

Joint UN Webinar on Safe school reopening in South-East Asia



INDIAN
INSTITUTE OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
GANDHINAGAR

Monday 12 Oct 2020 at 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm India Time

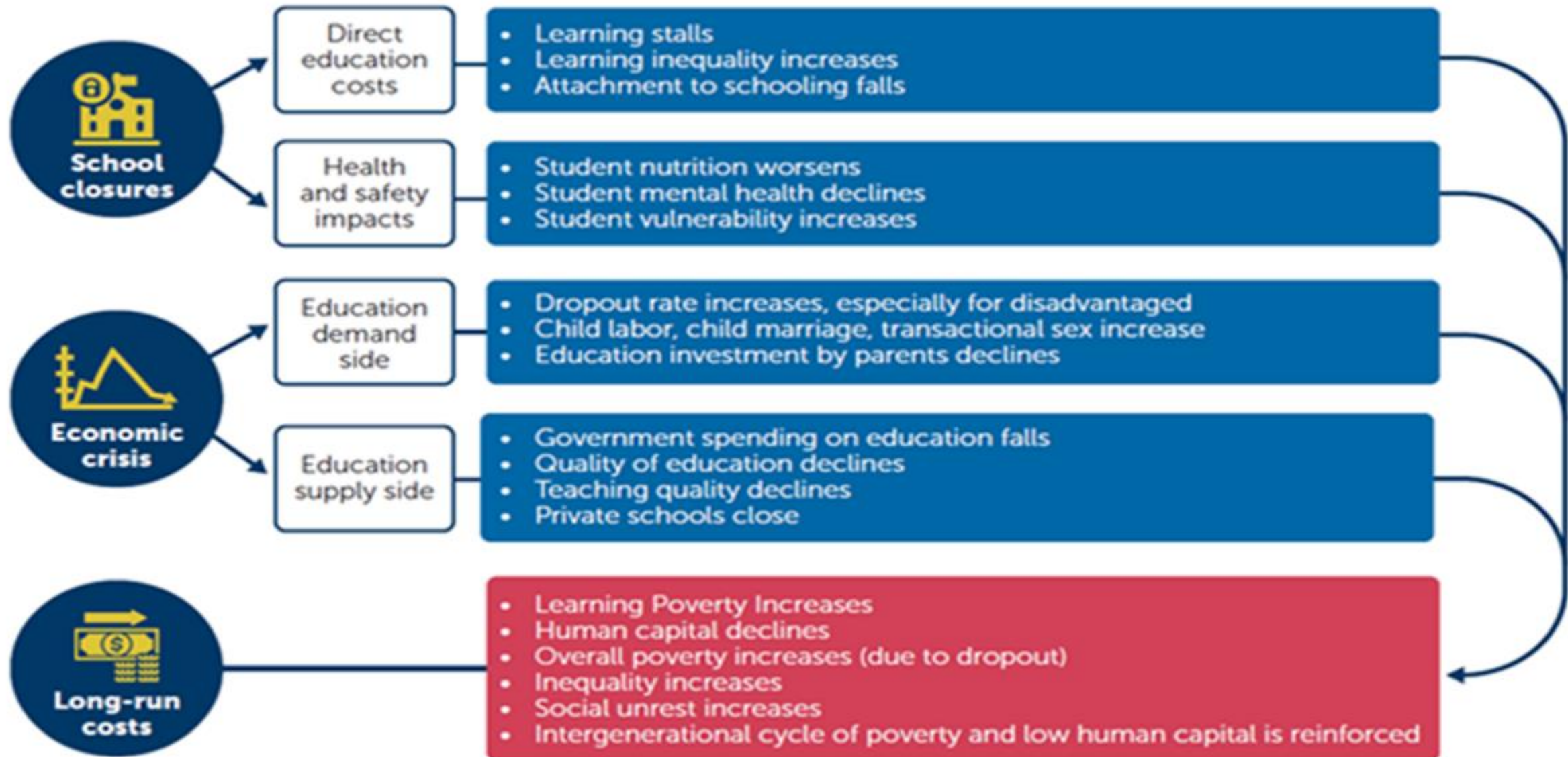
Programme

Time	Topics (Presenter)
1.00 pm – 1.05 pm	Opening: Welcome and introduction to the webinar Neena Raina, WHO-SEARO)
1.05pm – 1.20 pm	Impacts of school closures in South Asia and South East Asia Nyi Nyi Thaung, UNESCO Bangkok
1:20 pm – 1.35 pm	Q&A
1.35 pm – 1.50 pm	Guidance on safe reopening and operations of schools Jim Ackers, UNICEF-ROSA
1:50 pm – 2:15 pm	Q&A
2.15 pm – 2.35 pm	Health issues in school reopening Rajesh Mehta, WHO-SEARO
2:35 pm – 2:55 pm	Q&A
2.55 pm – 3.00 pm	Closing Remarks Omar Mame Diop, UNESCO Delhi

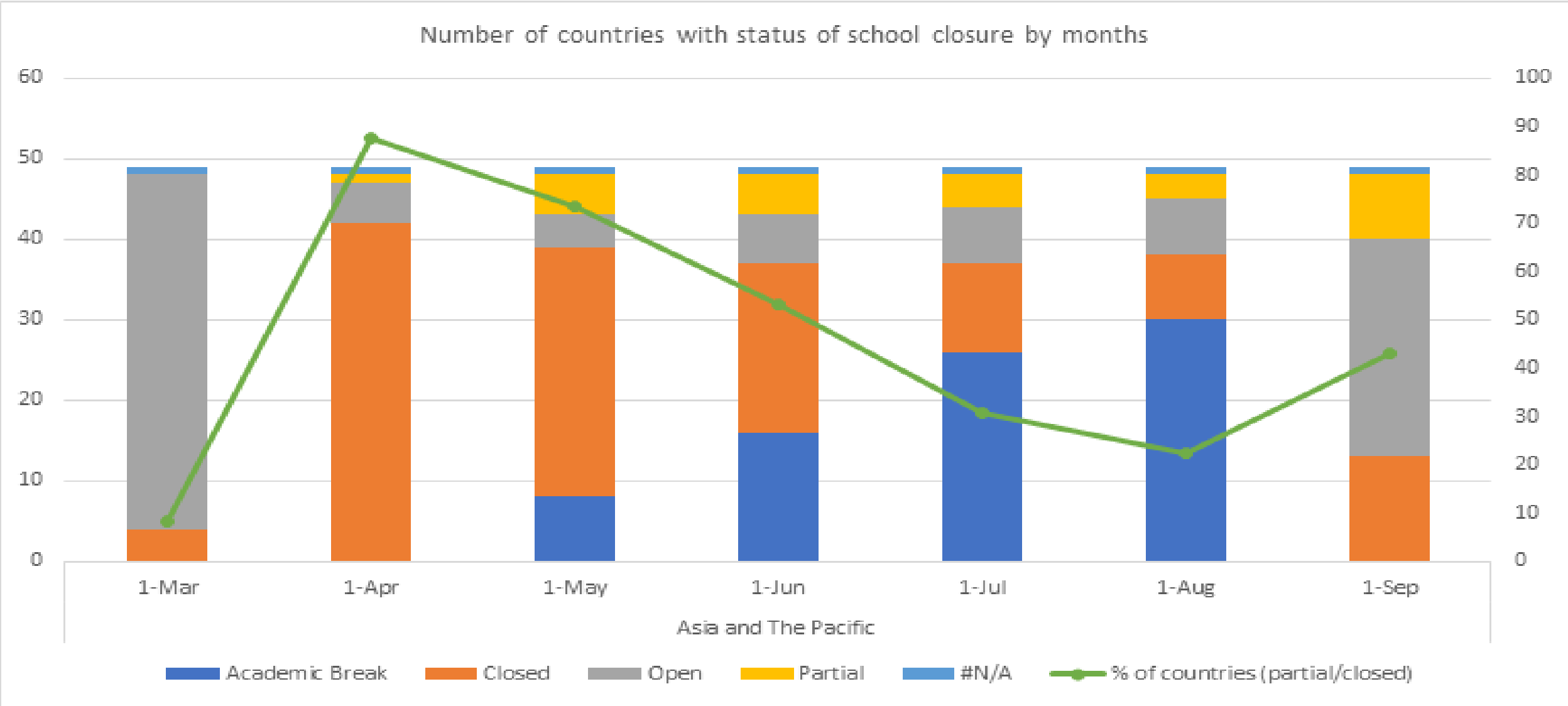
Impacts of COVID-19 related school closures

Nyi Nyi THAUNG (UNESCO)
12 October 2020

COVID-19 impacts on Education



Timeline of schools closures and re-openings (Response to COVID-19)



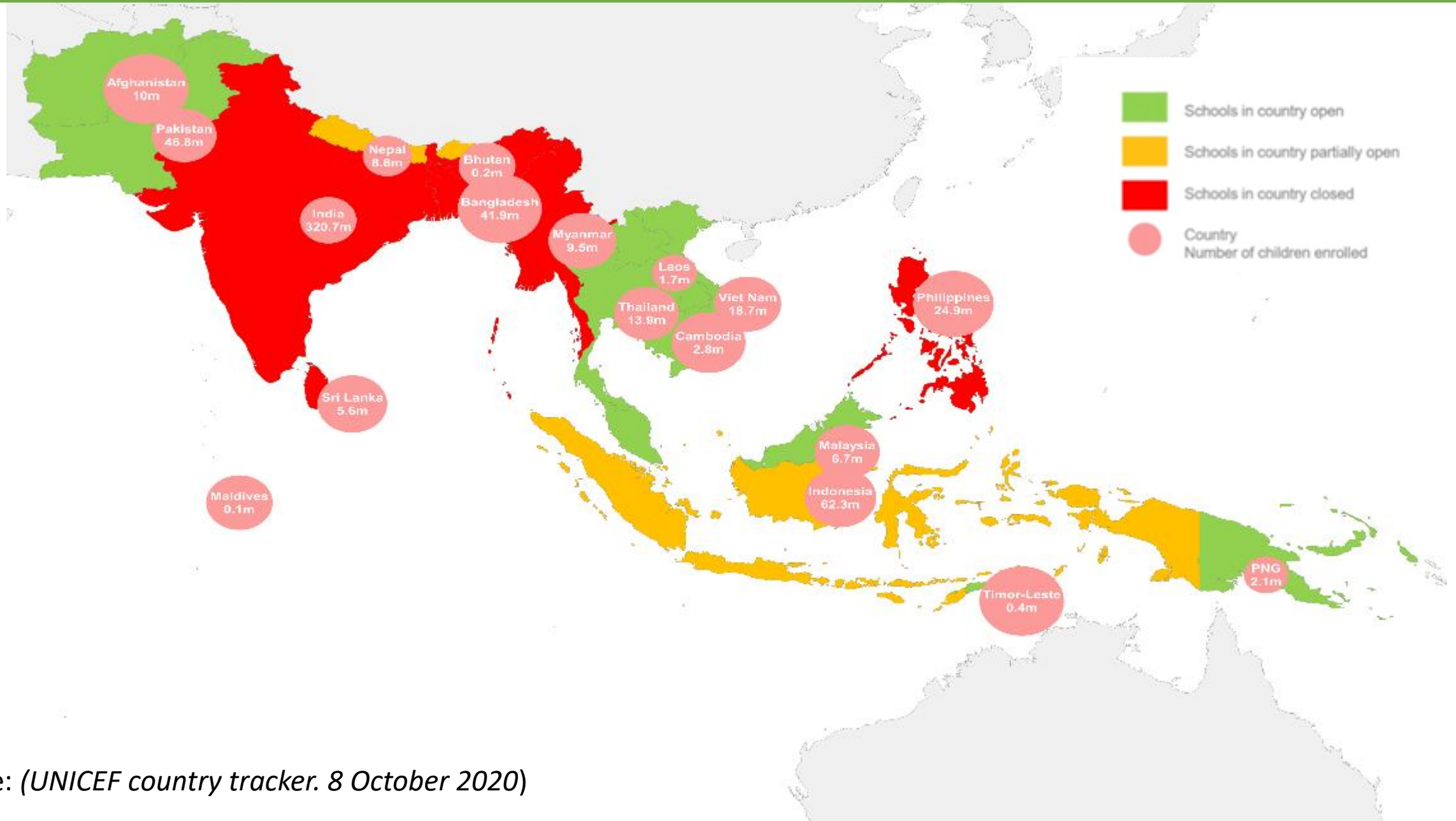
Status of school closures/reopening in South Asia

Country	School status	Expected duration of school closures	Date set for school to Re-open/ have reopened	Estimated # of learners affected during country-wide closures
Afghanistan	Fully reopened	-	Phased reopening began 22 August. Fully reopened on 3 October.	10,003,625
Bangladesh	Country-wide closure	Until October	Country wide closure until 31 October.	41,890,019 (-)(*)
Bhutan	Partially open	-	Phased reopening began on 14 September. Schools in high risk areas will remain closed until unlocking procedures are established.	188,432
India	Country-wide closure	Until October	Schools closed until 15 October. States may begin to reopen schools if located outside of containment zones.	320,713,810
Maldives	Partially open	-	Phased reopening began 1 July beginning with COVID-free islands. Schools in Grater Male are have reopened for grades 9-12.	109,688
Nepal	Partially open	n/a	1,600 schools have reopened based on the decision of local Municipalities. Some schools have closed again due to recent surge in cases.	8,796,624
Pakistan	Fully reopened	-	Phased reopening began 15 Sept. All schools now fully open.	46,803,407
Sri Lanka	Country-wide closure	Until further notice	All schools closed on 5 Oct. after being fully reopened since 10 August. Schools will remain closed until early November for National school holidays.	5,570,666
Source: (UNICEF country tracker. 8 October 2020)				Total
				434,076,271

Status of school closures/reopening in South-East Asia

Country	School Status	Expected duration of school closures	Date set for school to Re-open/ have reopened	Estimated # of learners affected during country-wide closures
Indonesia	Partially open	-	Phased reopening began 13 July. 16,600 schools in low and moderate risk districts had reopened by end of August.	68,284,648
Myanmar	Country-wide closures	TBC	High-schools began to reopen 21 July, but closed again on 16 August due to a community transmission outbreak.	9,486,507
Thailand	Fully reopened	-	Schools reopened on 1 July. Some schools have since closed for precautionary measures during local outbreaks.	13,867,508
Timor-Leste	Fully open	-	835 schools have reopened since 29 June after meeting reopening criteria.	390,080
Source: (UNICEF country tracker. 8 October 2020)				Total
				92,028,743

