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Building effective COVID-19 Education Response Plans: Insights from Africa and Asia

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Version 1

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Table of contents

Executive Summary	4
The approach to building COVID-19 education response plans	4
The components of COVID-19 education response plans	4
Strategies for reaching learners, teachers, and parents through COVID-19 education response plans	5
Introduction	6
1. Approach to building a COVID-19 education response plan	8
1.1. Create trust through transparency	8
1.2. Build in operational resilience	8
1.3. Leverage existing resources	9
1.4. Acknowledge and address shifts in student and family behaviours	9
1.5. Make room for adaptation	10
2. Components of COVID-19 education response plans	11
2.1. Status of COVID-19 pandemic	11
2.2. Data on learners and teachers	11
2.3. Description of target groups	11
2.4. Objectives and implementable framework	12
2.5. Budget	13
2.6. Level of support provided by development partners	15
2.7. Monitoring and reporting plan	16
2.8. Risk-mitigation framework	17
2.9. Information on reopening schools	18
2.10. Learning gaps assessment	19
3. Strategies for reaching learners, teachers and parents through COVID-19 education response plans	21
3.1. Learners: Use a multimodal approach to reach all learners	21
3.2. Marginalised learners: Ensure hard-to-reach groups are explicitly targeted	22
3.3. Teachers and school leaders: Provide professional development support	22
3.4. Parents and caregivers: Recognise holistic family needs	23
3.5. Media: Collaborate on back-to-school campaigns	24
References and links	25

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the education of almost 1.5 billion learners in nearly 200 countries (UNESCO, 2020). Countries have responded rapidly to this crisis, designing alternative education plans in an attempt to maintain continuity of education service provision. This brief contains the results of an analysis of 13 national COVID-19 education response plans from across Africa and Asia.

This analysis highlights three elements which should be considered when building a COVID-19 education response plan:

The approach to building COVID-19 education response plans

Section 1 describes how governments should develop plans that balance short term response with long term strategic impact. This approach will serve to address urgent needs while building more resilient education systems. Section 1 recommends that plans be:

- based on data and evidence, and made accessible to all stakeholders
- include short-, medium- and long-term initiatives and be designed to take advantage of existing resources
- include actions to support students who have to change schools or drop out due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their parents

The components of COVID-19 education response plans

Section 2 describes the key categories of COVID-19 education sector response plans. In this section, we outline the structure of clear, evidence-based response plans. Section 2 recommends that plans should:

- include detailed data on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on learners and teachers
- define objectives and break them down into an implementable framework
- identify budget and human resource needs
- include a monitoring and reporting plan as well as a risk-mitigation framework for any arising issues during implementation
- include a learning gaps assessment plan to determine learning support provision for students in need

Strategies for reaching learners, teachers, and parents through COVID-19 education response plans

Section 3 describes how to address the needs of learners, teachers and parents to ensure continuity of learning and a safe return to school. Section 3 concludes that plans should:

- identify interventions addressing the needs of marginalised learners
- include training for teachers and school leaders on the use of ICT in education

Effective Practices for Building a COVID-19 Education Response Plan

- consider the needs of affected children and families with schemes like school meals and the provision of psychosocial support
- include ways of collaborating with the media on back-to-school campaigns designed to inform, change attitudes and model behavior

Introduction

Every country across the globe has been touched by COVID-19, forcing governments to rapidly re-imagine a new world of learning. School closures have affected over 1.2 billion learners,¹ nearly 70% of the world's student population (UNESCO, 2020). Although necessary to protect the lives of young people, these school closures have adverse effects, particularly among marginalised learners. In addition to learning loss, students can be impacted by poor nutrition, increased exposure to violence and exploitation, and social isolation (UNESCO, 2020).

Education response plans are an integral part of any government strategy to support learners during the COVID-19 crisis. Education response plans provide various benefits including:

- aligning efforts among key stakeholders within a national education system to ensure continuity of learning, especially for the most vulnerable
- reassuring stakeholder groups by creating clear expectations of all actors
- providing key stakeholders with guidance so that they can focus their energy most effectively.

