



SITUATION ANALYSIS ON THE EFFECTS OF AND RESPONSES TO COVID-19 ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Sub-regional webinar for East & Southeast Asia

11 MARCH 2021



Housekeeping Rules

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- Panelists: Please **mute your mics** during presentations/when others are speaking.
- Panelists & Attendees:
 - Please **use the Chat Box to ask questions/share information.**
 - Please **use the 'raise hand button'** to let us know that you have something to share, and we can unmute you!
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Agenda

SITUATION ANALYSIS ON EFFECTS OF AND RESPONSES TO COVID-19 IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN ASIA

Opening Welcome Remarks by Francisco Benavides, Regional Education Advisor (UNICEF EAPRO)

Introduction by Akihiro Fushimi (UNICEF EAPRO)

- Agenda and webinar house rules
- Background on Situation Analysis: objectives, scope of the analysis and focus of the Webinar

Session 1: Continuity of learning: access, participation and learning during/after the pandemic

- Presentation by Sue Williamson (Cambridge Education)
- Moderated Discussion facilitated by Nyi Nyi Thaung (UNESCO Bangkok)

Session 2: Safe school reopening and operations, health and well-being

- Presentation by Emma Mba (Cambridge Education)
- Moderated Discussion facilitated by Amalia Serrano (UNESCO Bangkok)

Session 3: Building back better to improve learning and increase system resilience

- Presentation by Barbara Payne (Cambridge Education)
- Moderated Discussion facilitated by Dominique Koeppl (UNICEF EAPRO)

Summary and Next Steps by Akihiro Fushimi (UNICEF EAPRO)

Closing Remarks by Nyi Nyi Thaung, a.i. Chief and Programme Specialist (UNESCO Bangkok)

Objectives of the Situation Analysis

1

To assess and estimate the **various impacts** of the COVID-19 epidemic on the education sector and stakeholders (children, adolescents, teachers, parents, education officials etc.) in Asia (East, Southeast and South Asia sub-regions).

2

To examine **policy** and **financial implications** on progress towards achieving SDG4-Education 2030 (*pre-pandemic 5-year progress review being done*).

3

To identify examples of promising **responses** and **strategies** in education and associated social sectors, which can be **shared** with other countries/regions.

Scope

Asia

- East
- Southeast
- South

Stakeholders

- Children
- Adolescents
- Parents
- Teachers
- Education Officials

- Focus on most marginalized
- Cross-sectoral
- Beyond UN programmes

Producing

- 14 country case studies with an in-depth look at a specific dimension of response
- An overview of the 3 sub-regions
- A regional synthesis
- A costing model

Covering

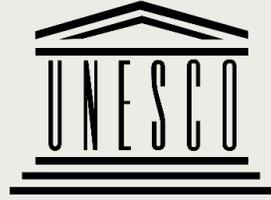
- Continuity of learning (incl. learning loss)
- Safe school reopening (incl. protection, health, well-being)
- Resilient education system

Identifying

- Effective responses/ good practices
- Lessons learnt
- Recommendations
- Policy and investment priorities to 'build back better'

Focus of Today's Webinar

1. Present **highlights** of the findings, lessons and recommendations
2. Get **feedback**
3. Understand key/emerging **priorities** (commonalities and differences)
4. Facilitate **exchanges** across the countries/stakeholders
5. Identify areas of further **collaboration** and **support** (country/region)



Rapid situation analysis on effects and responses to COVID-19 on the education sector in Asia

South East and East Asia Webinar



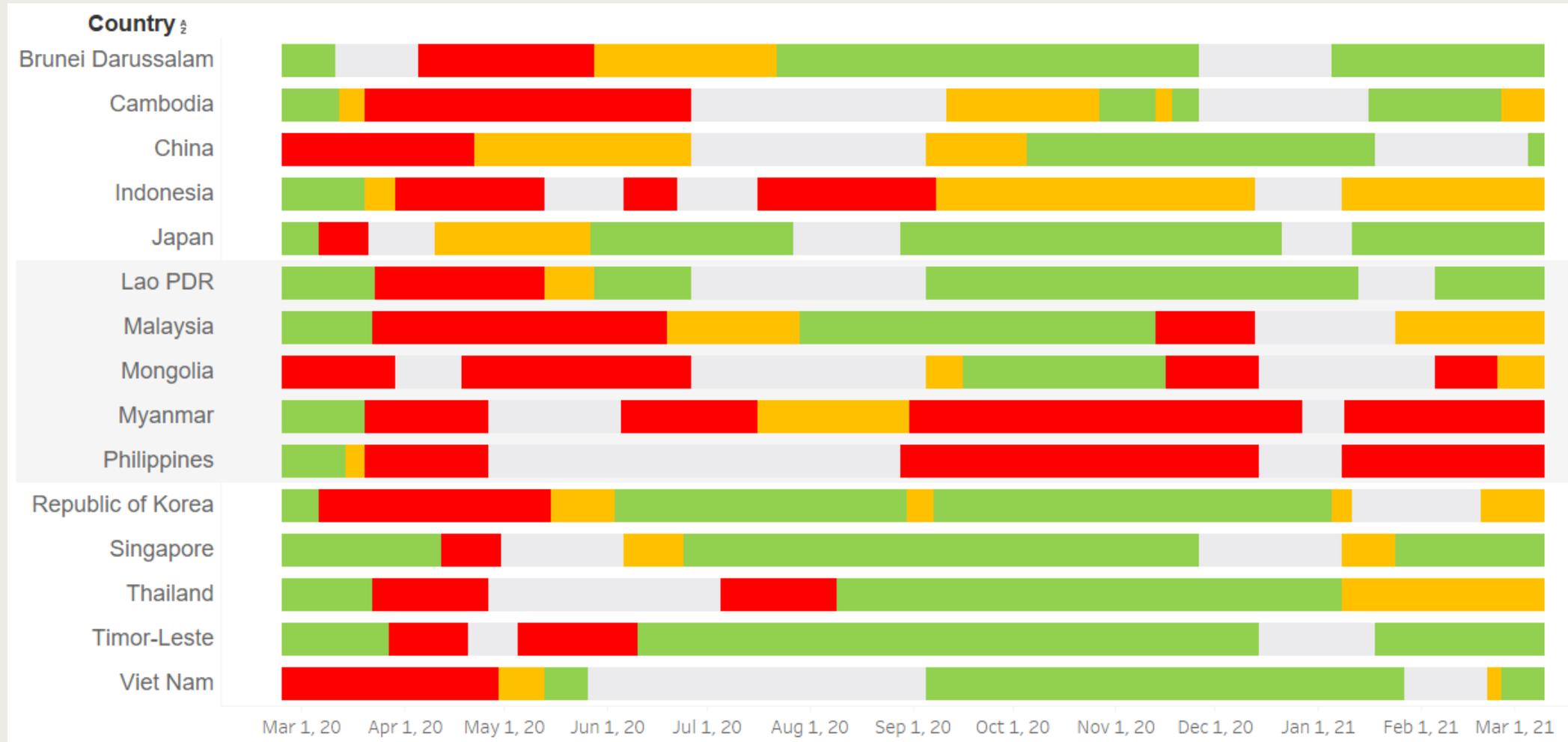
Presentation 1

Continuity of Learning

Access, participation & learning during the pandemic



Overview of school closures and planned school reopening



Evidence from a study after the Pakistan earthquake in 2005, showed that four years after schools had been closed for 3 months, children were 1.5 years behind in learning outcomes.