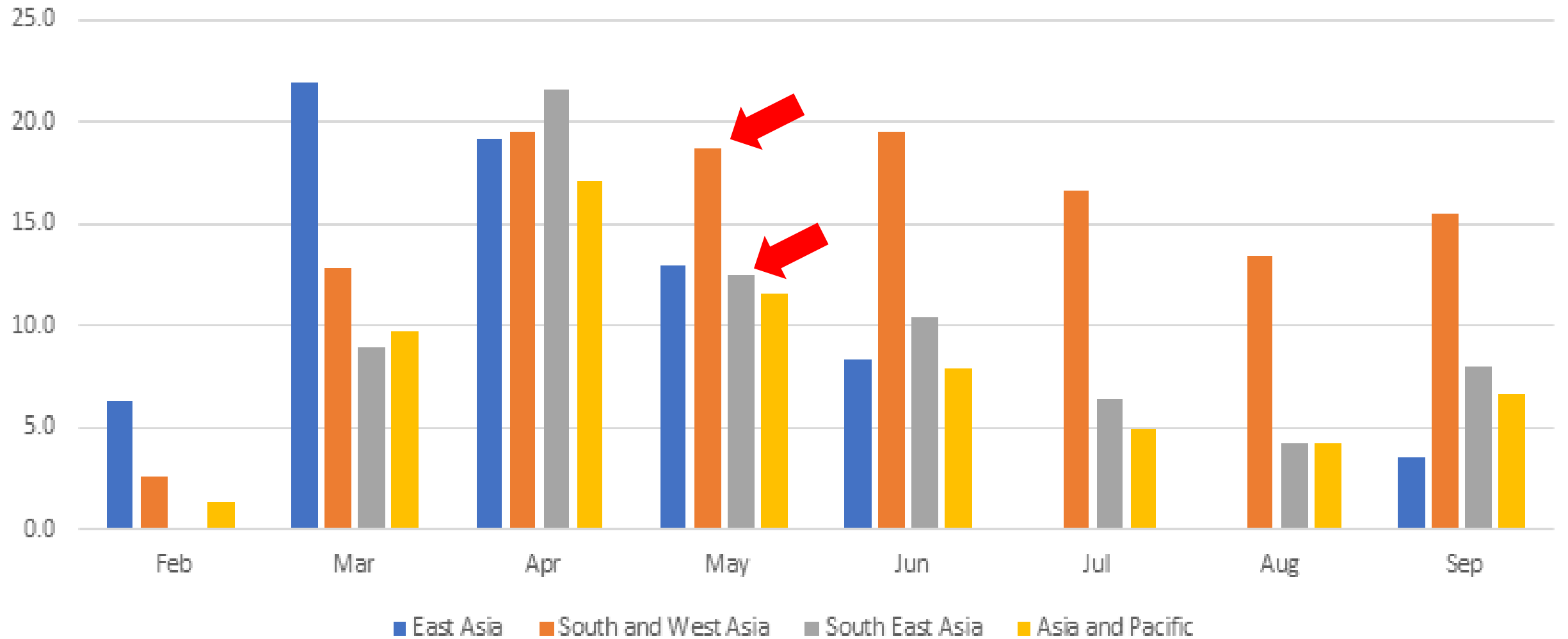
Status of school closures/reopening in South and South-East Asia



Source: (UNICEF country tracker. 8 October 2020)

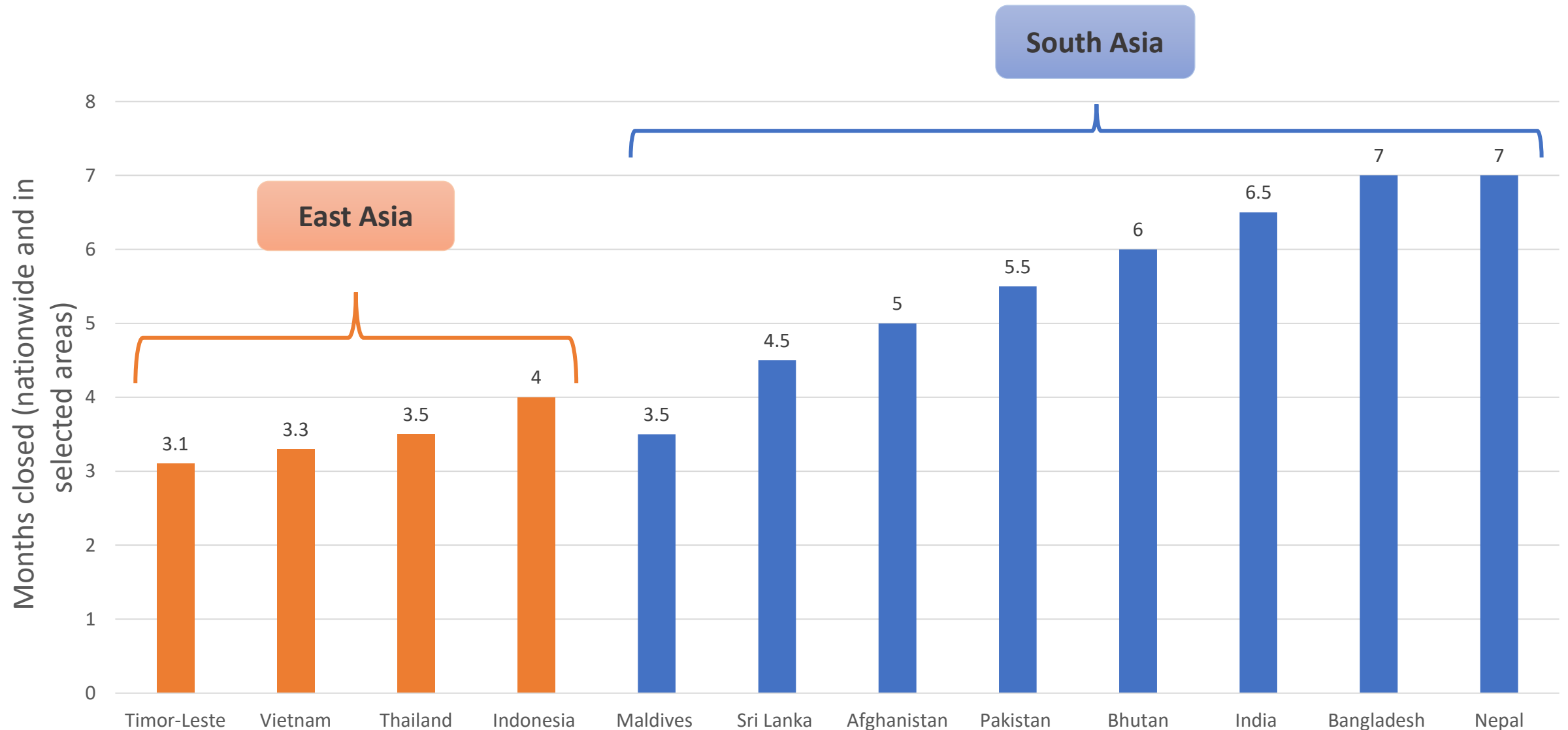
Impact of school closure: learners are out of school

Average number of days loss due to COVID-19 (unweighted)



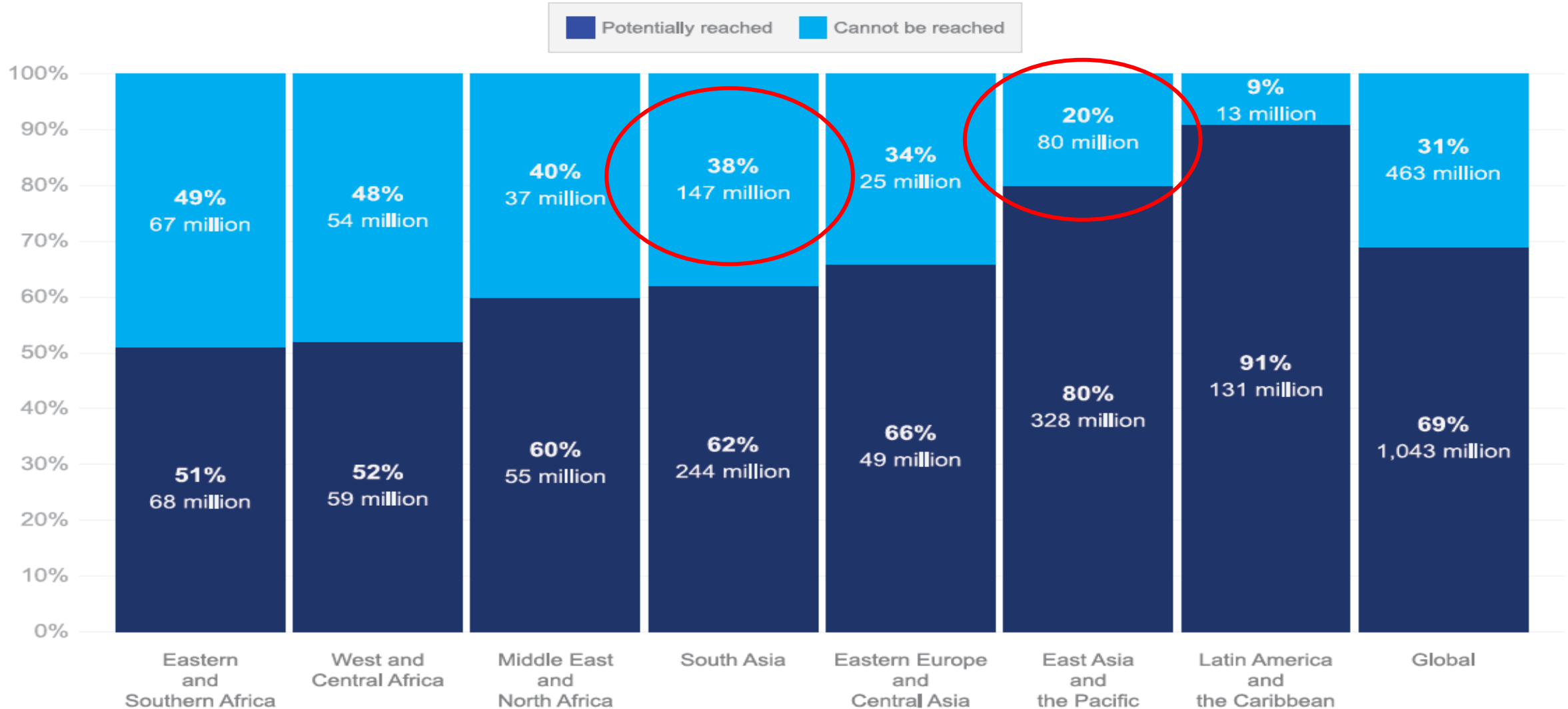
Source: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

Number of months of learning loss as of October 2020 in selected countries in South Asia and South-East Asia



Widening inequities in education

Share and number of students potentially reached and not reached[†] by digital and broadcast remote learning policies, by region (pre-primary to upper secondary)



Widening inequities in education

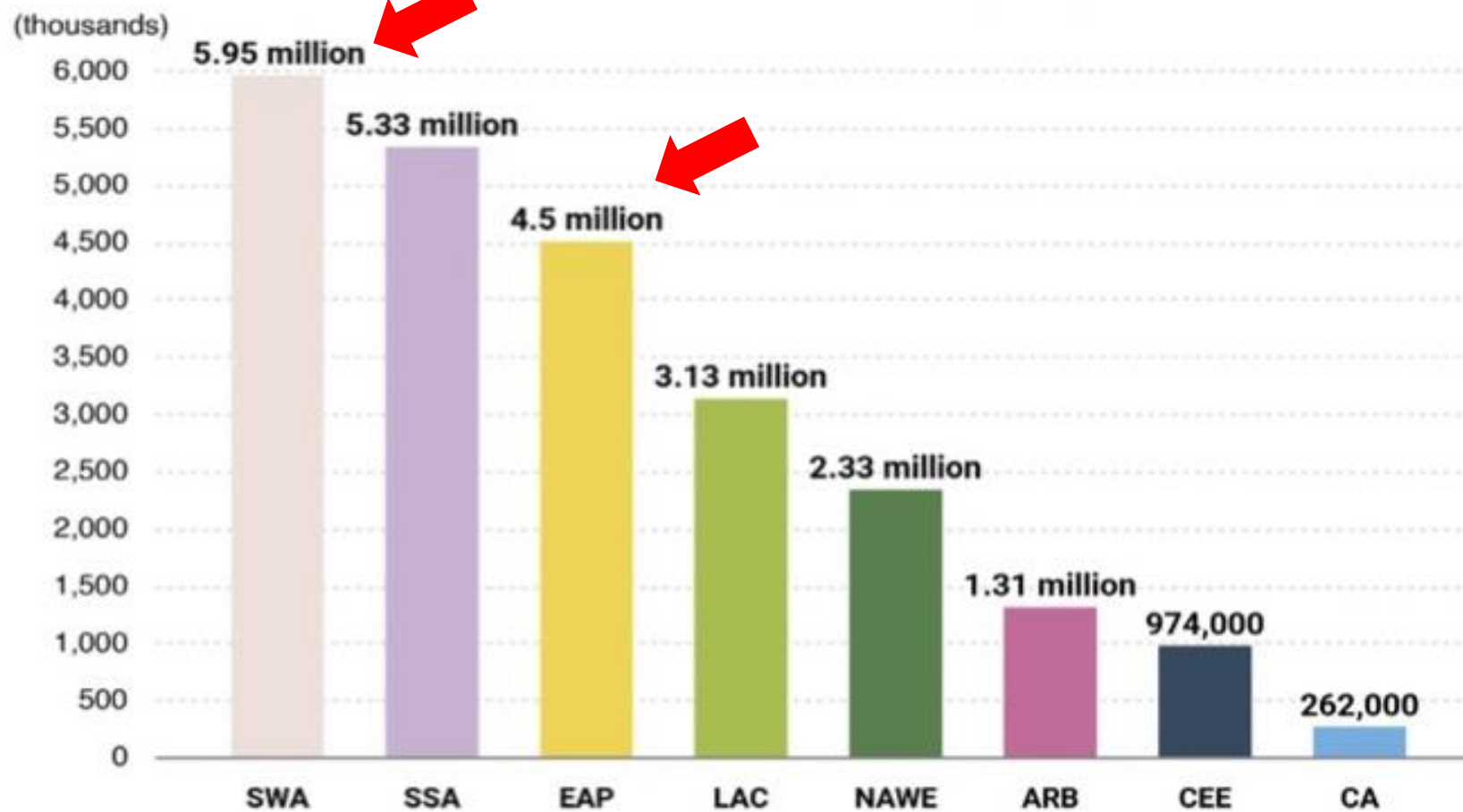
Figure 8. Platforms used by teachers during school closures (% of countries)



Figure 10. Measures taken to include vulnerable populations in distance learning platforms (% of countries)