This topic brief examines various national COVID-19 response plans from around the world to identify effective practices emerging in response to COVID-19. To inform the brief, we conducted a rapid review of education response plans from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) across Africa and Asia. However, the recommendations highlighted within are relevant to countries of all income levels around the world. We do not formally rate educational response plan quality, nor does inclusion in this brief constitute endorsement of any of the response plans reviewed.

¹ <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

Figure 1. Response plans reviewed to inform this topic brief

COVID-19 Education Response Plan: Review by Country			
<p>We evaluated COVID-19 response plans from 13 low and middle income countries (LMICs) in Africa and Asia. We selected plans that represented a geographic and income diversity, and had a strong focus on implementation. Our recommendations are based on effective practices summarised from these plans and existing EdTech Hub knowledge briefs.</p>			
Country Name	Continent	Country Income Level ²	Country Plan
Afghanistan	Asia	Low income	Link
Bhutan	Asia	Lower-middle income	Link
The Gambia	Africa	Low income	Link
Ghana	Africa	Lower-middle income	Link
Malawi	Africa	Low income	Link
Nigeria	Africa	Lower-middle income	Link
Pakistan	Asia	Lower-middle income	Link
Rwanda	Africa	Low income	Link
Somalia	Africa	Low income	Link
South Sudan	Africa	Low income	Link
Uganda	Africa	Low income	Link
Zambia	Africa	Lower-middle income	Link
Zimbabwe	Africa	Lower-middle income	Link

² The country income level is based on [World Bank Country and Lending Groups 2020](#).

1. Approach to building a COVID-19 education response plan

When building COVID-19 education response plans, governments should consider how long-term goals relate to short-term COVID-19 strategies. The EdTech Hub previously shared guidance on how to limit the educational impact of the pandemic through response, recovery and reform (Haßler, Khalayleh & McBurnie, 2020). As a complement to that framework, this section explores how crisis-driven adaptations can ultimately create a stronger, more resilient, more inclusive education system.

1.1. Create trust through transparency

When requesting urgent collaboration and action, governments need the trust of their stakeholders. If plans are based on data and evidence, this can help to build trust. This will help stakeholders understand the scope of the challenges at hand and the role they can play to address the needs of learners. For example, Bhutan clearly outlines the expectations of national government personnel, local governments, schools, teachers, parents and students so they understand how each group will contribute to the continuity of learning (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2020). Stakeholders' confidence and support is dependent upon their ability to easily understand the vision and planned action. Using clear, simple language, and express ideas without jargon and without acronyms helps to facilitate this understanding.

1.2. Build in operational resilience

Forward thinking leaders must take advantage of the disruption caused by COVID-19 to redesign structures to protect against future threats. For most LMIC countries, the push to distance learning has exacerbated the digital divide. It has exposed weaknesses in the capability of education systems to support marginalised communities. Governments can use this experience to recognise gaps that exist for both educators and students. Interventions that will help build long-term capacity for remote education should be prioritised.

A strong plan will include a long-term vision for a world-class education that reaches all learners at all times. It will address the infrastructure and tools needed to execute this vision, and identify the human capital requirements needed to deliver this learning experience. It will focus on building the capacity of stakeholders to provide high-calibre remote learning.

Figure 2. Ghana: Building a Future-Ready Education System

Ghana's plan acknowledges that the pandemic has exposed weaknesses in their system's ability to respond to emergencies. They commit to leveraging COVID-19 interventions to improve opportunities for all learners, with a focus on marginalised groups like girls and students with special needs. To build a more resilient system,

Ghana calls for increased connectivity, assistive devices and accessibility tools.

Source: Ghana, 2020

1.3. Leverage existing resources

Before making costly investments in an attempt to implement remote learning, governments should leverage existing education system resources. For example, Pakistan encourages schools to utilise WhatsApp groups, SMS messages and television alert systems to reach students and families (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (Pakistan), 2020). School systems should leverage technologies that families and teachers already possess, like radios and televisions, to share content, and then reuse any audio or video content through online platforms. Governments may look for local partners like non-governmental organisations or private EdTech companies who can help reach learners and provide supplementary content. Governments should also identify private sector actors like telecommunications companies who can help reduce costs of accessing digital learning tools.