The **challenges** in maintaining continuity of learning in SE/E Asia

Reach and coverage

- **Governments** challenged by the digital divide affected most marginalised groups
- **Teachers and learners** faced challenges with electricity supply, access to devices, digital literacy and support

Addressing marginalisation and inequalities

- **Governments** lacked the data they needed to identify and target different groups of marginalised learners.
- Each **learner** faced their own challenges, including young learners, those with disabilities, girls, those who spoke minority languages or a combination of these factors.

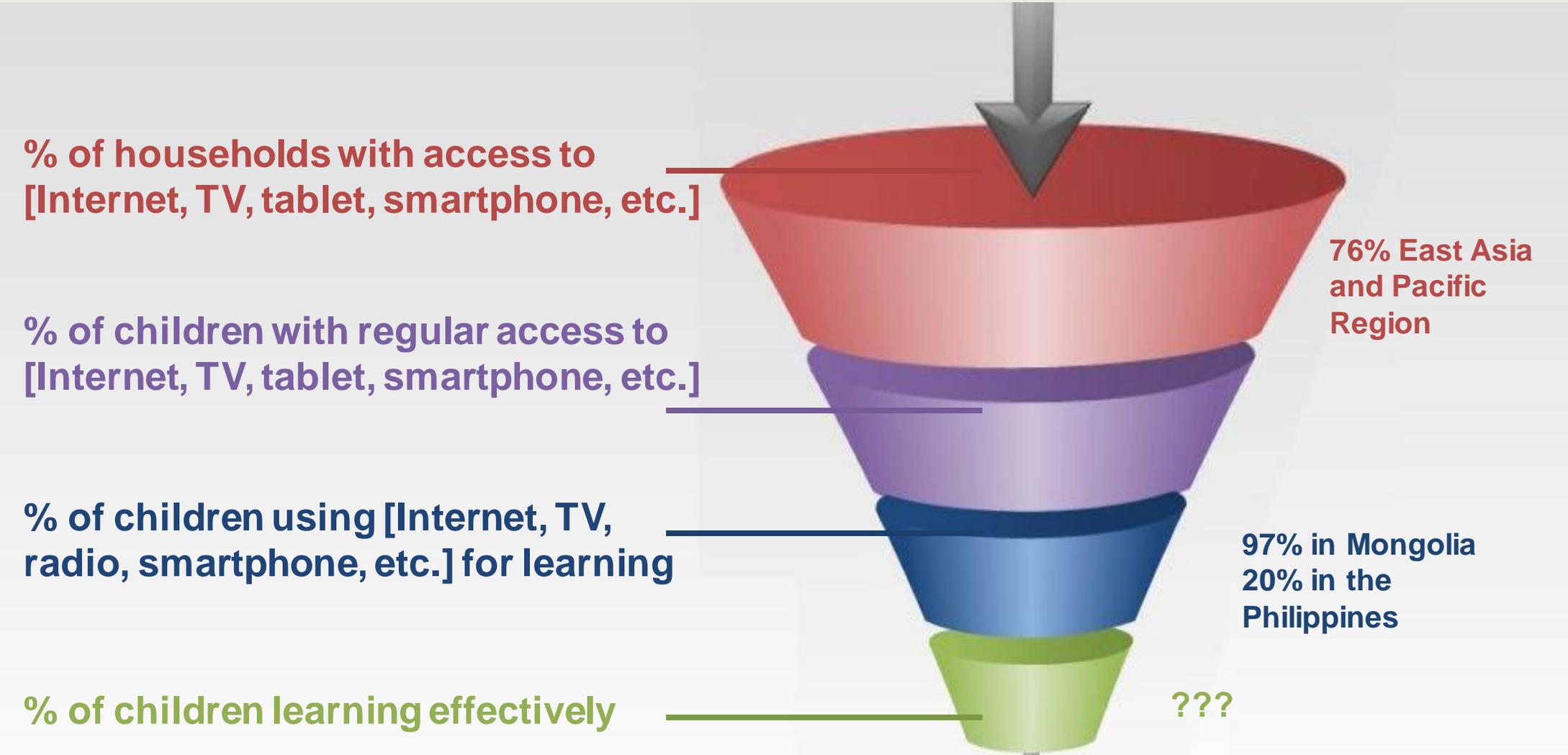
Levels of learning loss

- As **learners** go back to schools, there will be wider disparities in what they know, understand and can do.
- **Governments and teachers** have limited data available on the extent of the learning loss.
- **Teachers** faced multiple demands, but received very little training and support.

“For people like us living in a remote area far away from communication issues of access should raise concern to government and the world. When there is a pandemic, we received a big hit. There needs to be global attention on isolated areas – to make it more equal. There are some who have no access to technology and others that enjoy all the advantages.”

Source: Rapid situation analysis on effects and responses to COVID-19 on the education sector in Asia - South East Asia Sub-regional Report

Estimated reach vs actual reach



Positive responses: South East and East Asia

Reach and coverage

Vietnam, China and Indonesia: agreements with **internet companies** to provide low/no cost mobile and internet services

Japan: MEXT collected data from a sample of schools about the type of learning they assigned

China : Financial and equipment support was provided to children in remote areas and poor families to ensure their access to online learning, which varied from province to province.

Addressing marginalisation and inequalities

Vietnam: approx. 17.8 million students including **74,193 children with disabilities** were supported for their access to distance learning through both digital and nondigital means of communication

Lao PDR: For very young children, edutainment programmes such as 'My Village' were broadcast and storybooks such as 'My Hero is You' were translated and used in several countries

Indonesia: As part of the Learning from Home programme, in some remote areas, teachers visited students' homes or organised small groups to meet face to face outside school.

Levels of learning loss

Republic of Korea: MoE created 'the **10,000 community**' of experienced teachers ready to support other teachers, provided teachers with 'School-On' website on how to use online platforms, and provided remote support via **chatrooms and calls** for trouble-shooting

Vietnam: large-scale online teacher training was implemented to prepare for school reopening and to support preparation for distance learning