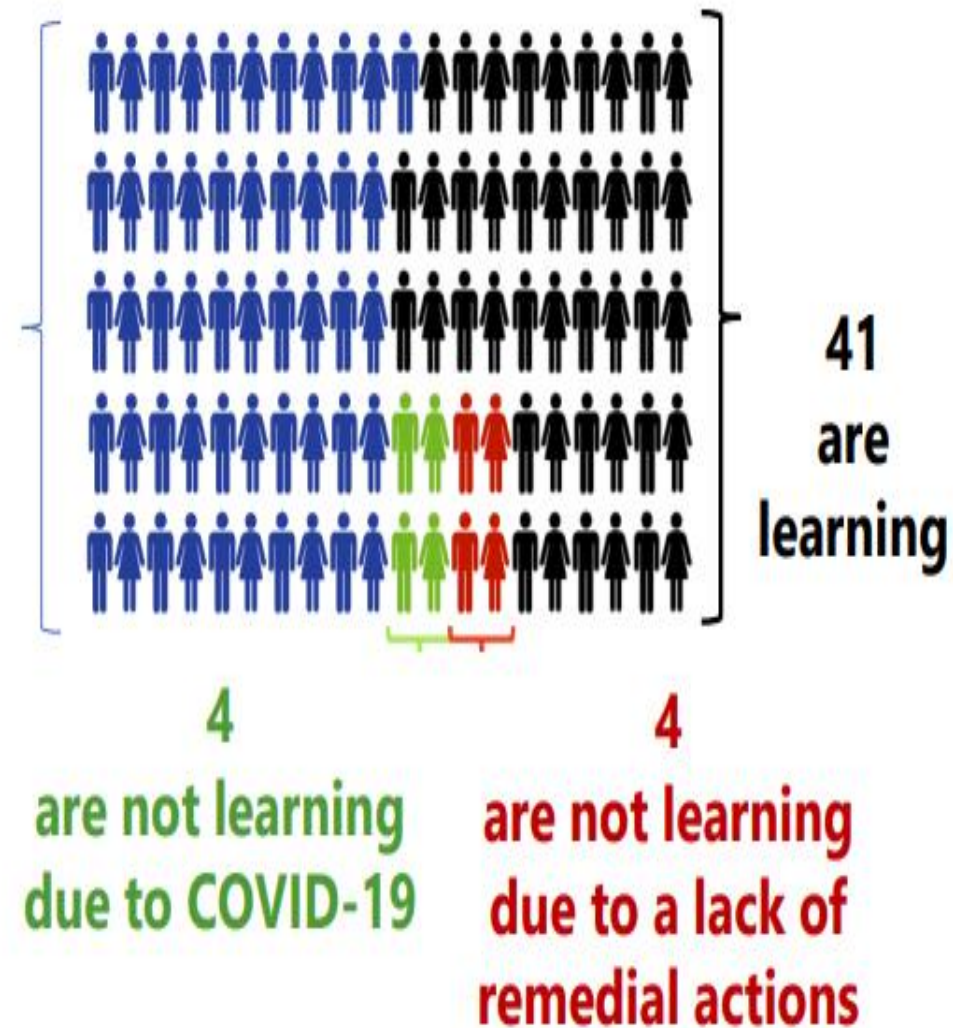
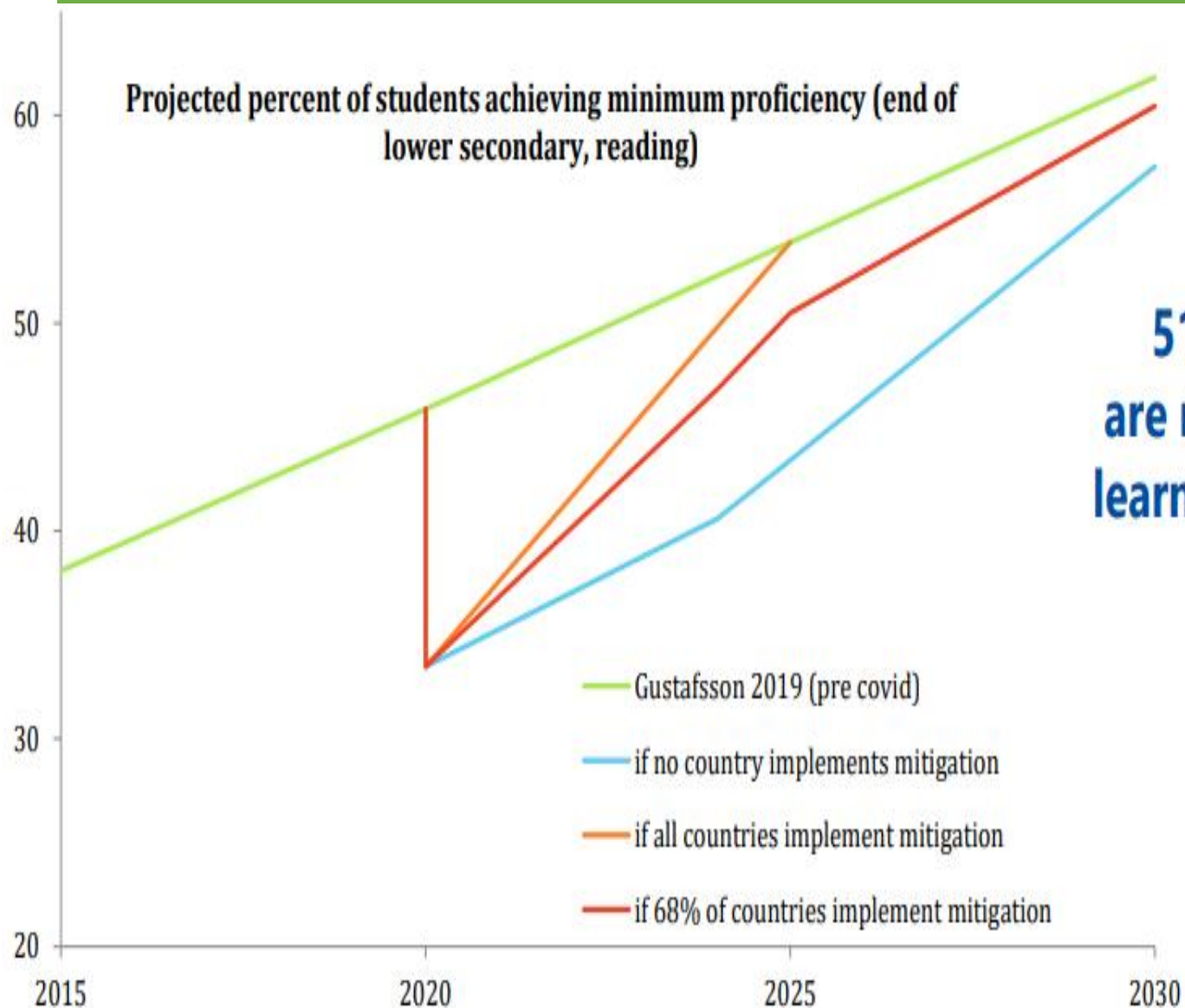


Students at risk of not returning to school: distribution by region



(Legend: SWA – South and West Asia; SSA – Sub-Saharan Africa; EAP – East Asia and Pacific; LAC – Latin America and the Caribbean; NAW – North America and Western Europe; ARB – Arab States; CEE – Central and Eastern Europe; CA – Central Asia)

Learning loss as a result of school closures



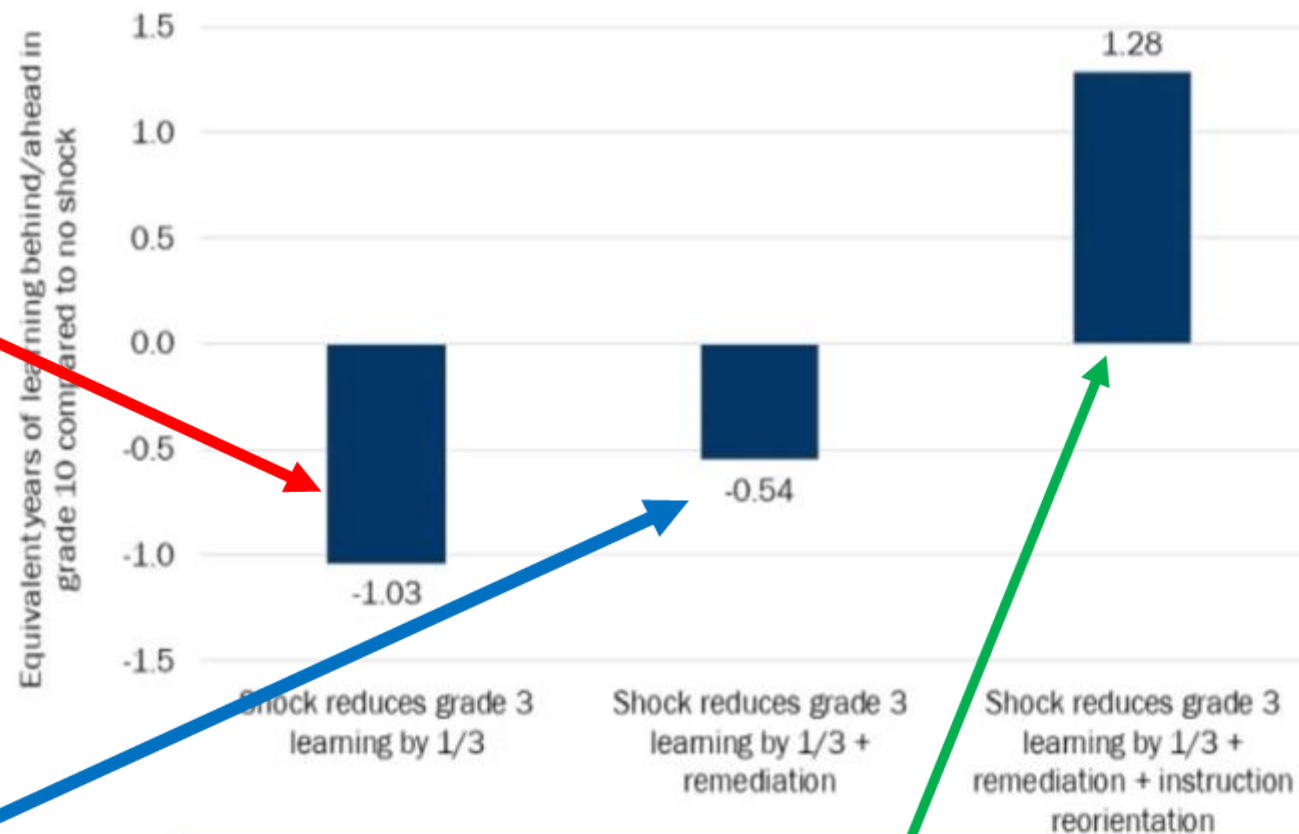
Learning loss as a result of school closures

Pakistan earthquake in 2005 resulted in 3 months schools closure: 4 years after, children were 1.5 years behind in learning outcomes.

This lost learning could result in children earning 15% less in every year of their adult lives.

Do nothing: 1 year of learning loss by Grade 10

Remediation during the year of reopening: $\frac{1}{2}$ year of learning loss by Grade 10



Remediation for 1 school year after reopening, coupled with instruction reorientation to be continued for subsequent years, could produce the equivalent of 1.28 years of learning gain by Grade 10, compared to counterfactual.

Impact of COVID-19 on teachers

Retention of teachers

Findings of COVID-19 Early Childhood Education Workforce Survey in Asia and the Pacific

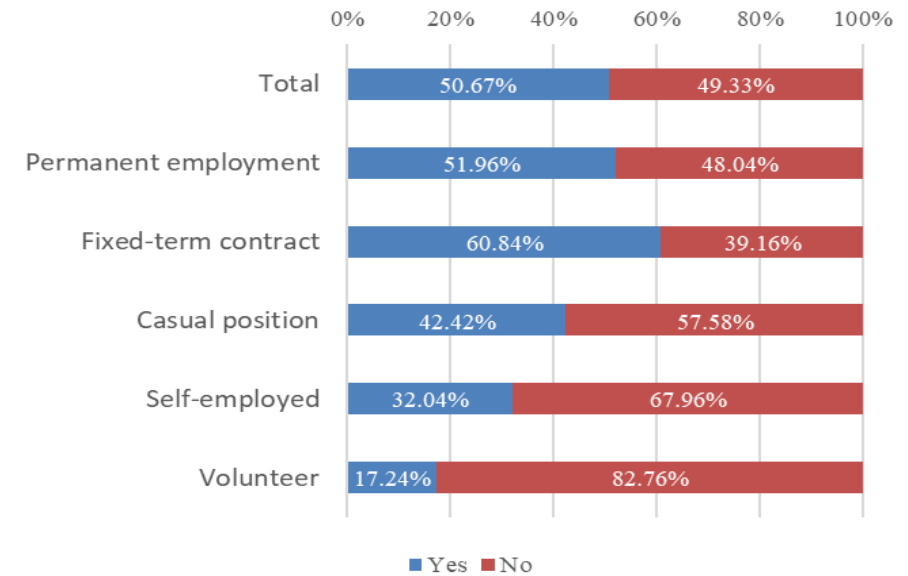
- Due to school closures, 6.7 % of respondents answered that they were approached by their employer to consider leaving or terminate their contract.
- Half of the respondents indicated that their salaries were not secured under social security schemes.
- Relying on household head's income, starting part-time job (i.e. farming, online selling)
- Some financial support schemes available, but limited.

34 countries; 2040 respondents:

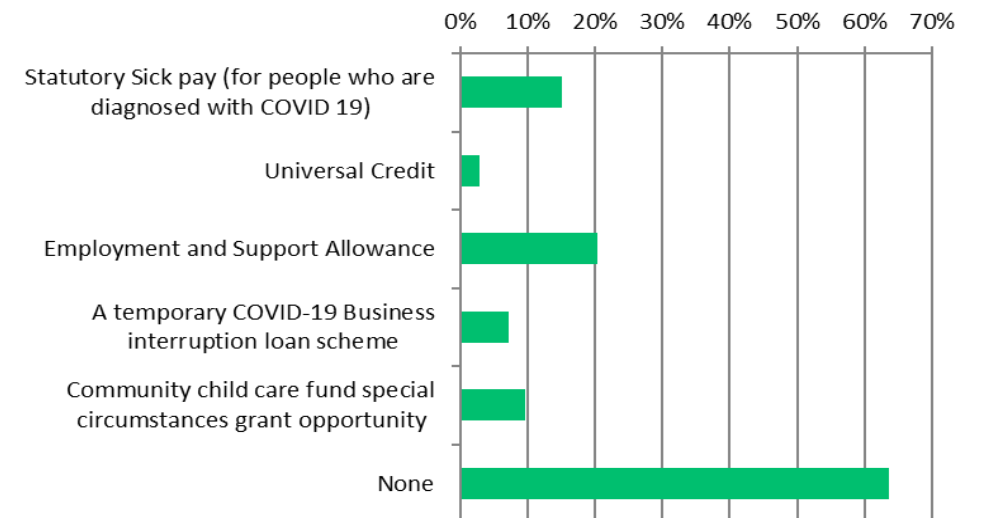
90.6% female, 8.7% male, 0.7% undeclared

Source: COVID-19 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workforce Survey. May 2020. UNESCO, UNICEF, ARNEC, ECWI, ISSA

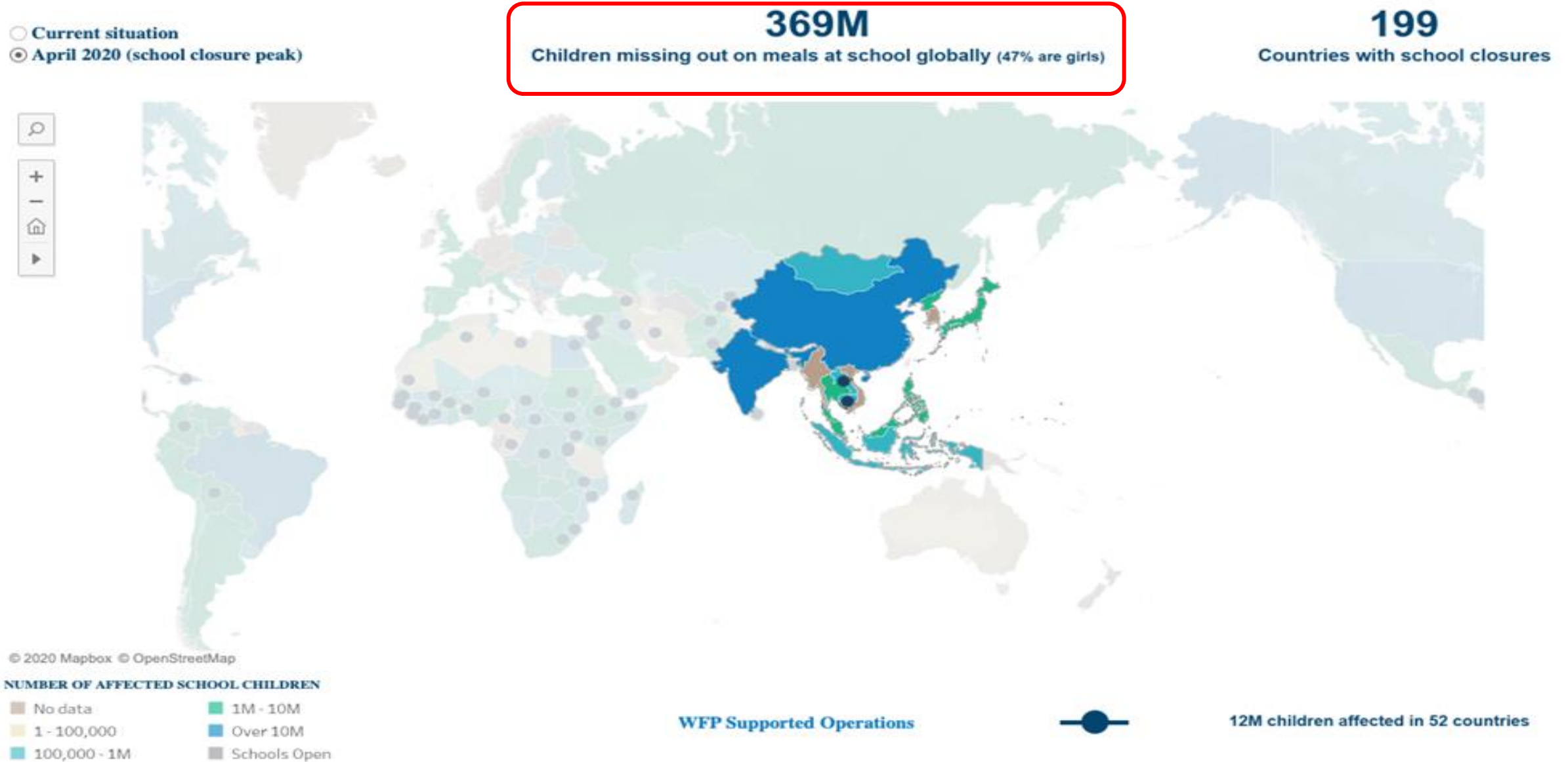
Is your salary secured under social security schemes even with the closure of centres/schools?