Only after exhausting existing options should governments plan to make additional investments in tools and infrastructure. Even at this time, they ensure that all spending has a high return on investment. According to the World Bank, the pandemic is expected to minimise increases in education spending in 2020 (Al-Samarrai, 2020). Additionally, spending will likely plateau or fall in 2021. Given the likelihood of these reductions, any resources used in the immediate response can be evaluated with cost-effectiveness and relevance to long-term impact in mind.

1.4. Acknowledge and address shifts in student and family behaviours

Many households in LMICs will suffer as a result of unemployment and underemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this loss of income, families may experience difficulties in meeting basic needs like food and shelter. Parents who previously sent their children to school may now expect them to obtain paid employment, or take on greater household responsibilities, resulting in lower enrolment rates. Girls will be particularly vulnerable to this situation, and dropout rates may increase across all levels of education. Additionally, parents may choose to transition their children from private schools to public schools in order to meet their family obligations. This will create further pressure on public education budgets at a time when funds are already scarce (Al-Samarrai, 2020). In Nigeria, the government is recruiting additional teachers to respond to the shifts in the system (Government of Nigeria, 2020).

Government must acknowledge these shifts in attitudes and behaviours in order to anticipate potential long term negative impacts on the education system and learners. It is imperative that response plans closely consider the various groups being addressed and how detrimental shifts in behaviour can be mitigated.

1.5. Make room for adaptation

Responses to COVID-19 are being designed amidst rapidly-changing national and international landscapes. Every week, more is learnt about the virus, and new evidence on education challenges is emerging. The most effective plans will be those plans that make flexible provisions, and offer possibilities for adapting as more is learnt about the virus and the risk it poses to education.

Figure 3. The Gambia: Planning for multiple potential scenarios

The Gambia initially closed schools for 21 days from March 18, 2020. At the time of designing their response plan, they did not have clarity into how long school closures might last. To build in room for adaptation, The Gambia plan is built upon three potential scenarios that focus on different levels of risk and duration of school closures.

Source: The Gambia, 2020

2. Components of COVID-19 education response plans

The clearest COVID-19 response plans are those that use high quality data to position actions and recommendations. This section provides an overview of key elements of COVID-19 response plans. This ranges from the types of data to that might be included in plans to clearly defining the objectives and identifying the budget.

2.1. Status of COVID-19 pandemic

In order to provide a clear justification of the need for a response plan it is important to outline the impact of the COVID-19 on the country. Included in this outline should be a description of the impact of the crisis on the education sector, particularly the current situation. This will allow programme designers to cohesively link the actions outlined in their plans to the way in which learners, teachers and parents are effected. It is also important to note when the education response plan was developed (e.g. the month) and any processes that might be in place to update the plan as the COVID-19 crisis evolves. This section should typically contain information on the following; overall total cases, recovered cases, active cases, number of tests conducted, number of deaths. It would be helpful to provide a link where the updated information on COVID for that particular country can be accessed. We note that none of the plans considered offer a section on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2. Data on learners and teachers

The information on different groups of learners and teachers, including how they have been affected by COVID-19, should be incorporated in the response plan. Where data is available, this information includes all core education data disaggregated by gender or marginalised groups (internally displaced people, girls, ethnic minorities and students with disabilities). The data includes the rates and percentages of student enrolment, student promotion rates, repetition rates, completion rates and dropout rates. Other information to include is the number of schools, the number of teachers and the pupil-teacher ratios. The number of students per classroom, ICT infrastructure per student ratio, textbooks per student ratio, availability of water and toilet facilities should also be included.

Highlighting this data helps both the plan designers and eventual readers to better understand how COVID-19 has impacted education services. This data can then also be used to inform planning on how to reach different groups of students throughout the course of the epidemic.

