-tech">https://inee.org/resources/distance-learning-during-covid-19-continuing-education-low-resource-and-low-tech</a>
INEE Webinar: Learning Through Play during COVID-19	<a href="https://inee.org/events/learning-through-play-during-covid-19">https://inee.org/events/learning-through-play-during-covid-19</a>
INEE Webinar: Arts in education during COVID-19: Illustrating the value of creativity and adaptability	<a href="https://inee.org/events/arts-education-during-covid-19-illustrating-value-creativity-and-adaptability">https://inee.org/events/arts-education-during-covid-19-illustrating-value-creativity-and-adaptability</a>
CASEL webinar: Leveraging SEL to re-open and re-new your school community during COVID-19	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hk8rXIOesy8&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hk8rXIOesy8&amp;feature=youtu.be</a> Slides for presentation: <a href="https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CASEL-CARES-Leveraging-SEL-to-Renew-and-Reopen-.pdf">https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CASEL-CARES-Leveraging-SEL-to-Renew-and-Reopen-.pdf</a>
CASEL Webinar: Distance learning across the education sector: Social & emotional supports from private, charter, & public schools co-hosted with Thomas B. Fordham Institute	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANEwg4Cmpd8&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANEwg4Cmpd8&amp;feature=youtu.be</a>
CASEL Webinar: So, what now? Support SEL at home featuring Jennifer Miller	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8W-GkIHGX0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8W-GkIHGX0</a> Slides for presentation: <a href="https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CASEL-CARES-Self-care.pdf">https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CASEL-CARES-Self-care.pdf</a>
CASEL Webinar: SEL as a lever for equity and social justice	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPWrnBA2274&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPWrnBA2274&amp;feature=youtu.be</a> Slides for presentation: <a href="https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SEL-as-Lever-for-Equity-Slides.pdf">https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SEL-as-Lever-for-Equity-Slides.pdf</a>

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<https://www.youthpower.org/soft-skills-positive-youth-development>