Are these measures available for you/your centre for COVID-19 response?



Loss of social protection: school-based health services



Reversing gains in gender equality in education

Access to/ participation in education:

- Exacerbated burden of unpaid care on women and girls, impacting on time for learning
- Widening gender digital skills divide



COVID-19 MULTIPLIED THE WORKLOAD AT HOME AND WOMEN ARE PAYING THE PRICE

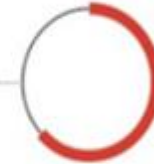
85%

of women are helping more*



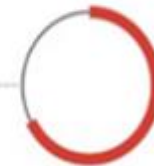
63%

of men are helping more*



67%

of daughters are helping more



57%

of sons are helping more



CHILDREN'S HELP AT HOME IS ENABLING PARENT'S PAID WORK

70%

of daughters help their employed parents more



58%

of sons help their employed parents more



Reversing gains in gender equality in education

Poor sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing outcomes:

- early and forced marriage, transactional sex, unintended pregnancy and GBV

For every three months the lockdown continues globally, an extra **15 million** gender-based violence cases are expected.



I also know two girls who have just gotten married during this pandemic. I truly think that education offers us a chance to a brighter future however, due to the current pandemic, many girls are giving up their learning opportunities for marriage to alleviate the new economic hardship.

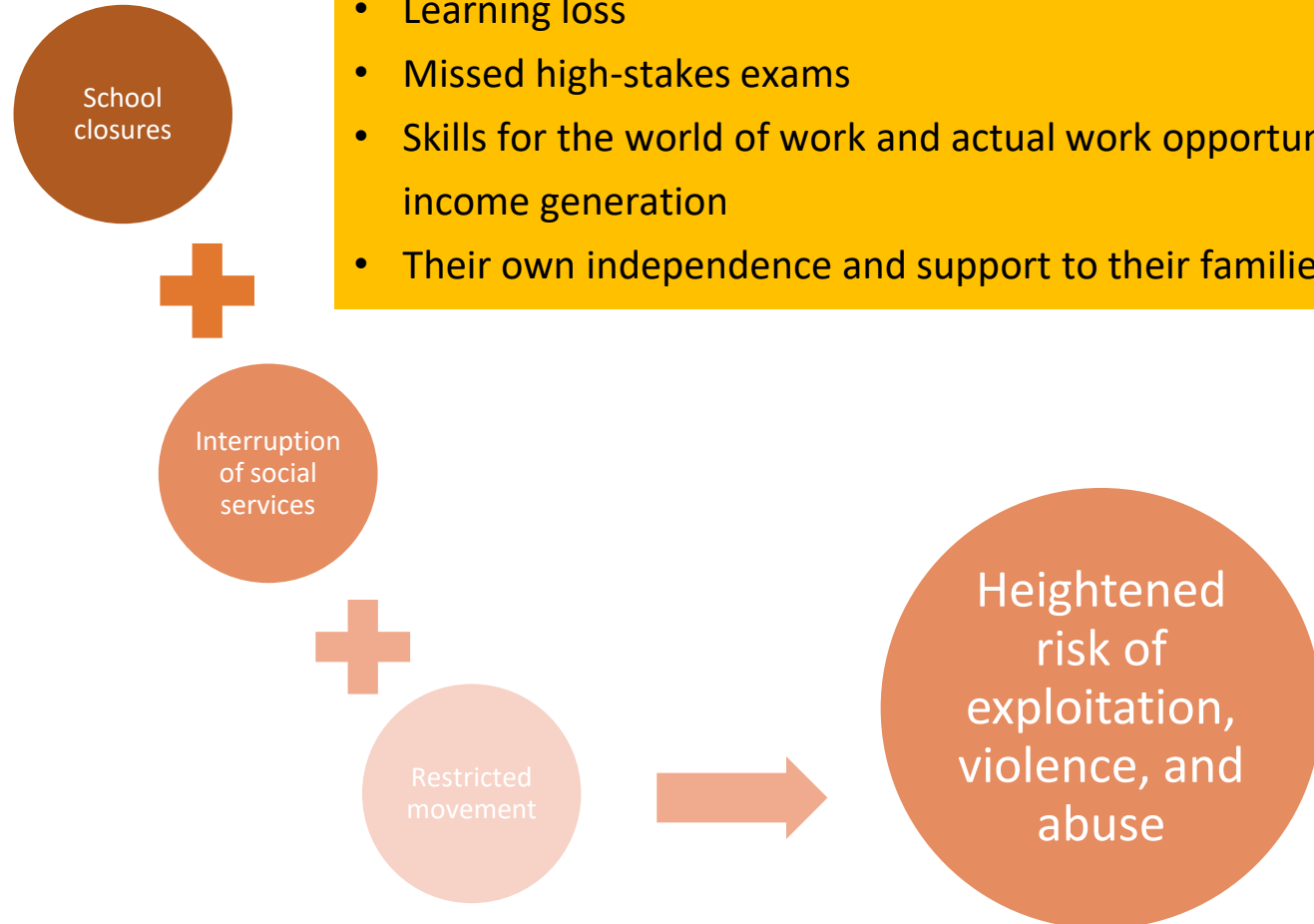
-Huu, Vietnam

Mental health, violence and exploitation



It might not be known to some of us that there are also dangers behind the façade of the online world through our phones and computers. We must be extra careful as the threats are now heightened. There are online scammers and predators seeking to prey the most vulnerable ones in the world of internet -- children. We must be wary of those dangers and be vigilant to anything that we click online.

-Mau, 17, Philippines

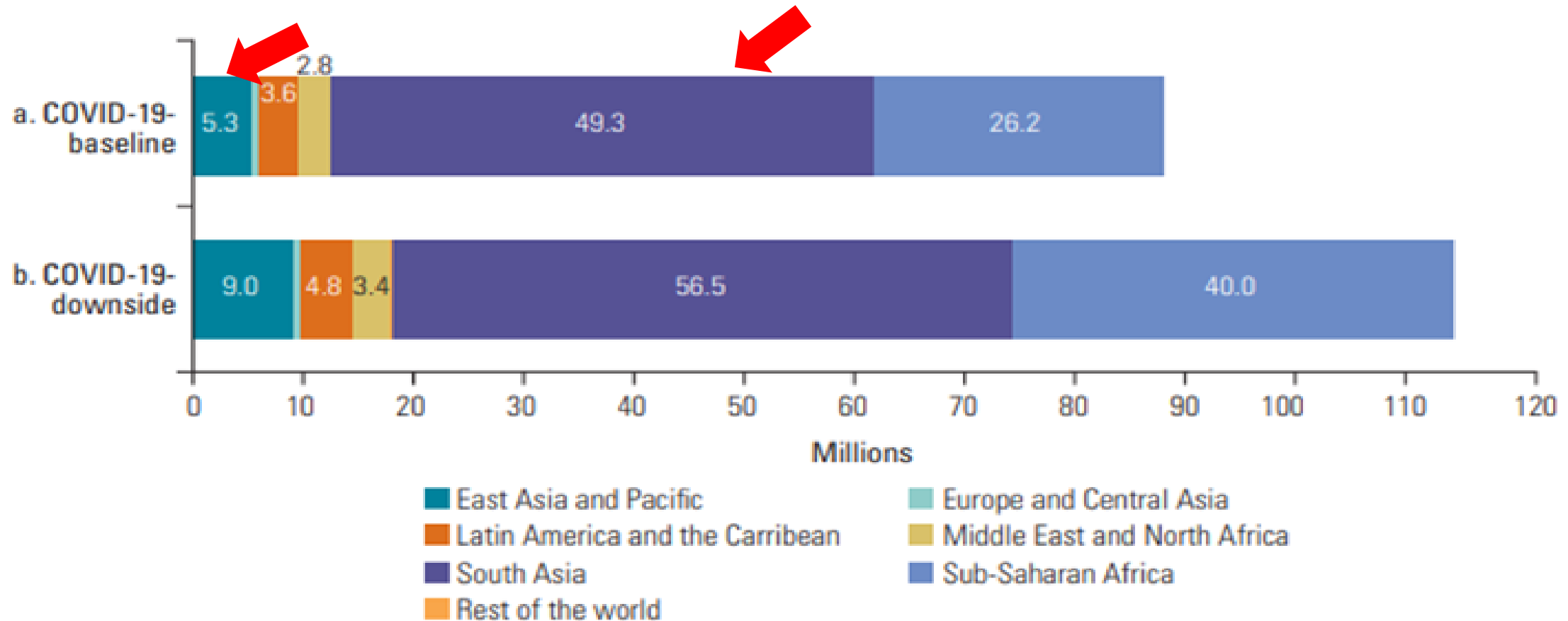


In both a global survey and a local survey in Thailand, young people reported feeling **considerable anxiety related to their education and careers** across areas related to:

- Learning loss
- Missed high-stakes exams
- Skills for the world of work and actual work opportunities for income generation
- Their own independence and support to their families

Poverty and youth unemployment

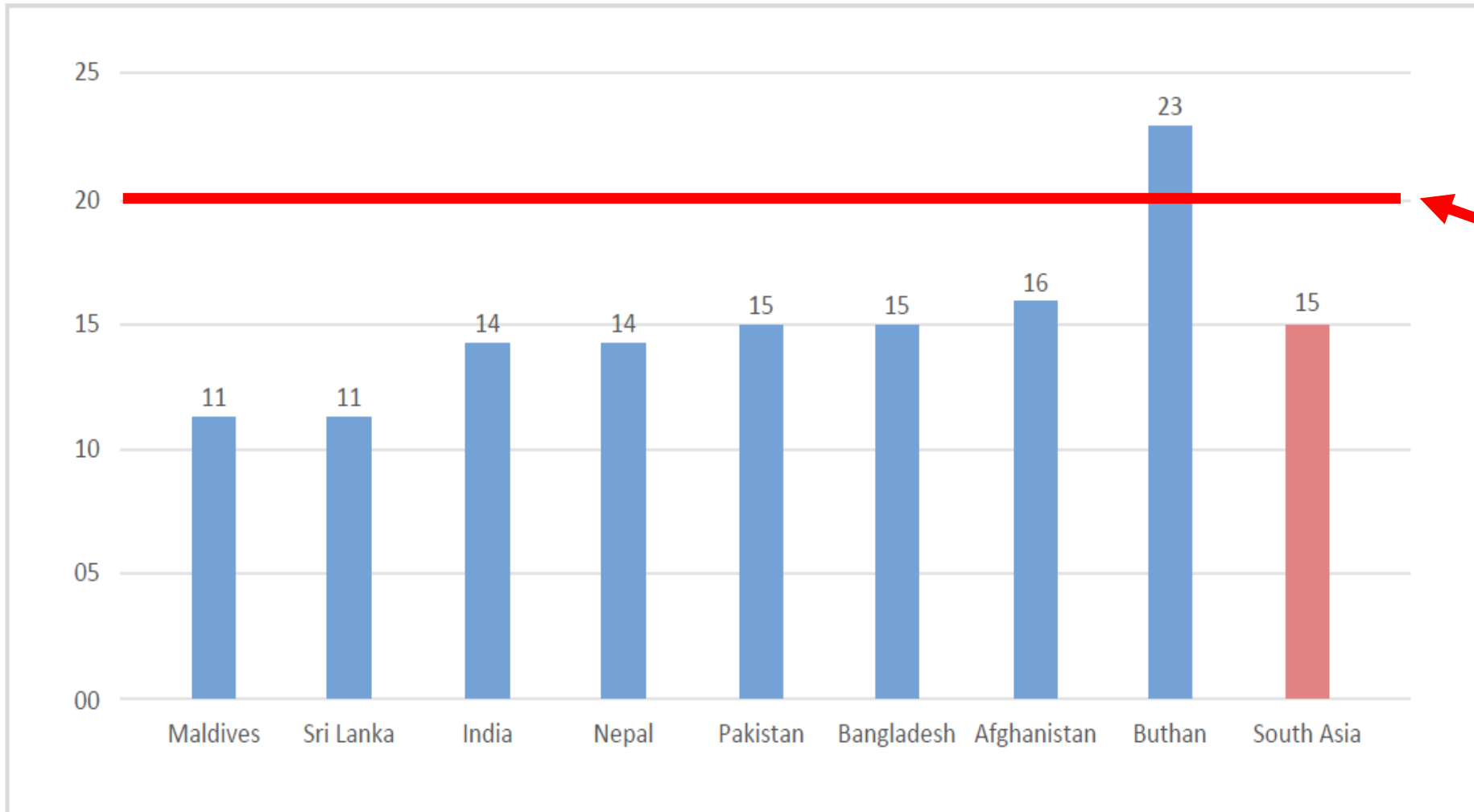
FIGURE 0.4 Additional Poor at the US\$1.90-a-Day Poverty Line in 2020, per the COVID-19-Baseline and COVID-19-Downside Scenarios



Sources: Updated estimates of Mahler et al. 2020, based on Lakner et al. 2020; PovcalNet (online analysis tool), World Bank, Washington, DC, <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>; World Bank 2020a, 2020b.