2.3. Description of target groups

A description of the different groups of learners and teachers targeted under the plan is included. Particular attention is paid to learners with special needs and other marginalised groups. Factors to be considered when defining target groups includes income levels and

housing arrangements (e.g., formal or informal); urban, peri-urban, semi-urban or rural settings; and access to technologies like smartphones, feature-phones, radio, television, laptops, desktops and internet. Examples of response plans that describe target groups well include those from South Sudan, Afghanistan and Malawi (South Sudan Education Cluster, 2020, p.8; Ministry of Education (Afghanistan), 2020, p.2; Republic of Malawi, 2020, p.53;)

Many countries have several official languages with sometimes close to 100 dialects. The description of the target groups should include language data.

Figure 4. Example for beneficiaries (Afghanistan).

Students: Using recent EMIS data the Ministry of Education has identified that 9.6 million students will be supported through the plan.

Teachers and Head Teachers (General): All general education and Islamic education teachers will be provided with educational and training materials.

Principals: All school and madrasa principals will undertake self-learning and training packages to develop their competencies in school/madrasa management.

Source: Afghanistan, 2020

2.4. Objectives and implementable framework

The education response plans typically include at least two to three clearly defined objectives that are aligned with the national response plan. A description of the goals of the country's education sector during the COVID-19 crisis could be included in the education response plan. These objectives should be broken down into different activities for short-, medium- and long-term response. The response plan might include a programme logic that links activities with the objectives. An example of this can be seen in the Rwanda Response Plan (Ministry of Education (Rwanda), 2020).

Figure 5. Examples of Objectives (Rwanda)

- Objective 1:** Ensure continuity of learning for all students in Rwanda
- Objective 2:** Ensure that schools reopen with appropriate services and measures in place and that students re-enter the formal education system
- Objective 3:** Ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and other education personnel
- Objective 4:** Protect and provide for vulnerable populations, including children with disabilities, girls, and children from lower wealth-quintiles
- Objective 5:** Prepare the resilience of the education system against future shocks

Source: Rwanda, 2020

2.5. Budget

All activities under the programme must be well-defined and budgeted appropriately, including both monetary and human resources. The human resources required to achieve each objective need to be identified to ensure that plans are not contingent on human resources that cannot be mobilised. The Somalia and the South Sudan response plans provide an example of well-defined and appropriately resourced activities (South Sudan Education Cluster, 2020; Government of Somalia, 2020).

Figure 6. Samples of a Budget (South Sudan and Somalia)

OBJECTIVE 1 STANDARDS:			
Activity	Cluster Standard	Costing	Source (Standard/Costing)
Develop, print and distribute appropriate IEC materials (i.e. posters, leaflets) on COVID 19 prevention and mitigation measures.	Appropriate IEC materials should include posters and leaflets	\$100/school	Health Cluster UNICEF C4D team WASH Cluster
Mobilise and sensitise school community and stakeholders (teachers, students, parents' committees) about COVID 19 disease.	Maintain the MOH standard prevention procedures on maintaining one-meter physical distance.	\$80/school	Education Cluster Health Cluster UNICEF C4D team
Establish communication system between education authorities and service providers to report if students or staff become unwell.		\$80/school	Education Cluster partners
Establish referral system on COVID 19 and GBV cases related to the crisis between schools and health and other social services.	GBV risks should be immediately reported to the GBV focal points at State Level	\$100/school	Health Cluster Protection Cluster including GBV sub-cluster

Source: South Sudan, 2020

TOTAL COST OF COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE					\$
OBJECTIVE 1:					
Prevention/Wellbeing: Support school children and their families to prevent the transmission and spread of COVID-19.					\$ 383,736
Activity	Unit	Target	Unit Cost	Total Cost	
1.1.1 Development, printing and distribution of appropriate IEC print materials (e.g. posters, leaflets, comics) on COVID-19 prevention	School children	176,868	\$2	\$353,736	
1.1.2. Development and dissemination of prevention key messages through pre-recorded radio messaging	Lumpsum	1	\$15,000	\$15,000	
1.1.3. Development and dissemination of prevention key messages through online messaging	Lumpsum	1	\$15,000	\$15,000	