Lessons learnt about continuity of learning

Distance learning

Distance learning is no substitute for face to face education



A range of alternative modalities needed



Online learning was a challenge for all

Addressing marginalisation and inequalities

Stronger monitoring systems and real time monitoring



Need explicit policies to reach the marginalized



Developing a response for young learners is not easy but critical

Levels of learning loss

Children's future capacity to learn affected by pandemic

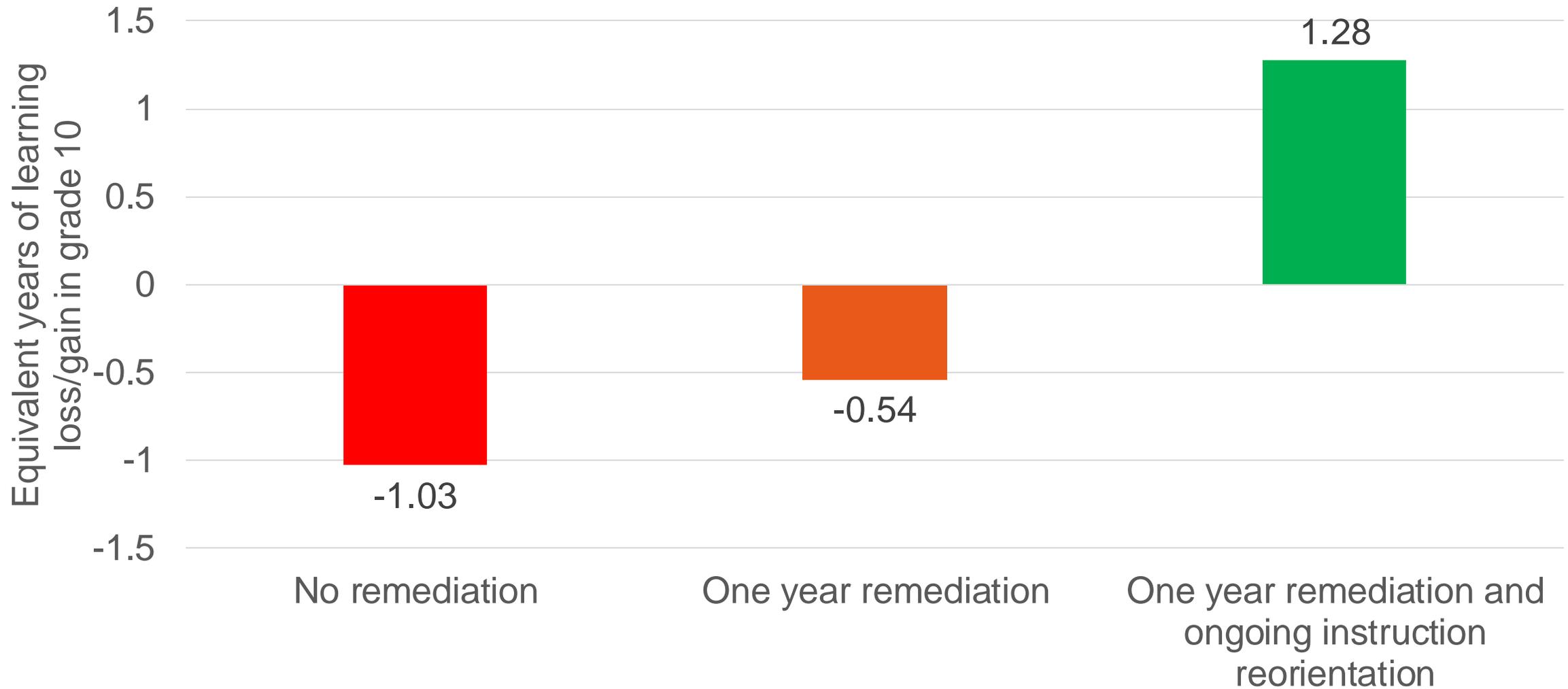


Managing the transition back to school is vital



Well trained, supported and remunerated teachers are key to quality education

What can be done to mitigate learning loss?



Source: Brookings

Roadmap for remediation

Strategy for long term gains

Immediate actions

- 1 Formative assessment
- 2 Curriculum prioritisation
- 3 Set goals for progression

Long term actions

- 4 Adapt plans and expectations to learners' levels
- 5 Give time to learners to revise, catch up and consolidate
- 6 Empower teachers to adapt their planning
- 7 Communicate learning goals and expectations to parents and learners
- 8 Develop blended learning solutions
- 9 Support school-based peer support groups for teachers

Recommendations

1 Reach and coverage

Short term

Develop a comprehensive strategy for taking forward a blended approach to learning.

Medium - long term

Promote public/private partnerships, with internet service providers to extend the reach of the internet and provide learning devices for those who need them.

2 Addressing marginalisation and inequalities

Short term

Target the different modalities of distance learning to reach the most marginalised and refocus on ECE. Use of low or no-tech solution will remain to be a strategy to reach the most marginalized for the time being.

Medium - long term

Promote digital inclusive education to create equitable learning opportunities that include marginalised and vulnerable children.

3 Low levels of learning

Short term

Enhance teachers' capacity to assess students' learning and deliver blended learning (how to plan, combine different modalities/tools effectively, etc.

Introduce remediation techniques on return to school.

Medium - long term

Reorient the role of the teacher towards managing and facilitating individualised learning.