Risk to education financing

Government expenditure on education (percentage of total Government expenditure):

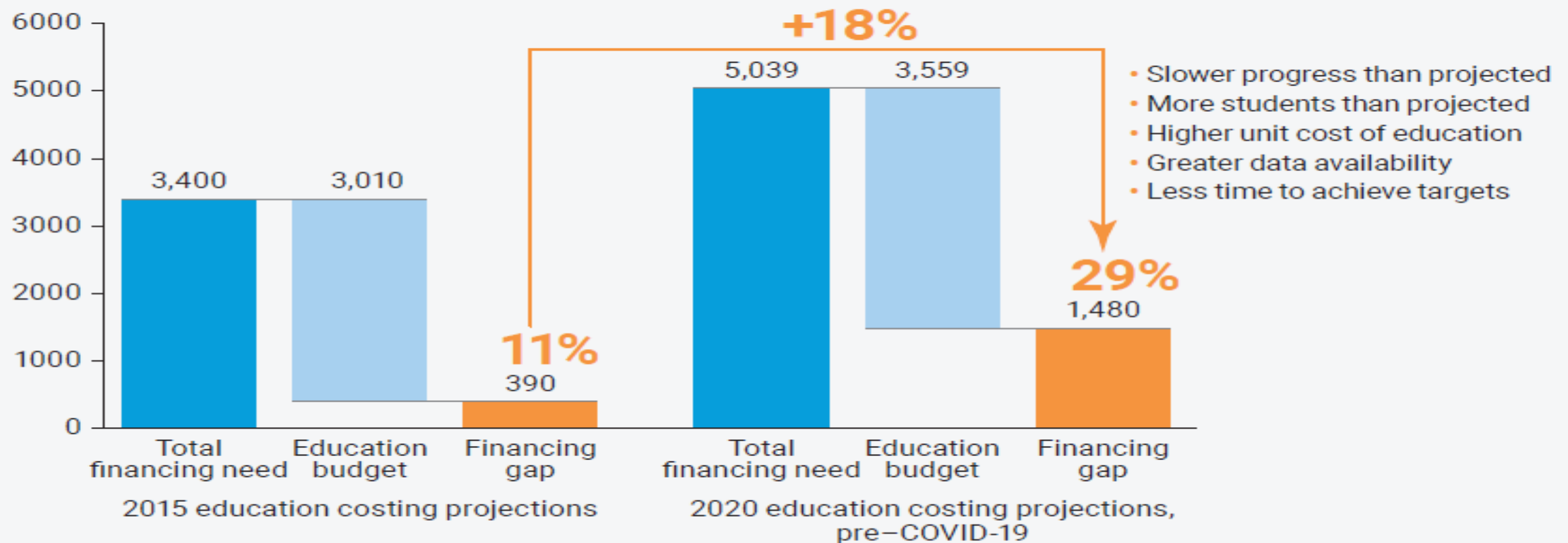


20% is the recommended minimum investment in Education

Source: UIS Pre-COVID-19 levels of investment in Education in South Asia: 2019 or latest available data

Risk to education financing

FIGURE 1: PRE-COVID-19 FINANCING GAP TO REACH SDG 4
(millions of dollars)



Source: UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (2020). New realities for education affected by COVID Cost predictions.

The journey of progress towards **SDG 4**

- There is a risk of **increased drop-out**, especially at secondary level
- The **risk is disproportionately higher for the most vulnerable** populations and poorest: without action, recent progress on equity might be erased
- The **ECD sub-sector** is at risk of being **deprioritized**
- **Education budgets threatened** because of the economic crisis leading to decreased domestic revenues
- Without remediation, **learning loss could compound over years** and result in a very significant drop in learning, capacity and skills for all children affected by school closures
- **Education Monitoring** is affected and some indicators **must be revisited** focusing on impact of COVID-19

Opportunity in a crisis

The three overlapping phases of the education response

GOAL: Seize opportunities to make education more inclusive, effective, and resilient than it was before the crisis

Coping

While schools are closed:

- Protect health, safety, and nutrition
- Prevent learning loss through remote learning
- Draw on tertiary education

Managing continuity

As schools reopen:

- Prevent increase in dropout
- Protect health and safety at school
- Prepare for staggered and partial reopenings
- Prepare teachers to assess learning losses and close learning gaps
- Provide adequate financing for recovery needs, especially for disadvantaged students

Improving and accelerating

Throughout, seize opportunities to improve the system for the long term:

- Scale up effective COVID-response approaches (e.g. incorporate remote learning, teach at the right level, track at-risk students to prevent dropout)
- Focus on creating build-back-better education systems
- Protect and enhance education financing

Thank you

Credit:

- Babb Jenelle (UNESCO Bangkok)
- Danika Claire (UNESCO Bangkok)
- Amalia Miranda Serrano (UNESCO Bangkok)
- Shailendra Sigdel (UNESCO Institute for Statistics)
- Roshan Bajracharya (UNESCO Institute for Statistics)
- Dominik Koeppel (UNICEF EAPRO)
- Ivan Coursac (UNICEF ROSA)

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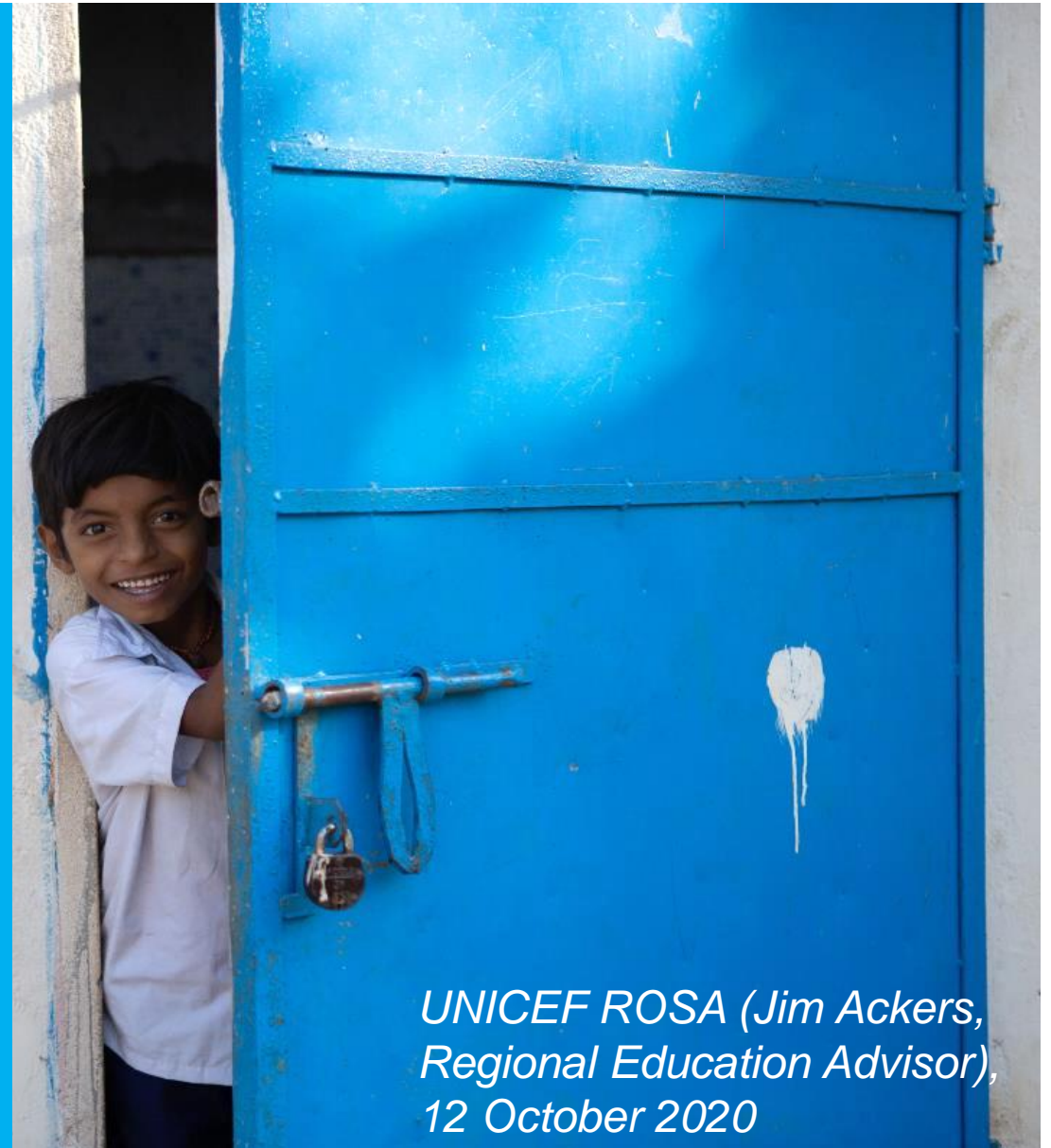
Learn more:

<https://globaleducationcoalition.unesco.org>
<https://apa.sdg4education2030.org/covid19>

Q & A Session

Safe reopening and longer term issues

- Critical challenges
- Readiness: some key considerations
- Guidance and tools
- HOW to reopen
- Reimagining the future from a health perspective
- Summary: key issues and messages



*UNICEF ROSA (Jim Ackers,
Regional Education Advisor),
12 October 2020*

Critical challenges to reopening and operating safely in Asia:

Contextual
factors
influencing
decision-
making

Education Considerations

- Inequity of access to EdTech
- Classroom size and PTR
- Teacher capacity for new roles and responsibilities
- Examinations and transitions
- State and Private School
- Accessibility, including CWDs
- OOSC: drop-outs & migrants

School health, hygiene and protection Considerations

- WASH in school
- Inter-personal communication
- Food scarcity
- Mental health and psychosocial support
- Stigmatization VAC. Including SRGBV
- Disability support

Macro-level Considerations

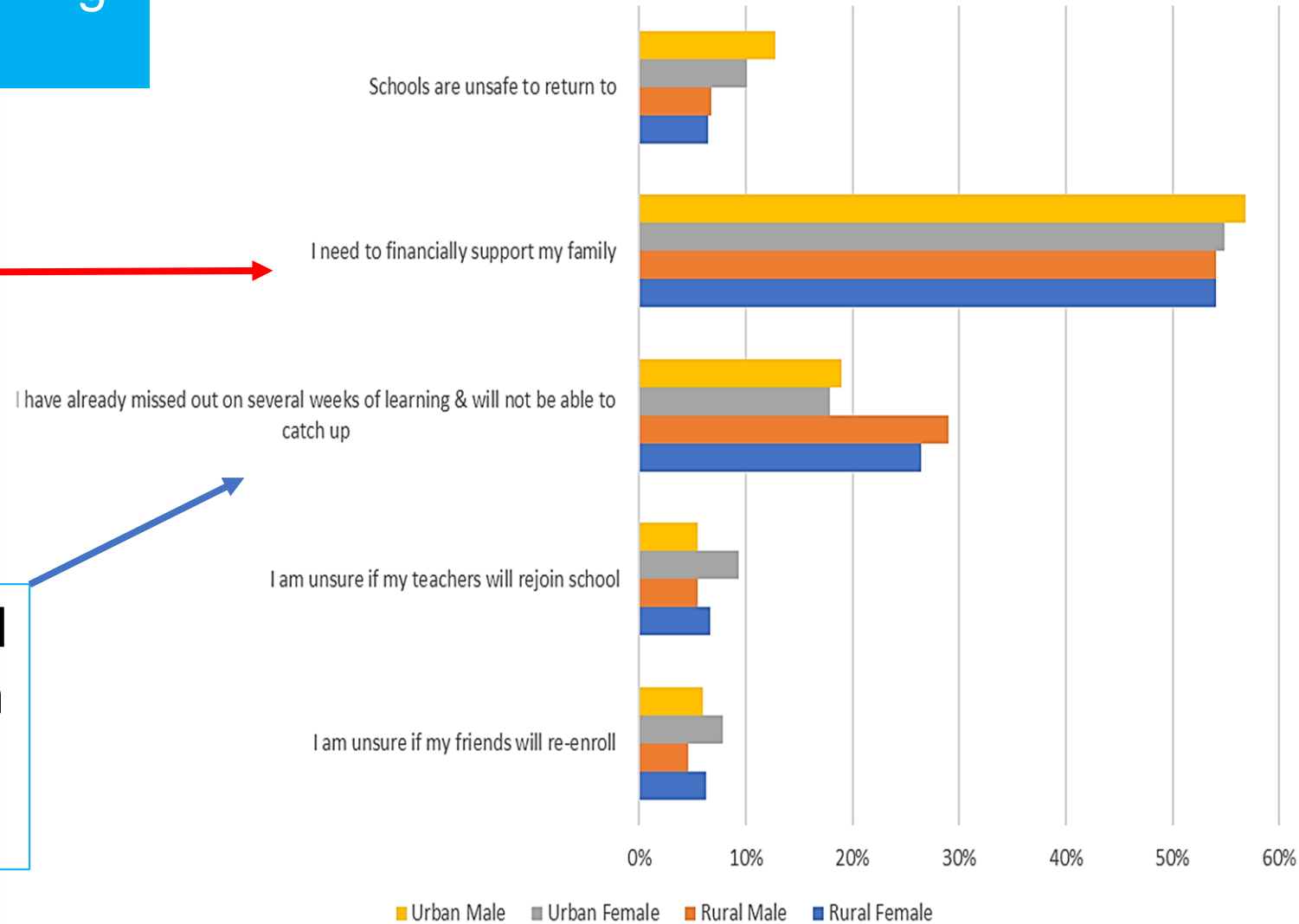
- Poverty & multiple deprivation
- Fiscal space and funding
- Capacity for decentralized approaches
- Population size and density
- Gender disparities
- Language, ethnicity and culture
- Communication with parents, teachers and communities

Impact of household poverty on learning. Pakistan survey (Oct. 2020)

More than half of students may drop out to support their families.

30% of rural students afraid they have missed too much already to catch up.

Factors that might prevent students from re-enrolling when schools are reopen



Critical challenge to School Reopening – The balance in the Public Debate

Public Health Consideration

Health & safety of
children

Potential Negative Impact

Learning loss

VAC/abuse
/neglect

Out-of-school
children

Cyber risks

Mental health

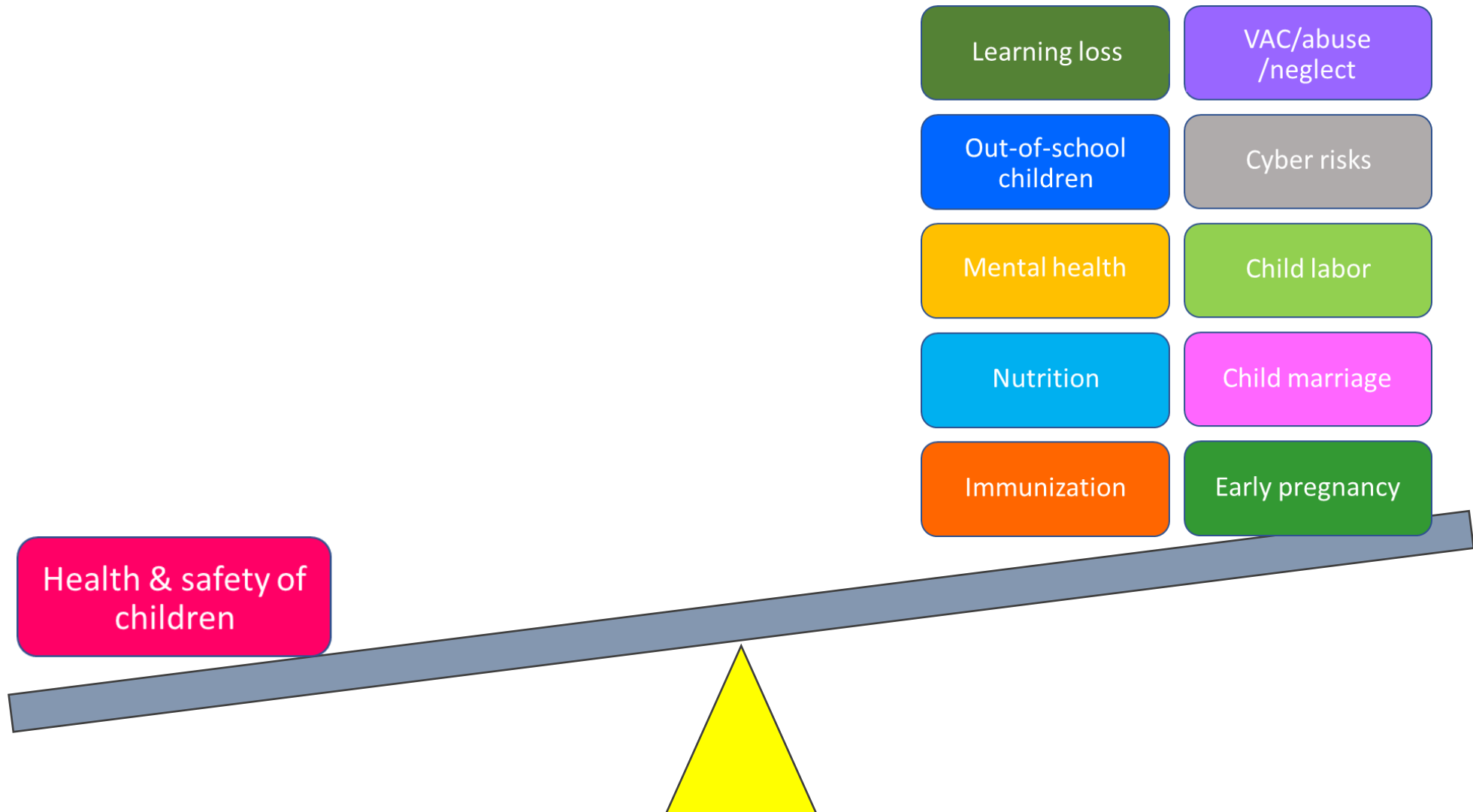
Child labor

Nutrition

Child marriage

Immunization

Early pregnancy



Effective vertical and horizontal co-ordination is a must

- Need high level cross-sectoral political leadership
- Coordination between MoE; MoH, Gender and Children, WASH, Social Welfare and Protection.
- Coordination between central level and sub-national levels, including schools and across sectors.
- Leveraging new partnerships, including CSOs, community associations and private sector.