Source: Somalia, 2020

2.6. Level of support provided by development partners

It is advisable to include education-sector development partners in the planning process. Involving development partners in this process can help to generate buy-in and support, and also provide access to technical expertise that may not otherwise be present in a country. Consultations with local education groups are a key part of this process. Development partners can also play a key role in the implementation of COVID-19 response plans. Different development partners working within different countries have varied programmatic goals, coverage areas and target groups. Based on an understanding of partner capacity and areas of specialisation, activities may be allocated to partners. An example of the level of involvement of development partners can be seen in the Malawi response plan (Republic of Malawi, 2020).

Figure 7. Malawi: Development partners involvement

	Activities	Responsible Agencies	When	Budget (\$)		
				Total (USD)	Available	Gap
1	Development/adaptation of key messages in English, Chichewa and some copies of Kiswahili for Dzaleka refugee learners (including referral system)	UNICEF, UNHCR, and Save the Children	20 March	50,000	50,000	0
2	Production of learning continuity programs broadcast through radio, tv, and online, and the provision of resources such as radios, textbooks, study guides and equipment to the poorest.	All Cluster members	24 March – 3 April	500,000	500,000	0
3	Support risk analysis and response planning, including data collection and monitoring (at national, subnational and school levels)	All Cluster members	24 March – 3 April	400,000	400,000	0
4	Support district coordination meetings including using technology such as WhatsApp	MoEST (lead) All Cluster Members	Ongoing	10,000	10,000	
5	Train youth groups to support schools in	MoEST		100,000	100,000	0

Source: Malawi, 2020

2.7. Monitoring and reporting plan

To ensure implementation is being executed as expected, we recommend regular monitoring and reporting. A monitoring and reporting plan would include baseline and target figures, which will show starting figures and target figures. The indicators are included to help guide the assessment of the plan and identify areas of improvement. The data collection methods, means of verification and expected reporting periods are included in the monitoring and reporting plan to ease tracking implementation. Measures can be put in place to build capacity for data collection by education ministries. An example can be seen in the Rwandan plan (Ministry of Education (Rwanda), 2020).

Figure 8. Rwanda: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Objective	Baseline	Target
Objective 1: Ensure continuity of learning for all students in Rwanda		
% of students (disaggregated by grade, sex) reached by remote learning, by type	0	60%
# of e-learning platforms enhanced	0	5
# of assessment tools developed to measure remote learning	0	10
Objective 2: Ensure that schools reopen with appropriate services and measures in place and that students re-enter the formal education system		
# of schools receiving enhanced school capitation grants	0	4,637
# of students receiving school feeding in the first 3 months after school reopening	0	3,315,799
% of students who return to school	0	95%
Objective 3: Ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and other education personnel		
# of communication messages delivered to students and teachers	0	10
# of students and teachers who have engaged in risk communication messaging	0	3,000,000
Objective 4: Protect and provide for vulnerable populations, including children with disabilities, girls, and children from lower wealth quintiles		
# of radios provided to students from households from lower wealth quintiles	0	50,000
# of remote learning programmes developed for children with disabilities	0	10
# of children with disabilities accessing remote learning activities	0	5,000
Objective 5: Prepare the resilience of the education system against future shocks		
Lessons learnt mapping completed	No	Yes
Education Sector Emergency Plan developed	No	Yes
Radio and multimedia studio established in REB	No	Yes

Source: Rwanda, 2020

2.8. Risk-mitigation framework

During implementation, circumstances may change and activities may be delayed. A risk mitigation framework should be designed to ensure that countries can flexibly adapt to these changing circumstances. Risk mitigation plans should be designed according to a country's particular situation to ensure that issues arising are tackled accordingly. This risk-mitigation is designed to be flexible in case of any changes that may arise. For example, Rwanda's response plan provides a comprehensive risk-mitigation framework

that acknowledges the need to adapt programming to the situation in-country (Ministry of Education (Rwanda), 2020).