Thank you

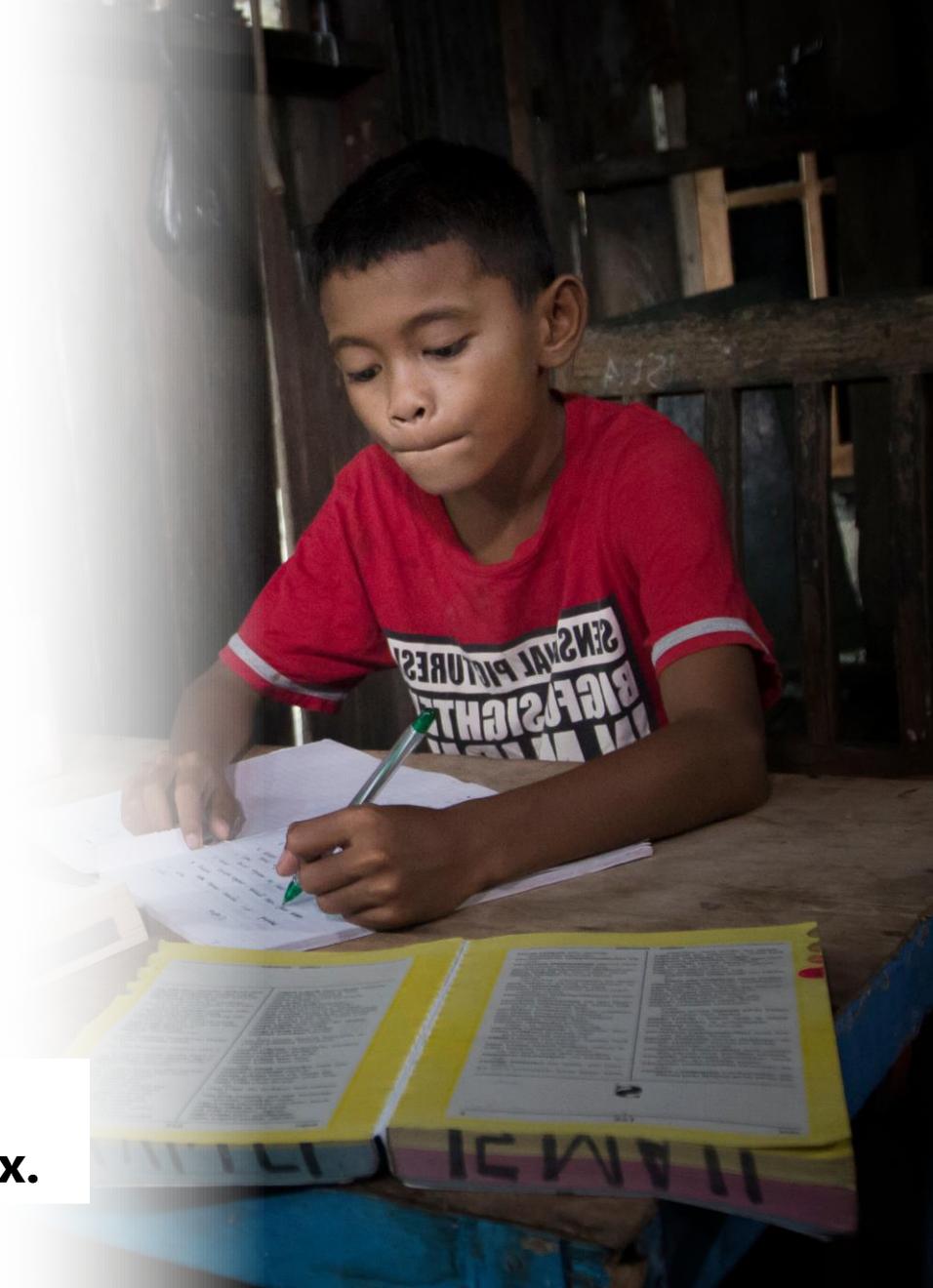


DISCUSSION

Continuity of Learning: access, participation and learning during school closures

What are your key challenges in ensuring continuity of learning during school closure, especially for the most marginalized?

NOTE: Please limit your choice to maximum 3 !
If you choose 'Other', please write them in Chat Box.



Presentation 2

Safe school (re)opening and operations, health & well-being



Number of COVID-19 infections and peak infection months

Despite progress over the previous decade the near poor and lower-middle-income groups remain at **risk of poverty**, and the impoverished at **risk of extreme poverty**, in the event of another crisis.

It has been estimated that prior to COVID-19, around 10-20% of children and adolescents worldwide experience mental health challenges with half of these beginning by age 14. In East Asia and the Pacific, **adolescents' mental health and well-being**, growing incidences of self-harm, and high suicide rates are of increasing concern.

Country	Infections per 100,000
Singapore	1,053
Malaysia	981
Philippines	550
Indonesia	510
Japan	348
Myanmar	263
Republic of Korea	179
Mongolia	100
Brunei Darussalam	44
Thailand	38
Timor-Leste	9
China	7
Cambodia	6
Viet Nam	3
Lao PDR	1

A strong health response is vital to education

1. to protect children and their families against the risk of COVID-19 infection
2. to ensure that the myriad of interlinked health, mental health, nutrition, social and WASH services required to support child and adolescent well-being remain accessible to those most in need.

How does COVID-19 impact on children and their learning?

Children usually have mild or no COVID-19 symptoms



Overall, COVID-19 is reported much less frequently in children



Older children are more likely to become infected and to transmit COVID-19, but the role of younger children in transmission is not yet fully understood

See [WHO Information Network for Epidemics](#) for updates

Good communications are needed with key groups such as parents and teachers so that they understand the level of risk involved in opening schools and in keeping them closed.

The longer schools are closed, the greater the risk of:

- long term health issues and developmental challenges especially for the youngest learners
- harm to vulnerable children especially children with disabilities and girls
- children dropping out and not re-enrolling
- increased mental health and well-being incidences
- irreversible learning loss.

Challenges

Health

- Routine services such as **vaccinations and diagnosis and treatment of illnesses** were suspended
- School feeding programmes were interrupted and household incomes reduced affecting **nutrition gains**

Well-being

- **Learners** of all ages faced increased levels of stress due to isolation, uncertainty and fear of the future
- **Parents** were stressed by economic challenges and home learning
- **Teachers** struggled to combine work and family commitments and learn new teaching techniques in a very short space of time

Protection

- Increased **physical and emotional abuse** including online bullying
- Financial insecurity increased harmful social norms such as **child labour and early marriage**

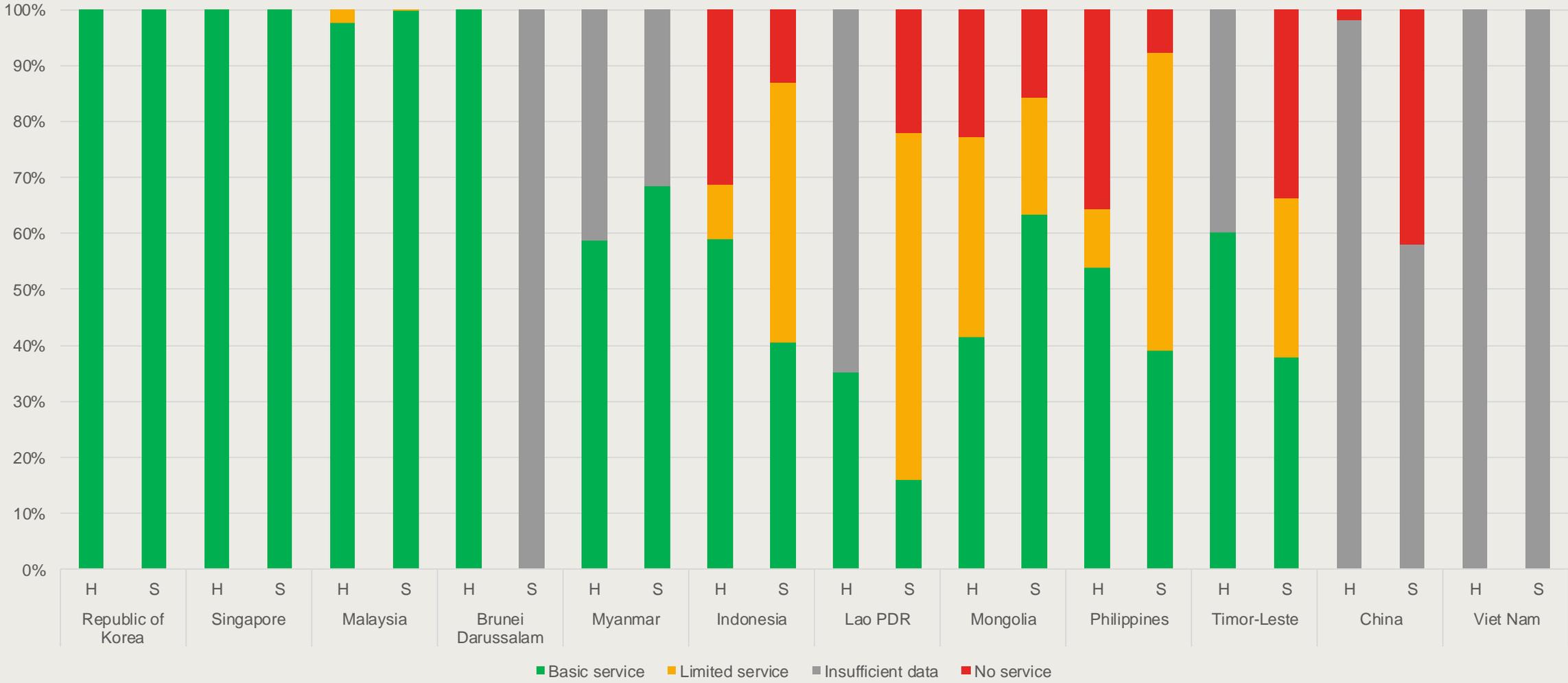
Safe school (re)opening

- **Social distancing** in large classes
- Lack of adequate **WASH facilities** and lack of data
- **Schools** and **government** lack a comprehensive real-time planning, monitoring and response system