Readiness of schools to implement safe reopening: WASH infrastructure in South Asia is a major challenge

HYGIENE BASELINES PRE COVID-19 IN SOUTH ASIA AND SOUTH EAST ASIA[JMP, 2019]

4 in 10 households in South Asia do not have handwashing facility with soap and water on premises



5 in 10 schools in South Asia do not have hand-washing facilities with soap and water available to students



We do not know the proportion of health care facilities in South Asia that have functional hand hygiene facilities with soap and water or hand sanitizer



3 out of 10 households in East Asia and Pacific* do not have a dedicated place for washing hands with soap and water on premises



More than half of the schools in East Asia and the Pacific* do not have hand-washing facilities with soap and water available to students



More than 6 out of 10 health care facilities in East Asia and Pacific have functional handwashing facilities with soap and water or hand sanitizer



Available guidance: *multi- agency framework to reopen schools*

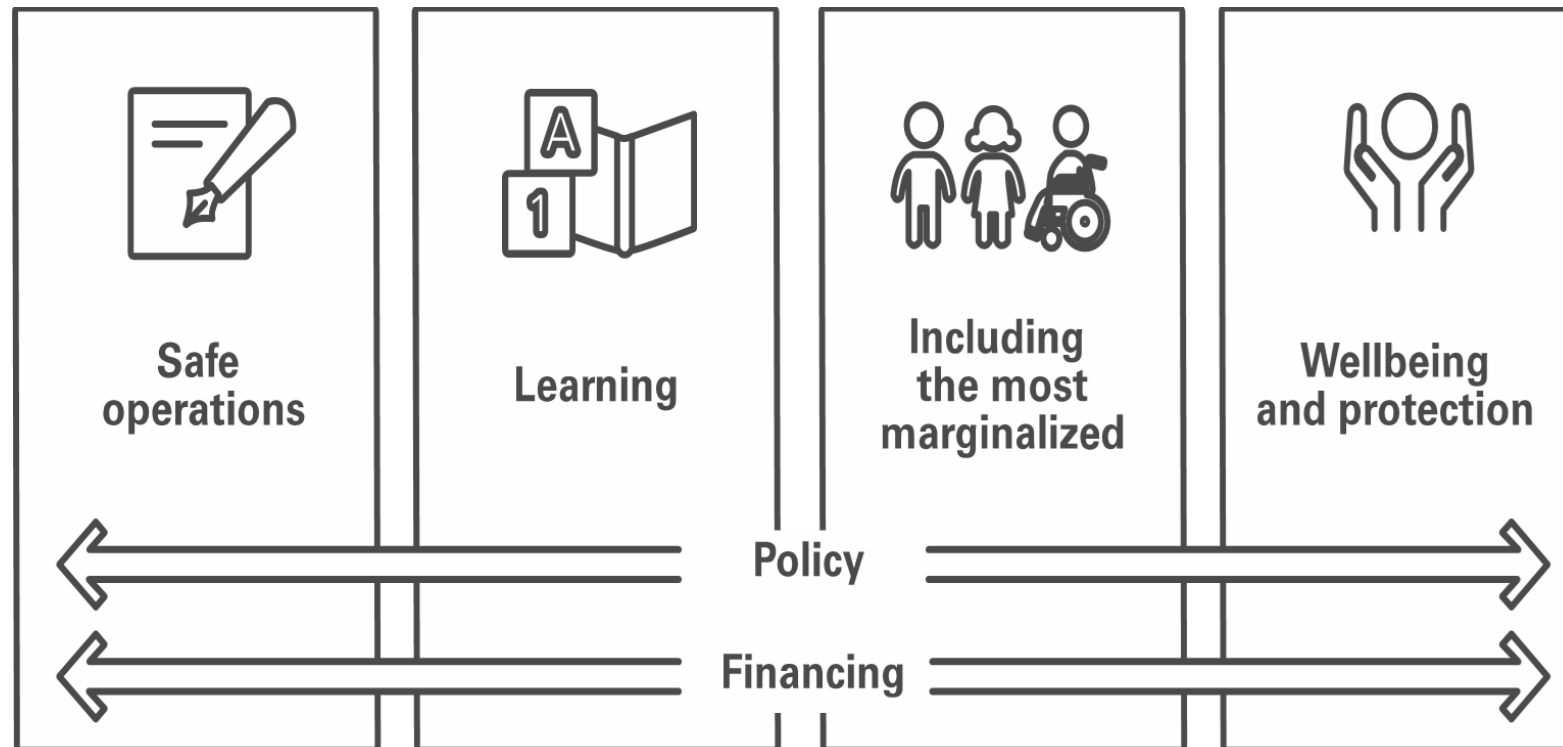


- 6 Key Dimensions of School Re-openings:
- 4 pillars
 - 2 enabling conditions

When, where and which schools to reopen?

“The timing of school re-openings should be guided by the best interest of the child and overall public health considerations, based on an assessment of the associated benefits and risks and informed by cross-sectoral and context-specific evidence, including education, public health and socio-economic factors.” –

UNICEF Framework for Reopening Schools, April 2020



Re-opening schools in a phased approach:



Prior to reopening

Prepare with critical policies, procedures, and financing plans **focused on safe operations** and reforms needed to strengthen systems, including **remote learning** practices.

Part of reopening process

Adopt proactive approaches to reintegrate marginalized and out of school children. **Invest in water, sanitation and hygiene** to mitigate risks and focus on **remedial education** to compensate for lost instructional time.

With schools reopened

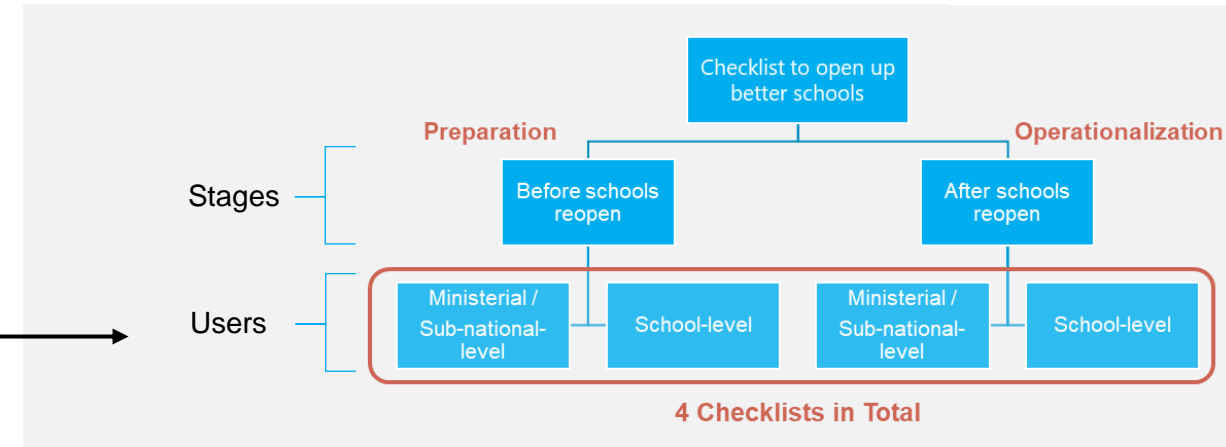
Actively **monitor health indicators, expanding focus on wellbeing and protection**. Strengthen pedagogy, adapt remote education for **blended teaching and learning**, including knowledge on disease transmission and prevention.

Guidance to plan & monitor safe reopening: ROSA toolkit

Can be used as a **planning and monitoring tool**

1. Checklists to open up better schools

- Key decisions and preparations needed for safe reopenings and operations.



2. Technical guides for day-to-day schools operations

- Detailed, technical, sector and theme-specific guidelines for reference in preparing for school reopenings, or operations.

- ☐ WASH
- ☐ Physical distancing
- ☐ Gender considerations
- ☐ Guidance for teachers and school administrators

****Includes (where applicable) a list of supplies, costing templates, detailed activities, guidelines for contextualization, etc.**

3. Key guidance documents and tools

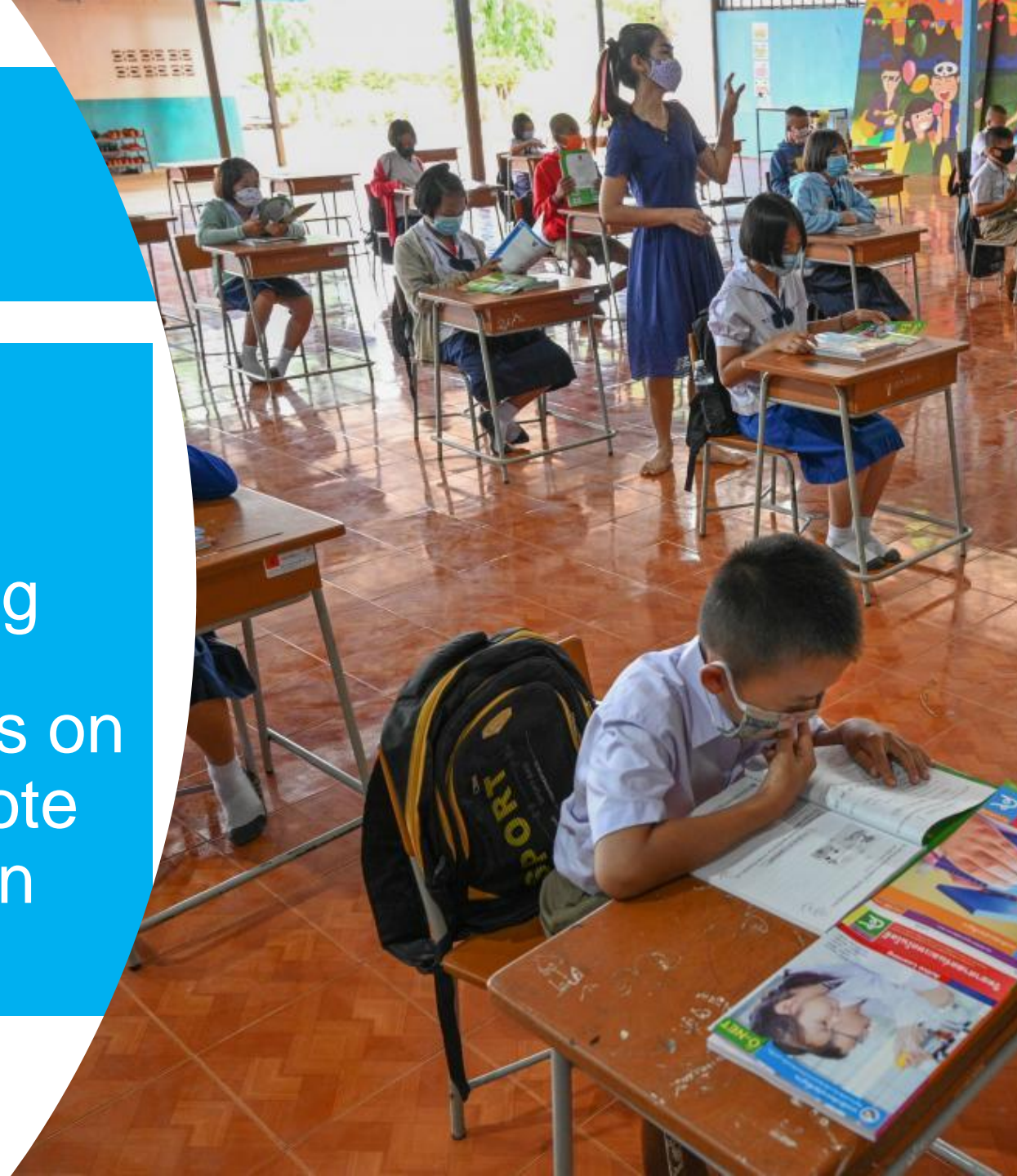
- Links to online resources published at global, regional and country level for further reference

Using the Toolkit

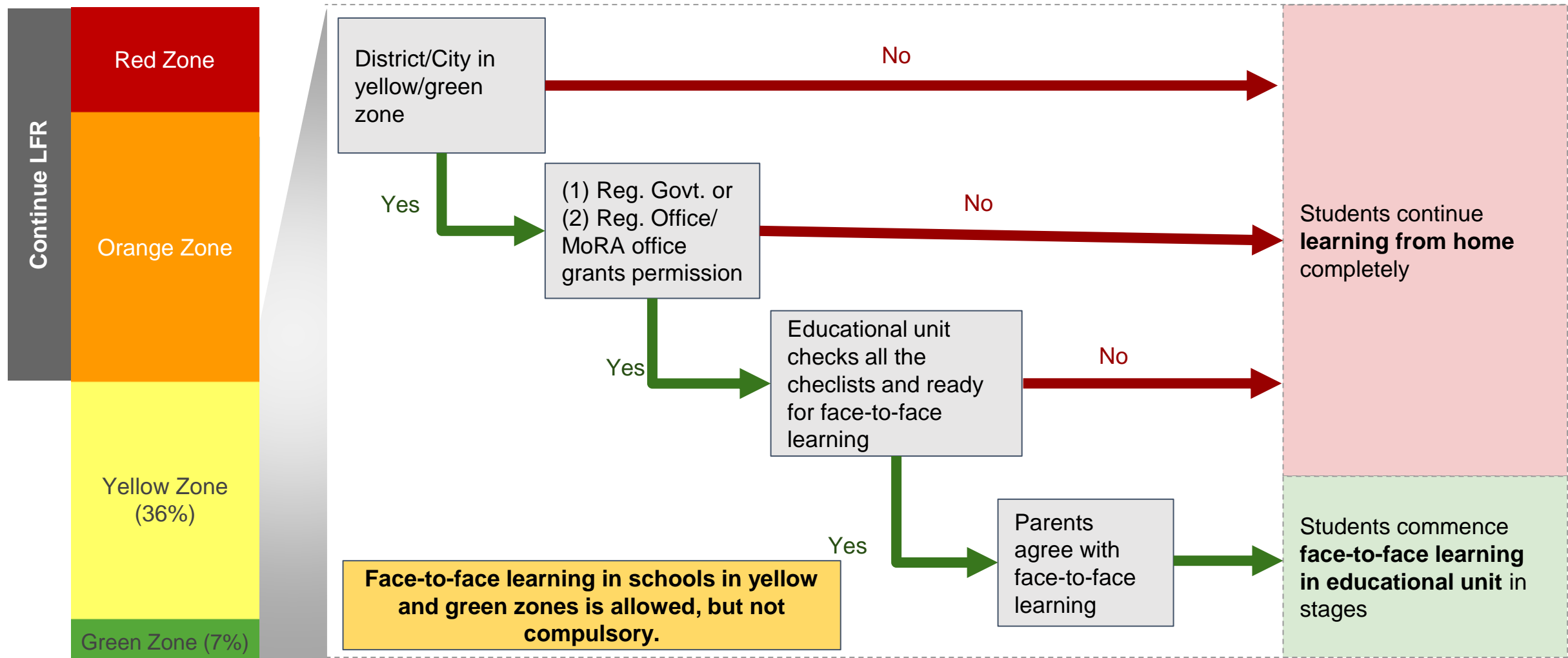
	School-level (School Management)	District-level (District Education Officers, School Inspectors)	National-level/Provincial- level (MoE, Disaster Committees, etc.)
Before Reopening (monitoring prepared ness)	Have cleaning supplies been purchased and has the school been disinfected?	Have schools purchased cleaning supplies and have schools been disinfected?	Which districts are not able to implement minimum guidelines and standards ?
After Reopening (monitoring compliance)	Are cleaning supplies stocked regularly and is the school cleaned regularly according to given guidelines?	Do schools have enough cleaning supplies in stock and are schools disinfected regularly and properly?	Which districts are struggling to comply/apply the required standards for safe school operations?