Figure 9. Risk-mitigation plan

Given the school closure, there are inherent risks in developing programming, delivery, and monitoring. To mitigate, the Ministry of Education will liaise, as necessary, with the appropriate authorities to gain exceptional permission for movement.

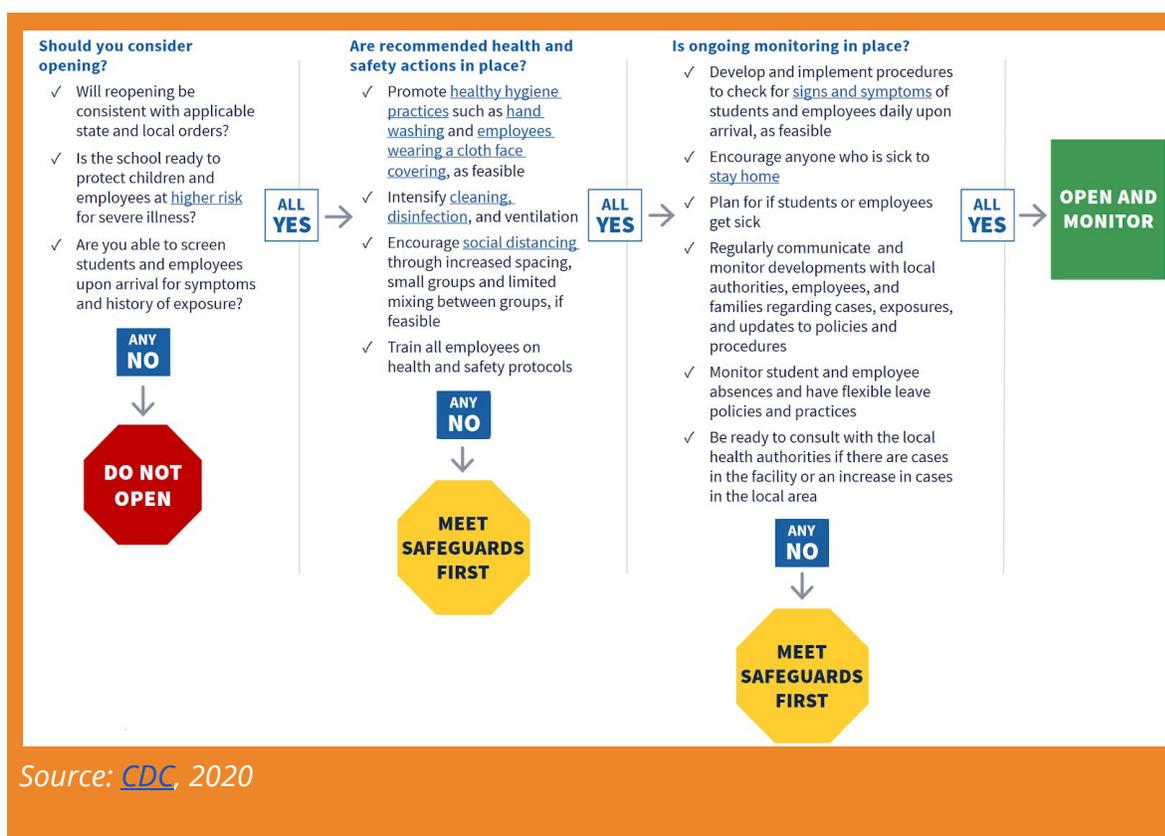
Some activities within the plan are not within the technical expertise of the Ministry of Education, for example the development of audio-visual material.

Source: Rwanda, 2020

2.9. Information on reopening schools

The response plan should provide guidelines for heads of schools, teachers and other stakeholders on measures to take when considering returning to schools (Kaye, Chuang, Coflan, Haßler, 2020). These measures must be built around government orders and health, hygiene and social distancing guidelines. Including such measures ensures learning and teaching are not affected and overall learning objectives are met. A description of such guidelines is shown in this school-reopening decision tree from the [CDC](#) in the United States.