Learning on (re)opening

- Monitoring re-enrolment
- Potential interruptions and / or reductions in face to face learning

Hygiene and Sanitation Data



Positive responses: South East and East Asia

Health

Mongolia: monthly allowance of >\$32 was given to >1 million children for 6 months and monthly food stamps for adults and children with food shortages were doubled from May to October 2020

Republic of Korea: cross-sector collaboration and coordination responses between the Education and Health authorities, and between MoE and education stakeholders at all levels

Well-being

Lao PDR: Lao Women's Union and Lao Youth Union have hotlines aimed at young people, which provide professional counselling to help them cope with stress

Japan: allowance has been made for additional school counsellors and school social workers to provide mental healthcare to students in schools where necessary

Protection

Vietnam: had equity-focused back-to-school campaigns with specific strategies for CWD who were at risk of dropping out

Indonesia: community level data used to register 250,000 children for social support, and a cross-sector task force is working to strengthen EMIS data to identify those at risk of school dropout

Safe school (re)opening

China: a comprehensive 'Safe School' communication campaign was organised in close collaboration between Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

Lao PDR: organised communities to bring water to schools that lack water points, to enable handwashing

Lessons learnt

Health

The region has robust systems in place to tackle natural disasters, but these were found inadequate in the face of a pandemic. Countries such as Viet Nam built on the SARS response.

COVID-19 responses have been undermined by widespread undernutrition, poor WASH infrastructure and a lack of resources - a broader and integrated approach to child/school health is needed to build resilience to pandemics.

Well-being

Mental health and well-being is the single biggest factor affecting all ages of children in the sub-region and more information about age specific needs, actions taken and impact are all needed (including the role examinations currently play).

MHPSS needs to be given far higher priority to develop a full and tailored response to this complex and critical need including the role of teachers, parents and the health/social service system.

Protection

Social protection measures such as continuing school feeding were introduced in some countries during school closures.

More needs to be done to understand the additional measures needed to safeguard and protect marginalised and vulnerable children (e.g. migrant worker children and CWD), to ensure previous gains are not undermined further during a pandemic.

As schools reopen and close and open again, families need flexible access to ongoing protection support - remotely as well as face to face.

Safe school (re)opening and operations

The need to ensure schools are able to reopen safely has shone a light on inequalities in WASH provision within countries.

Monitoring systems are vital to provide information on whether schools are safe or not, and to constantly review and prioritise support and resources.

Managing the transition back into school needs to also include assessing children's learning levels, especially after long closures - but formative assessment isn't currently part of assessment practice in the sub-region.

Recommendations

Health

Plan and budget for essential health, nutrition and social services for children and young people and increase access to quality pre-primary education

Protection

Collect and use data about vulnerable children to implement targeted interventions

Implement Universal Child Benefit

Change social norms for those at risk of violence and abuse

Well-being

Review examination systems and refocus education on well-being and resilience

Provide a comprehensive approach to MHPSS for all children

Safe school opening

Consider safe alternatives to school closures

Improve data systems on WASH facilities

Introduce long-term cross-sectoral resource allocations for WASH facilities

Develop remedial and blended learning approaches

Strengthen **cross-sectoral collaboration**

Implementation **monitoring**

Key available guidance on school reopening

Child nutrition and COVID-19 - UNICEF DATA

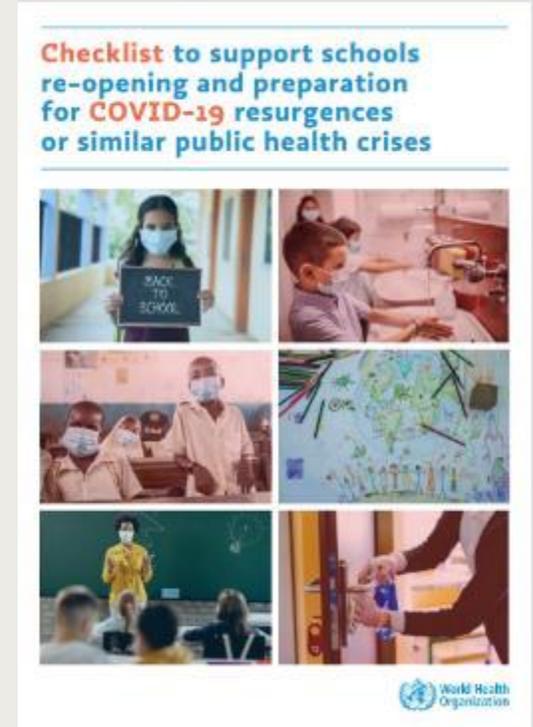
Gender equality and COVID-19 - UNICEF DATA

Child protection and COVID-19 - UNICEF DATA

Child & adolescent health and COVID-19 - UNICEF DATA

Child poverty and COVID-19 - UNICEF DATA

Child disability and COVID-19 - UNICEF DATA



Thank you



DISCUSSION

Safe School Reopening: operations, health and well-being

What are your key challenges in keeping schools safely open and how do you plan to address those challenges?

NOTE: Please limit your choice to maximum 3 !
If you choose 'Other', please write them in Chat Box.



DISCUSSION

Addressing Learning Loss/Gaps

What key plans/strategies do you have (or are already implementing) to mitigate learning loss after the school reopening, especially for the most marginalized?

NOTE: Please limit your choice to maximum 3 !
If you choose 'Other', please write them in Chat Box.



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Presentation 3

Increasing resilience and building back better



Each government will need to significantly increase the level of funding for basic education as COVID-19 has created a new kind of humanitarian disaster which unless addressed fully could undo decades of investment and especially impact on girls' education.