HOW to reopen safely

1. Decrease class sizes
2. Stagger school days/shift systems/use blended learning
3. Phase reopening: initial focus on low risk, poor access to remote learning and younger children



Rational approaches: Indonesia: decision tree



Safe operations (Pillar 1)

1. Protocols for re-closing/re-opening
2. Training of key staff in protocols
3. Hygiene measures implemented (e.g. disinfection, WASH facilities, health checks)
4. Monitoring of implementation



Pragmatic approaches in the short term should lead to more systemic longer term interventions

WASH/IPC Package for safe re-opening of a School

Immediate

- Handwashing with soap (preferred & prioritized option)
- Use of hand sanitizer for a limited time under close supervision; not more than a month, where water availability is an issue
- Essential disinfection supplies
- Training to teachers/master trainer on WASH/IPC
- Disinfection of schools/need base
- Re-locating communal handwashing station

Short Term

- Rehab and maintenance of existing water supply
- Extension from nearby system
- Improved storage
- Improve sanitation, mainly toilet and solid waste management
- Support monitoring mechanism including private schools for adherence to SOP
- School WASH clubs strengthening

Long Term

- Invest in system and institutional strengthening for improved WinS through public resources & private sector
- Support the implementation of the approved WinS strategy with the inclusion of WASH/IPC

On-going:

- Capacity building of SMC and community engagement : for improved WinS service provision & monitoring
- Continue social behavior change communication
- Advocacy on hygiene promotion in coordination with C4D and A&C
- Coordination with education sector and government department at all levels

Good practice in Papua, Indonesia

Best practice from Supiori:

- School submits letter to DEO and signs commitment letter re. health protocols.
- DEO provides Thermo Gun
- Village support hand washing facilities, soap, masks,
- Cleaning and disinfection by school committee and community
- School reopens with health protocols and learning in shifts

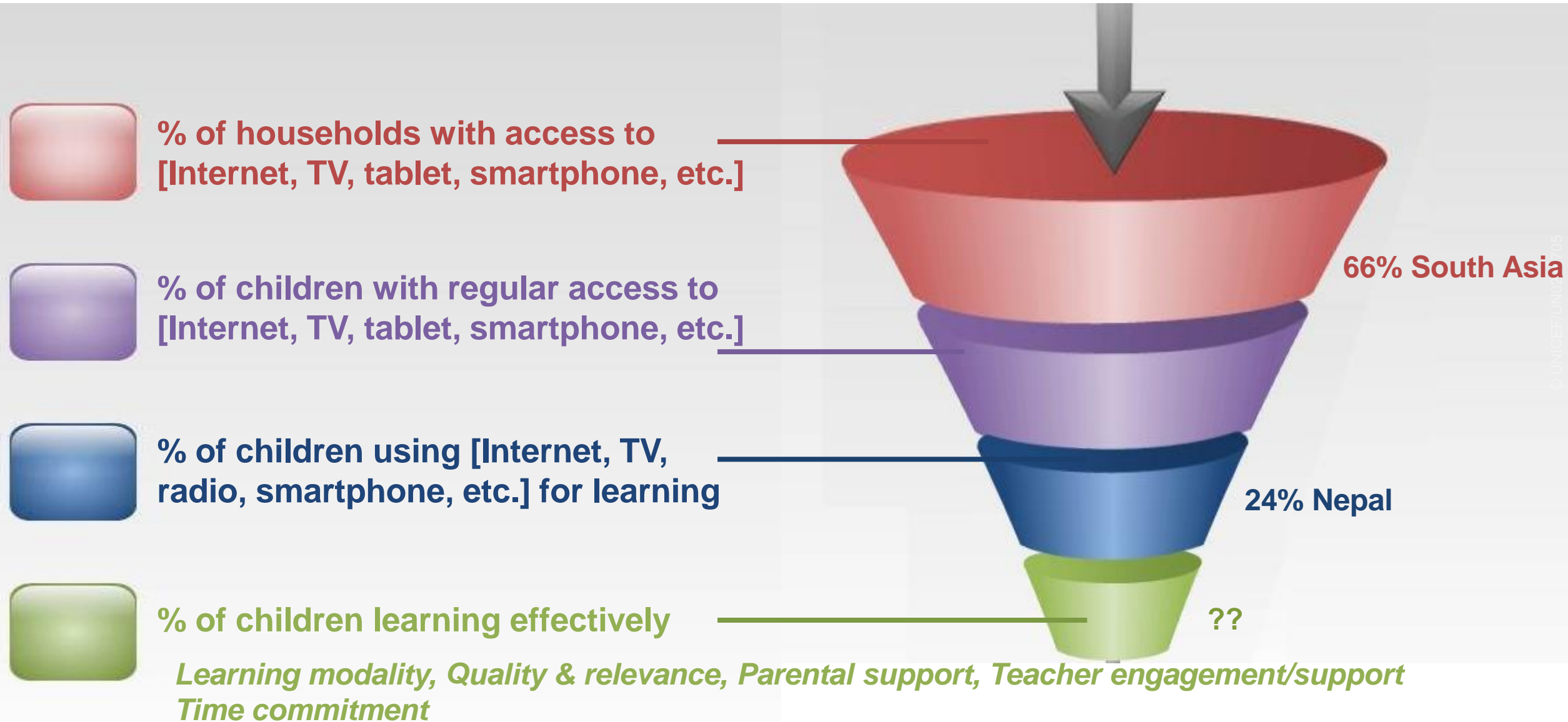


Safe-guarding learning (Pillar 2)

1. Remedial/catch-up programmes
2. Adjustment of learning calendar
3. Simplification of curricula
4. Flexible/blended approaches



Is remote learning the answer?: Estimated versus actual reach in South Asia



Reaching the most marginalized (Pillar 3)

1. Targeted practical support to most marginalized
2. Provision of materials in accessible formats
3. Maximising potential of ICT e.g. for minority language speakers and Children With Disabilities
4. Using low tech approaches where necessary
5. Blended approaches.



Well-being and protection (Pillar 4)

1. Early, regular communication and support to teachers, parents and students
2. Provision of MHPSS support
3. (Re-)establishment of essential services (e.g. Vaccinations and school feeding)



Reimagining the future of education from a school health perspective

Schools should:

- Detect and monitor health issues, including disabilities and special needs
- Detect and monitor protection issues, like bullying and sexual abuse.
- Detect mental health issues and refer for support
- Provide school meals for poor children
- Support holistic development of children, including life skills, employability skills & sexuality education
- Inculcate healthy behaviours
- Impart tolerance and empathy for social cohesion.

‘A healthy child is more likely to learn; and an educated child is more likely to have a healthy future’

Governments and development partners should:

- Revitalise cross-sectoral partnerships around school health and nutrition, as per the FRESH framework



**WHO-UNICEF-UNESCO-UNFPA consultation on
safe reopening and operations of schools**

Key take-away messages on back-to-school activation:

1. The re-opening of schools must be considered an utmost priority as soon as it is deemed safe or the education, or the health and social well being of this and future generations will be undermined.
2. Decisions about return to school should be supported by key actors at sub-national and community levels based on an assessment of benefits and risks.
3. Uncertainties about reclosures must be addressed through flexible approaches, which reach all children.
4. When schools re-open they must provide much needed support to children affected by COVID.
5. After re-opening we need to address critical gaps and ensure that all children learn better and are healthier in future.
6. Education budgets must be protected in the short term and expanded in the longer term.

Thank you



For further information please contact:

Jim Ackers, jackers@unicef.org
UNICEF Regional Education Advisor for South Asia

unicef  | for every child

Q & A Session

COVID-19 Pandemic

Reopening of schools: Health actions

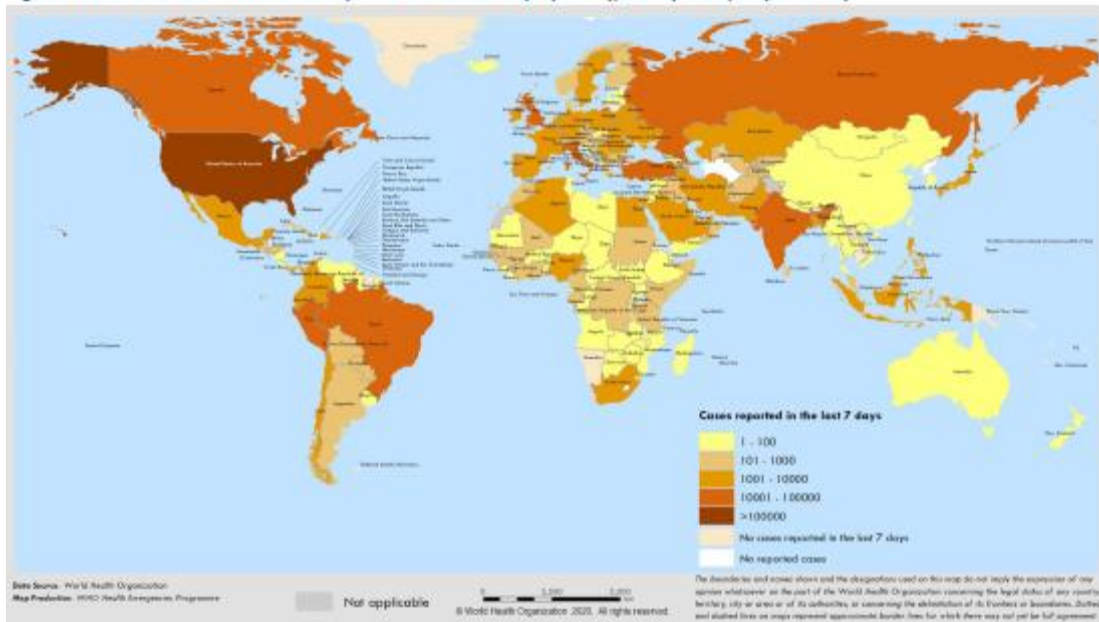
**Dr Atnafu
Getachew Asfaw**
UNICEF-ROSA

Dr Rajesh Mehta
WHO-SEARO

Dr Jo Sauvarin
UNFPA-APRO

COVID-19 Pandemic

Figure 1. Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases reported in the last seven days by country, territory or area, 28 April to 4 May**



- About 200 countries and territories affected

Confirmed new cases:

Global: > 36 million SEAR: 7 million

Unfortunate deaths:

Global: > 1 million SEAR: >125 K

- Future course is not predictable with any accuracy

“Learn to live with the Corona Virus”

Reopening Schools

Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools

March 2020



Education Sector

UNESCO COVID-19 Education Response Education Sector issue notes

Issue note n° 7.1 – April 2020



Framework for reopening schools

GUIDANCE FOR SAFE AND HEALTHY JOURNEYS TO SCHOOL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND BEYOND



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

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

10 May 2020

Background

In response to COVID-19, countries around the world have implemented several measures, including school closures, to prevent the spread of the virus. However, as the pandemic evolves, countries will need to adjust these measures to balance public health and educational needs. This annex provides guidance on adjusting public health measures in different contexts and on how to return to schools or close schools in a safe manner. It is based on a review of available literature, discussion with experts, and input from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of Experts on Educational Institutions and COVID-19.

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

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

14 September 2020

Introduction

Countries around the world are taking broad public health and social measures (PHSM), including closure of schools, to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19.¹ This Annex examines considerations for school operations, including openings, closures and re-openings and the measures needed to minimize the risk to students and staff of COVID-19. This Annex applies to educational settings for children under the age of 18 years and outlines general principles and key recommendations that can be tailored not only to schools but to specific school-related contexts, such as extracurricular activities.

This Annex replaces a document published by the World Health Organization on 10 May 2020 entitled *Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19*.² This document was developed with input from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of Experts on Educational Institutions and COVID-19 and experts from WHO, UNICEF, and UNESCO, who jointly reviewed the latest evidence to develop this interim guidance, which considers equity, resource implications, and feasibility. The main changes introduced in this document are a risk-based approach for school operations in the context of COVID-19 based on the level and intensity of the transmission at administrative levels lower than the national level, age-appropriate considerations for both physical distancing and the use of masks in the school setting and comprehensive, multi-layered measures to prevent introduction and spread of SARS-CoV-2 in educational setting.



IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Interim Guidance

SCALING-UP COVID-19 OUTBREAK READINESS AND RESPONSE OPERATIONS IN HUMANITARIAN SITUATIONS

Considerations for reopening

Two inter-related objectives: Education and Health

- 1. Continuity of learning: Ensuring safe, adequate and appropriate educational and social learning, and development of children**
 - **System readiness:** Staff, infrastructure, resources and capacity to resume functions
 - **System resilience:** Preparedness of the education system to anticipate, respond to and mitigate the effects of current and future crises
- 2. An overarching priority: Health and well-being of the institutional population, families and community at large**
 - **Minimizing the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission** within school settings and guarding against the schools acting as amplifiers for transmission
 - **Ensuring school-related public health and social measures are integrated** into the wider measures implemented at the community level in the country

MOH and MOE work closely

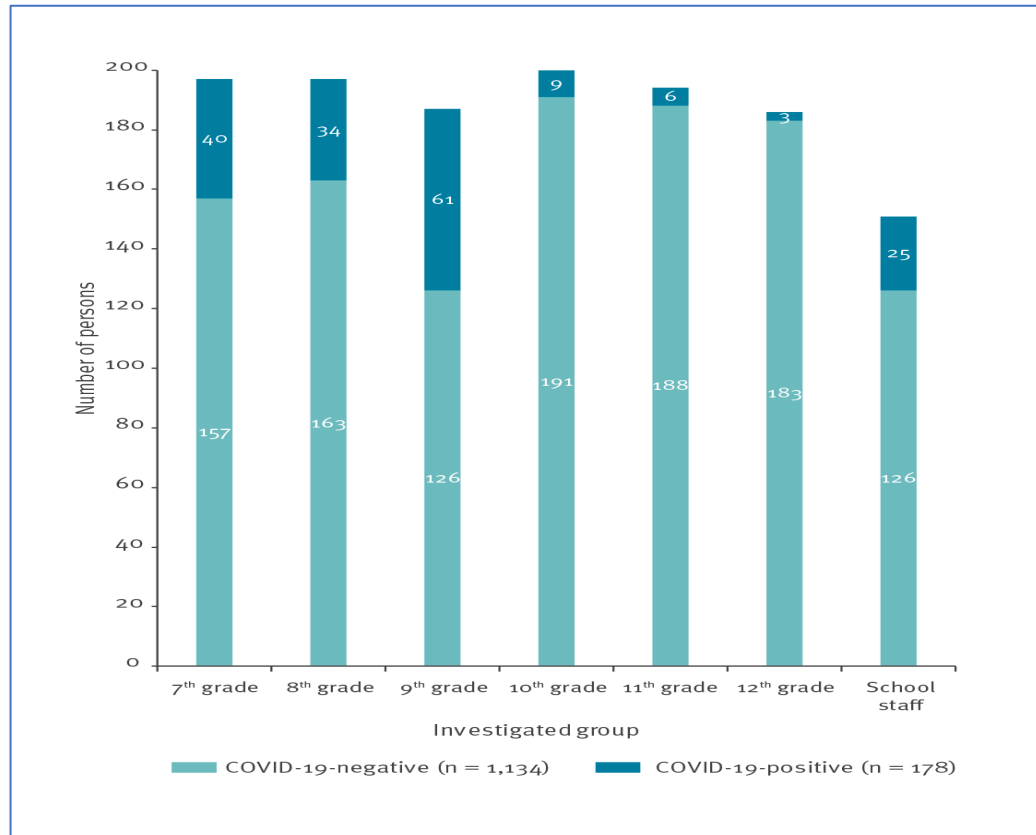
Health issues

- **Lockdown:** Health benefits Vs Economic loss
- **Benefits vs harm of school closure:**
 - **Children and adolescents are less affected** by COVID-19: Less serious disease
 - **Children as spreaders:** Evolving evidence
 - **Children are seriously affected by control measures:** Social isolation, learning disruption
 - **Vulnerable and children with special needs** are more affected
 - **Exposure to poverty and compromised settings in households**
- **When to reopen?**
- **Prevent fresh outbreaks**
 - The Center for global development: School opening did not change disease transmission with few exceptions (US , Israel)
- **Safe Operations:** All school activities restored safely

Keep equity in mind – include marginalized and students with special needs

Outbreaks could happen: Example from Israel

Crowding, Masking, air-conditioning were not optimal



- Schools reopened with “preventive actions”
 - Daily health reports, Hygiene, Facemasks, Social distancing, Minimal interaction between classes
- Major outbreak after 10 days
 - Higher positivity in **Grade 9 and below** (lower in Grade 10-12)
- Lessons: Pitfalls of reopening too soon
 - The safeguards need to be in place prior to reopening
 - Crowding, face mask, air-conditioning style were not optimal

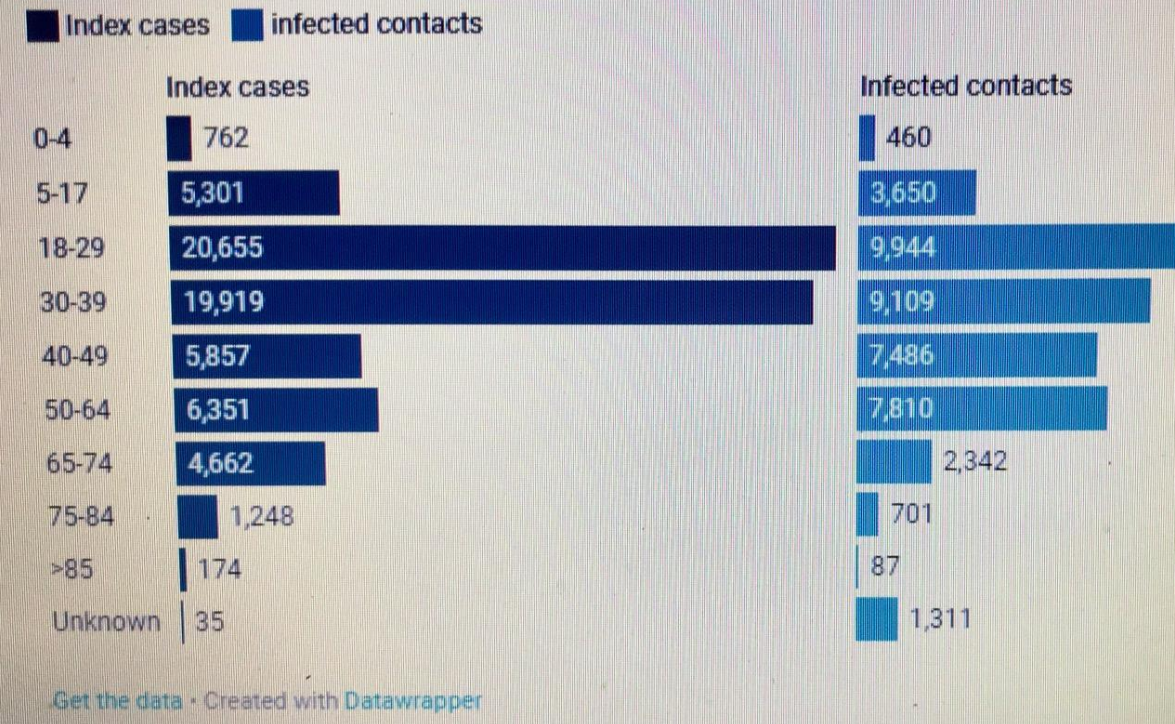
Children as spreaders: Under investigation

Susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2 Infection Among Children and Adolescents Compared With Adults A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis: Viner et al, JAMA Paediatrics Sep 2020

- The role of children and adolescents in transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is dependent on **susceptibility, symptoms, viral load, social contact patterns, and behavior.**
- The role that children and adolescents play in transmission of this virus remains unclear:
 - 3 school-based contact-tracing studies found **minimal transmission** from child or teacher index cases.
 - Children and adolescents **play a lesser role than adults in transmission** of SARS-CoV-2 at a population level – weak evidence

85000 patients with 580 000 contacts in three South India States - Sep 2020

Most cases from big spreaders



When to reopen educational institutions

Decision taken at local level

Status of SARS-COV-2 transmission level and consideration for school operations

Transmission level at district/sub-district level	General considerations
No cases	All schools open and implement COVID-19 prevention and control measures.
Sporadic cases	All schools open and implement COVID-19 prevention and control measures.
Clusters transmission	Most schools open, and implement COVID-19 prevention and control measures. Authorities may consider closing schools as part of broader PHSM in the areas experiencing an expansion in the number of clusters that includes schools.
Community transmission	Risk-based approach for the operation of school and other community-wide PHSM with aim of ensuring the continuity of children's education. It is likely that broad PHSM including school closure will be in place in areas with increasing trends of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations for COVID-19 and COVID-19 deaths; any schools remaining open should strictly adhere to COVID-19 guidelines. ⁴

Safe operations: Preparation

- **Health environment: Status and preparedness**
 - Distancing in school spaces
 - Ventilation – use of open-air spaces
 - Hand washing facilities, toilets: separate for girls and boys
 - Disinfection: Regular cleaning of surfaces
 - Commodities: Uninterrupted supply of clean water, soap, sanitizers, thermometers, masks
 - Screening, isolation and referral
- **Safe extra-curricular activities**
- **Safe accommodation / hostel facilities**
- **Safe school transport: Ensure safety on the way to and from school** to minimize the risk of new infections
- **Multi-sectoral actions:** Education and health, WASH, Social sector, Transport sector, Private sector, and Community at large

Health Actions: National, sub-national and school levels

Use of Masks in schools

- **Children aged 5 years and under:** Should not be required to wear masks
- **Children between six and 11 years of age:** Risk-based approach: Intensity of transmission, child's capacity to comply
- **Children and adolescents 12 years or older:** Should follow the national mask guidelines for adults
- **Teacher and support staff** may be required to wear masks when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others or there is widespread transmission in the area
- **Ensure the use of a mask does not interfere with learning; safe disposal**
- **Children should not be denied access to education because of mask wearing or the lack of a mask because of low resources or unavailability**

Ensuring health and wellbeing in school community

- **Get wide support:** Communicate and consult with parents, caretakers' community, public health authorities
- **Promote health education:** Disseminate age and language-appropriate messages around hand washing, respiratory hygiene, masking, distancing
- **Sustaining school-based activities:** Sports, Nutrition (Mid day meal, IFA, deworming), immunization, school health services, comprehensive sexuality education, sanitary napkins
- **Care for mental health and socio-emotional well-being:**
 - Deal with prejudice and stigma
 - Onsite psychosocial support to students and education personnel to deal with anxiety, stress related to COVID-19, PTSD
 - Referral care: Coordinate with pre-identified psychologists, counselors, social workers
- **Assess and address female vulnerability:** Barriers of access, increased risk of school dropout, early marriage and pregnancy, GBV
- **Address the special needs:** Disabilities, vulnerabilities

Monitoring the health status of staff and students:

Pre-existing risk factors, SOPs for screening, plan for a member who falls ill - isolation, referral

Why is Comprehensive Sexuality Education a priority?

- **Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)**, variously known as **Adolescent Education Programme, Family Life Programme, Life Skills Programme**
- **Disruption of school – focus on academic subjects**
- **CSE – carrier subject for social and emotional skills**
 - Communication, decision making, relationships, self respect and respect for others, gender equality
 - Participatory methodology with role plays, discussions so students internalize knowledge and attitudes, practice skills
 - Social and emotional skills linked with reduction of anxiety and depression, bullying and harassment, drug and alcohol use, and increased educational attainment
- **CSE – prevention of adolescent pregnancy, HIV and STIs**
- **CSE – gender equitable attitudes**, contribution to reduction in **GBV**

Discussion of relationships important **entry point for students to seek advice**

In and out of school CSE programmes and links to services

- **Innovation in many countries pre-COVID, during COVID**
 - **providing CSE online/television** eg Mongolia, China
 - **Linkage to youth friendly hotlines and mental health services** – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Mongolia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam
 - **Youth-led initiatives on digital sexuality education** - Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam (and many others)
 - **Targeted CSE programmes for young people with disabilities, LGBTI**
- **Linking students to beyond-school initiatives**
 - Students may prefer **anonymity** of on-line/out of school programmes
 - **Reduces barriers** of access
 - **Peer to peer** support in many of the initiatives
 - Can address special needs eg **disability, LGBTI** more directly

Checklist for school administrators, teachers and staff

1. **Promote and demonstrate regular hand washing and positive hygiene** behaviors and monitor their uptake. Ensure adequate, clean and separate toilets for girls and boys
 - Ensure soap and safe water is available at age-appropriate hand washing stations
 - Encourage frequent and thorough washing (at least 20 seconds)
 - Place hand sanitizers in toilets, classrooms, halls, and near exits where possible
 - Ensure adequate, clean and separate toilets or latrines for girls and boys
2. **Clean and disinfect building**, classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities at least once a day, particularly surfaces that are touched by many people (railings, lunch tables, sports equipment, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids etc.)
 - **Use sodium hypochlorite at 0.5%** (equivalent 5000ppm) for disinfecting surfaces
 - **Use 70% ethyl alcohol** for disinfection of small items
 - **Ensure appropriate equipment** for cleaning staff
3. **Increase air flow and ventilation** where climate allows (open windows, use air conditioning where available, etc.)
4. **Post signs for encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices**
5. **Ensure trash is removed** daily and disposed of safely



Checklist for parents/caregivers & community members



1. **Monitor your child's health** and keep them home from school if they are ill
2. **Teach and model good hygiene practices** for your children
 - Wash your hands with soap and safe water frequently. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water, if hands are visibly dirty
 - Ensure that safe drinking water is available, clean toilets are available at home
 - Ensure waste is safely collected, stored and disposed of
 - Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow and avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth, nose
3. **Encourage your children to ask questions and express their feelings** with you and their teachers. Remember that your child may have different reactions to stress; be patient and understanding.
4. **Prevent stigma** by using facts and reminding students to be considerate of one another
5. **Coordinate with the school** to receive information and ask how you can support school safety efforts (though parent-teacher committees, etc.)



Checklist for students and children

Key Messages
and Actions for
COVID-19
Prevention and
Control in
Schools
March 2020

unicef



1. Mental status:

- It is normal to feel sad, worried, confused, scared or angry in a situation like this.
- Know that you are not alone and talk to someone you trust, like your parent or teacher.
- Ask questions, educate yourself and get information from reliable sources.

2. Protect yourself and others:

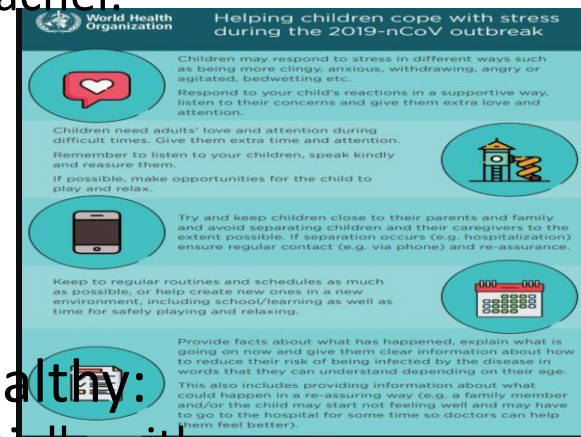
- Wash your hands frequently, always with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Remember to not touch your face
- Do not share cups, eating utensils, food or drinks with others

3. Be a leader in keeping yourself, your school, family and community healthy:

- Share what you learn about preventing disease with your family and friends, especially with younger children
- Model good practices such as sneezing or coughing into your elbow and washing your hands, especially for younger family members

4. Don't stigmatize your peers or tease anyone about being sick; remember that the virus doesn't follow geographical boundaries, ethnicities, age or ability or gender.

5. If you feel sick tell your parents, another family member, or a caregiver, and ask to stay home.



Key messages

- **Acknowledge** the unprecedented magnitude and global nature of the crisis
- **Education and Health objectives are linked:** Maintaining health in the institutions is critical – Help from Local Health Authority
- **Prioritize school reopening with adequate preparation:** Local decision
- **Open safely – Operate safely:** National and subnational plans and guidelines: Within a unified response to the pandemic
- **Continuation of curricular, extracurricular activities, school-based services**
- **Multi-sectoral collaboration and Partnership** with all stakeholders: **Private sector**
- **Monitor the situation:** Document success and challenges; Learn from others
- **Preparedness: Continuity plan** for next wave of COVID-19 and other crises in the long term

BUILD BACK BETTER



- **Building back Better:** An opportunity to strengthen school infrastructure including WASH provisions, health literacy and health promoting behaviours – **Health Promoting Schools**
- **Understand and use evolving evidence:** Document the practices and results, monitor and evaluate, undertake research



THANKS

Q & A Session