Figure 10. CDC: School - reopening decision tree



2.10. Learning gaps assessment

Since schools have been closed, on reopening there will be a need to assess the learning gaps of students, particularly among marginalised groups. This assessment will show the effectiveness of the learning options put in place during the COVID-19 crisis and teachers' readiness to deliver pedagogical content. The outcome of this assessment will help teaching staff decide which learners need additional learning support, such as supplementary materials and catch-up classes. This assessment will provide the education ministries and school administrators with information on particular areas to focus on for teachers' continuous professional development. The Ghana response plan provides details on accelerated education, remedial and catch-up programmes (Ghana Education Services, 2020).

Figure 11. Catch-up plan

It is known that not all children, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, will continue to access learning during the period of school closure. It is important that the Ministry of Education in consultation with key education stakeholders including school heads, teachers and school management committees develop plans to support such children to

catch-up when schools resume.

Source: Ghana, 2020

3. Strategies for reaching learners, teachers and parents through COVID-19 education response plans

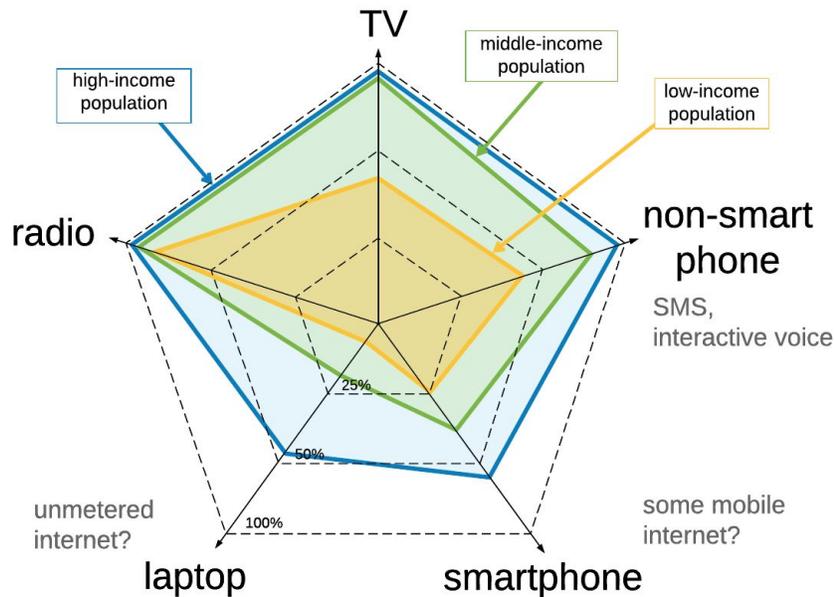
Education response plans should outline interventions required to reach key system stakeholders. Governments should identify their stakeholder groups and anticipate their needs with targeted support. In this section we describe ways to reach and support learners, teachers and parents.

3.1. Learners: Use a multimodal approach to reach all learners

Leveraging multiple technologies is important to ensure students in different contexts can access learning through various options. For example, in Afghanistan's response plan, a variety of technologies are used to ensure continuity of learning across different regions, age groups and roles (Ministry of Education (Afghanistan), 2020). Radio, online learning packages, televisions, mobile applications, feature (non-smart) phones and offline / print resources are all being used for student, teacher and principal learning. Additionally, the plan recognises the human capital needed to support interventions for marginalised groups. The plan explicitly mentions literate parents, community members and mullahs of mosques as critical to technology adoption. Zambia recognises that the level of digital literacy should be taken into consideration when interventions are proposed (Ministry of General Education (Zambia), 2020). The Zambian plan highlights that only 6.8% of Zambians above the age of ten know how to use a computer.

Radar charts can be used to help policymakers estimate and visualise access to different technologies that support learning (Haßler, Khalayleh & McBurnie, 2020). Differences may present across socio-economic levels as well as geographic context (rural vs urban). The radar chart in Figure 6 illustrates the potential mix of access to technologies by different populations in a specific country. For example, in a low-income country, the majority of the population will be a low-income population. However, there will be some middle-income citizens (e.g., teachers and other professionals) and some high-income citizens. In a middle-income country, the majority of the population will be middle-income although there may well be a low-income population of appreciable size. In order to make sure that all children are able to continue learning, LMIC governments must address the digital divide using a multimodal strategy.