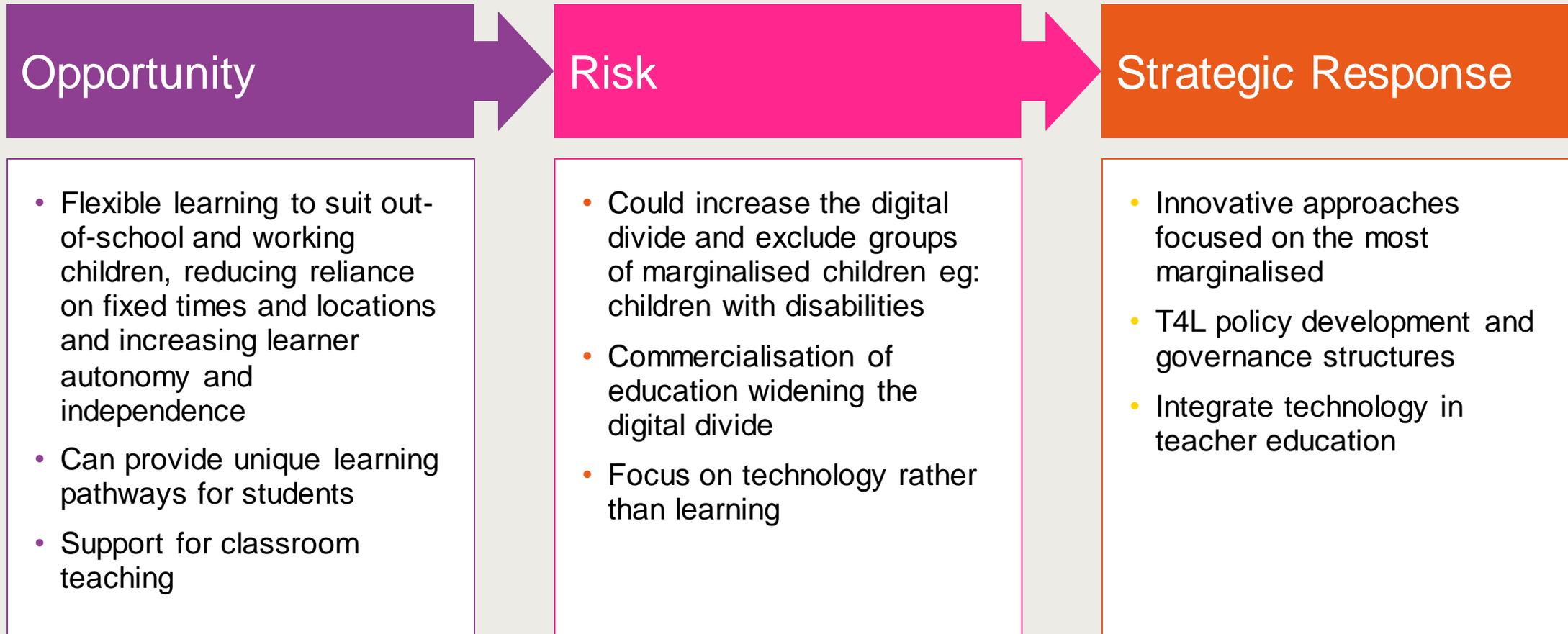
Source: Rapid situation analysis on effects and responses to COVID-19 on the education sector in Asia
Regional Report

A new way of planning and working that will...

...enable all children, including girls and the most marginalised children to access learning at the appropriate level and with suitable help and support

...include operating frameworks to encompass the likelihood that significant numbers of children will not return to school.

Harnessing technology to move to a more blended approach to learning



Increasing resilience

Cross-
sector
collaboration

... have resulted in the strongest responses which have minimised the effects of COVID-19

Consult
when
planning for
the future

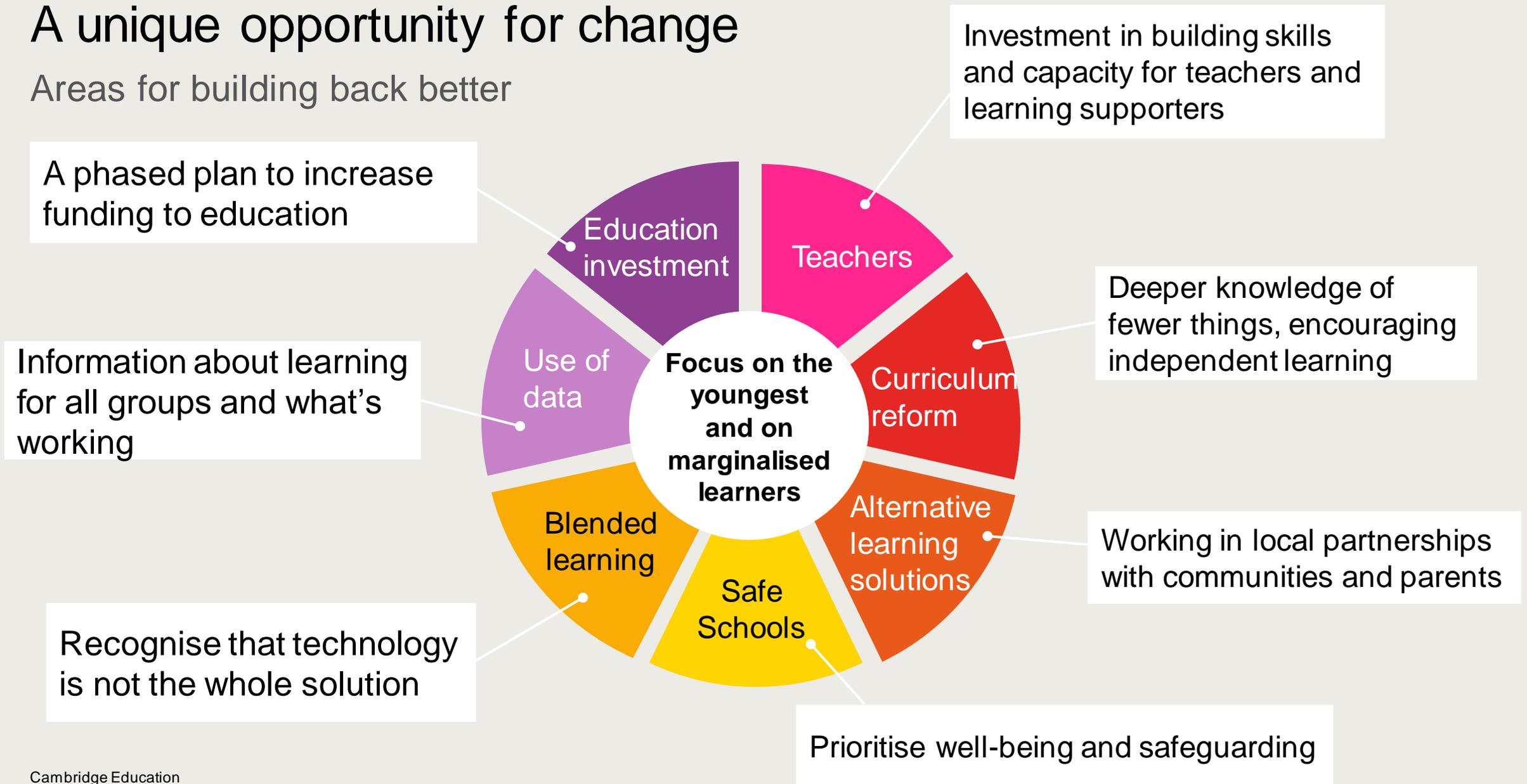
...with teachers, parents, community leaders, children themselves, as well as officials within the system.

Review good
practices,
prioritise and
sequence
reforms

...identifying strong responses and lessons learnt to establish priorities

A unique opportunity for change

Areas for building back better



Education budgets – the fiscal challenge

With rising costs for response and decreased domestic revenues due to COVID-19 impacts, governments are faced with very difficult trade offs.

Cambodia, Myanmar:

insufficient budget for recovery or accelerating progress if budgets remain at those levels.

Indonesia, Brunei:

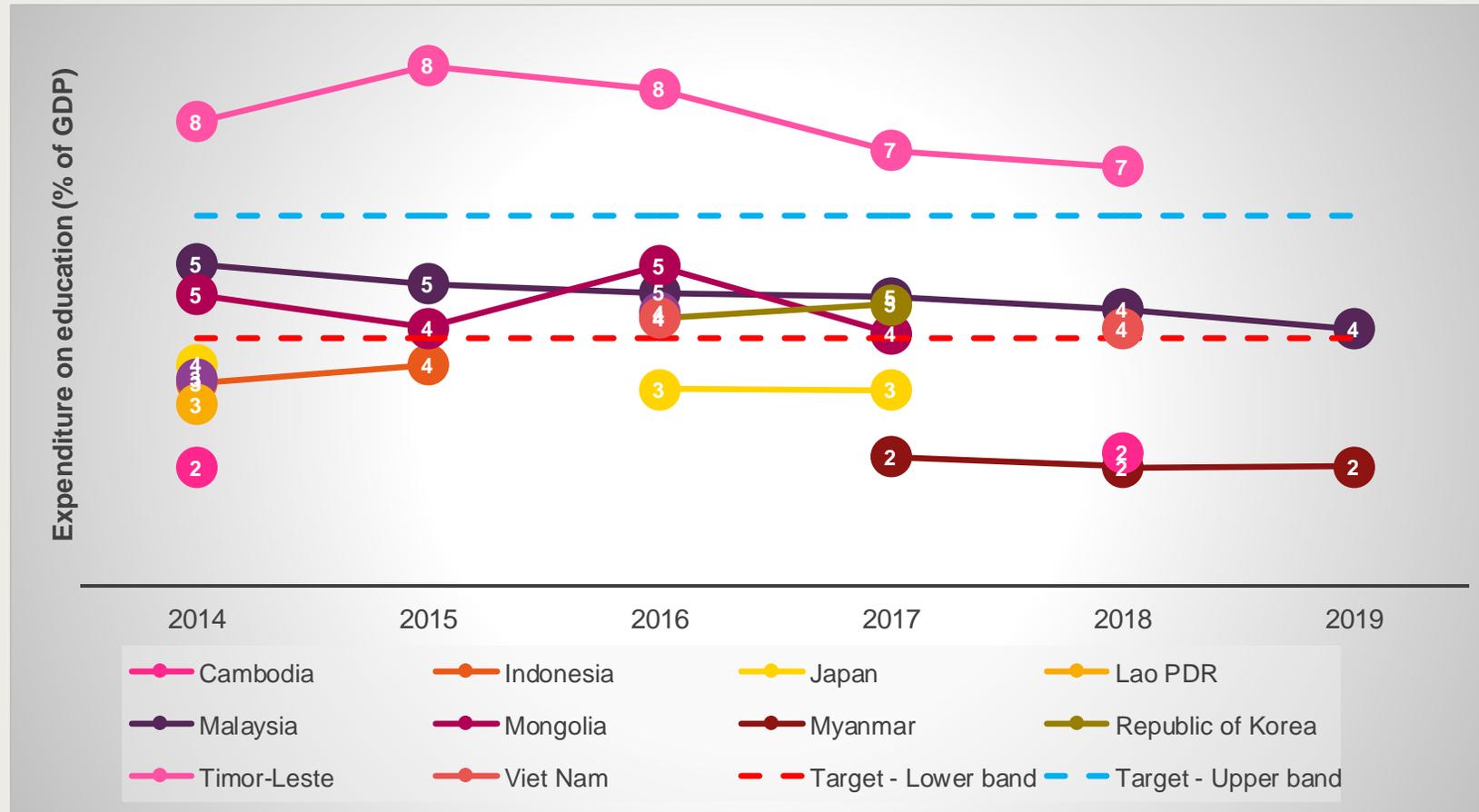
despite recent increases, levels are still low given progress needed to reach SDG4

Viet Nam, Malaysia, Mongolia:

Maintained efforts above 4%, in addition to significant HH contributions.

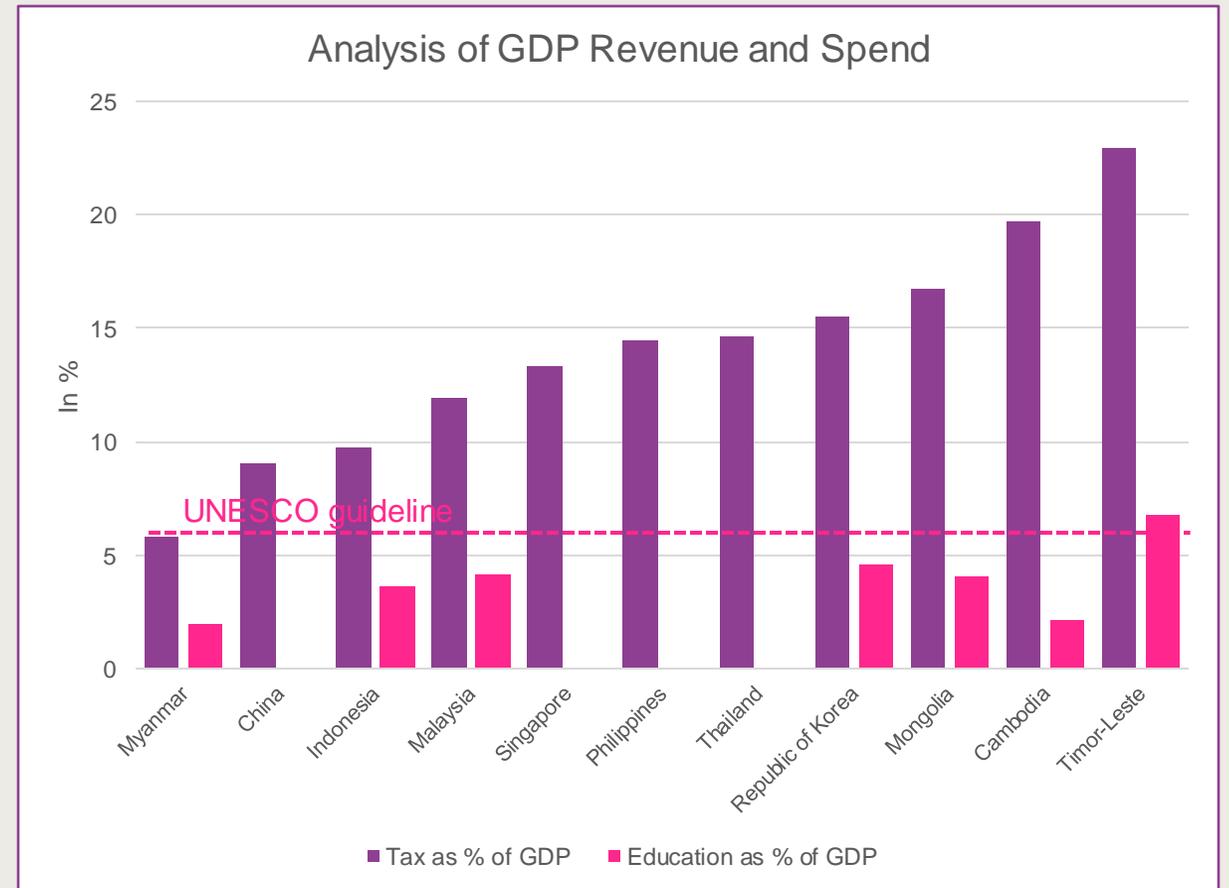
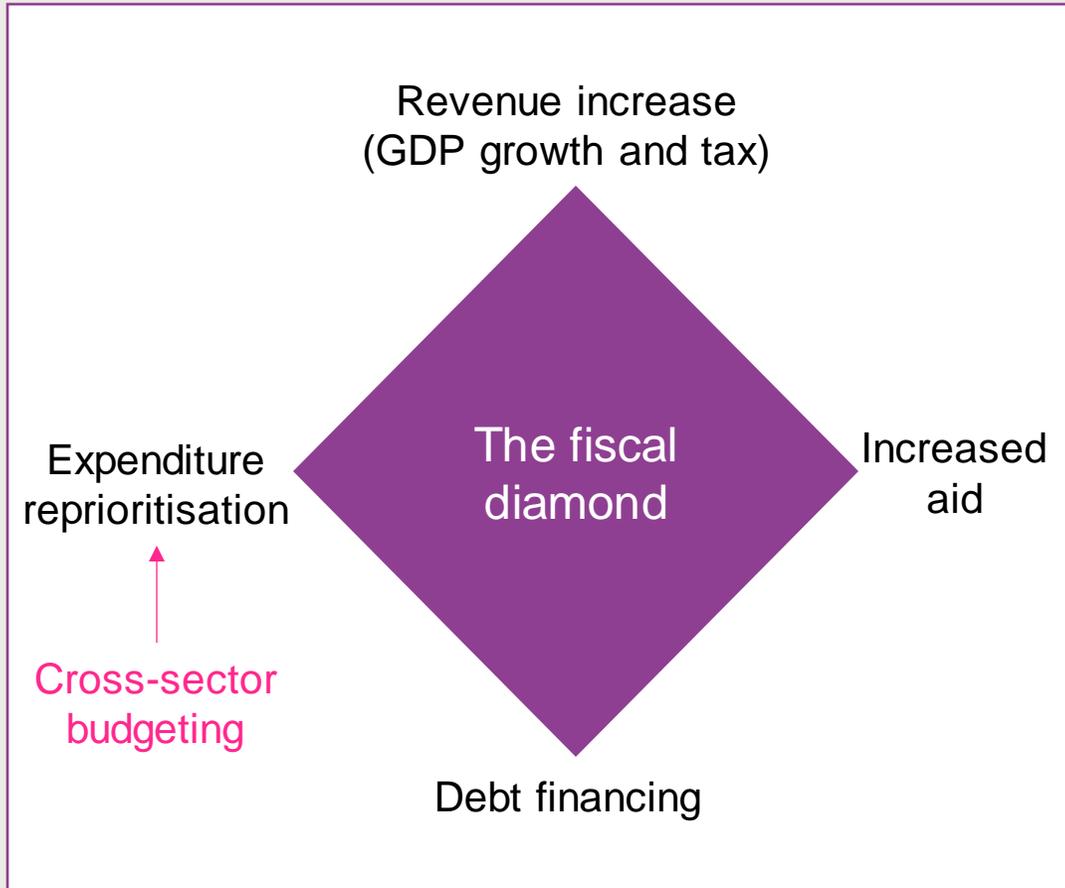
Timor-Leste: only country (where trend data is available) exceeding recommended levels