Figure 12. Radar chart on technology. (Source: Haßler, Khalayleh & McBurnie, 2020)



3

3.2. Marginalised learners: Ensure hard-to-reach groups are explicitly targeted

Effective education response plans explicitly include references to students from marginalised groups (e.g., children in remote settlements, children with special needs) when preparing their response. For example, Uganda’s plan highlights the need to adapt print materials into large print and braille for learners with special visual needs (Ministry of Education and Sports (Uganda), 2020). They will also use sign language in their television programmes for learners with hearing impairments.

3.3. Teachers and school leaders: Provide professional development support

Teachers and school leaders remain a critical part of the learning process, even when students are not in the classroom. However, without the right support, educators can easily become overwhelmed or make choices that are not aligned with effective practices for remote learning. Teachers and school leaders need support on digital skills, integration of ICT in teaching and learning, and remote facilitation (Beteille, 2020). Plans should include mechanisms to upskill educators to handle the short-term response to COVID-19, and to embrace a long-term strategy of building back better that includes remote learning (Wilichowski and Cobo, 2020).

³ Open Development & Education, 2020. [Assessing Who Has Access to What Devices in the Education Response to the COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#).

Figure 13. Teacher capacity development initiatives

Afghanistan: All teachers and school / madrasa principals are provided with training materials to increase their capacity in core subjects, class management, assessment mechanisms, child psychology and self-teaching and learning methods.

Pakistan: Pakistan is delivering distance learning training to teachers which covers different learning modalities and assessment methods.

Zambia: Zambia will train teachers on the integration of ICT in teaching and learning. They will also receive training on the use of the alternative modes of engagement such as Whatsapp groups or SMS.

Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe will train teachers on open and distance-learning modalities. Teachers will also be supported to engage families and children remotely from their homes. They specifically highlight that this training has potential to help address the needs of out of school children beyond school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.4. Parents and caregivers: Recognise holistic family needs

The ability to learn is not just about accessing learning materials. Governments recognise that in order for students to continue learning, their basic needs must also be met. Response plans must recognise the holistic needs of children and families to be able to address and remove barriers to learning.

With limited income due to business and informal economy shutdowns, parents are struggling to feed their children and keep them safe and healthy. The Gambia intends to provide school meals to vulnerable children to ensure they can remain at home and focus on learning (Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (The Gambia), 2020). Zambia is targeting vulnerable communities with their school feeding programme, with a focus on learners from drought or flood affected districts (Ministry of General Education (Zambia), 2020). Zambia has also identified that a lack of electricity might be a barrier to student learning, especially for the poorest households. Zambia plans to distribute solar-powered, rechargeable radios to these most vulnerable families. Pakistan is addressing income limitations with cash grants and stipends for learners (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (Pakistan), 2020).

The psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic should not be ignored. Children may be forced to skip meals, watch parents lose their jobs, or see someone close to them fall ill and even pass away. Zimbabwe is making special efforts to address the psychosocial impacts of the pandemic through training teachers to identify needs and make referrals to experts (Zimbabwe Education Cluster, 2020). They are also providing direct support to

learners and the school workforce. Zambia similarly provides psychosocial support to teachers and learners, and extends the offer to parents as well.

3.5. Media: Collaborate on back-to-school campaigns

Economic strains may mean that parents are not able to afford school fees or feel compelled to involve children in income-generating activities. When designing back-to-school campaigns, the focus should be on building knowledge (inform), changing attitudes (use emotional arguments), and modelling behaviour (provide an example) (Kaye, Chuang, Coflan, Haßler, 2020). In Ghana and Zambia, response plans provide for back-to-school campaigns engaging media and education systems at national, regional, district and community levels (Ghana Education Services, 2020; Ministry of General Education (Zambia), 2020).

References and links

A full list of links and references can be found on the [EdTech Hub Evidence Library](#).

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