Education budgets relative to the UNESCO guideline, 2014-19



Is there fiscal space to increase spending on education?

What are the potential sources of additional education funding in your country?



Source: IMF 2021

Thank you



DISCUSSION

Build Back Better: Resilient System

What does 'building back better' mean to improve learning and enhance system resilience, particularly for the most marginalized?

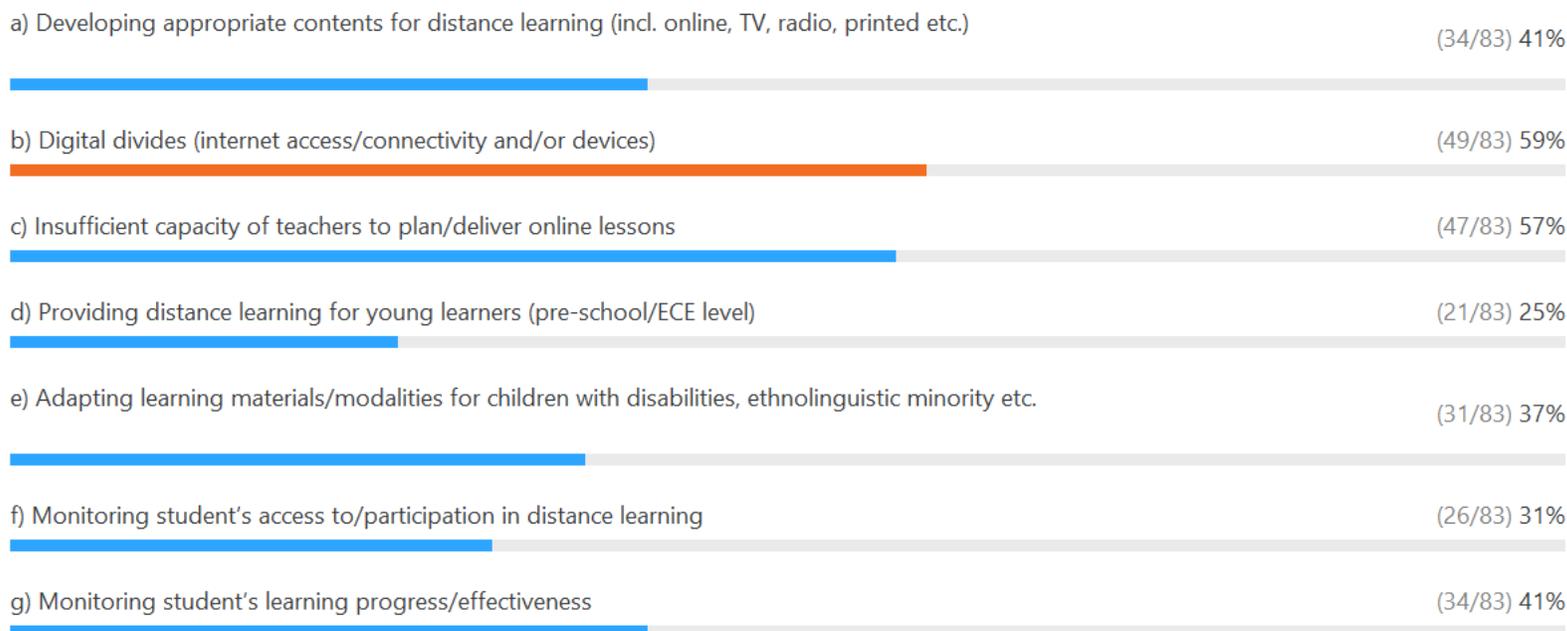
NOTE: Please limit your choice to maximum 3 !
If you choose 'Other', please write them in Chat Box.



Summary & Next Steps

(1) Continuity of Learning

1. Q-1: What are your key challenges in ensuring continuity of learning during school closure, especially for the most marginalized? [Choose max 3 choices] (Multiple choice)



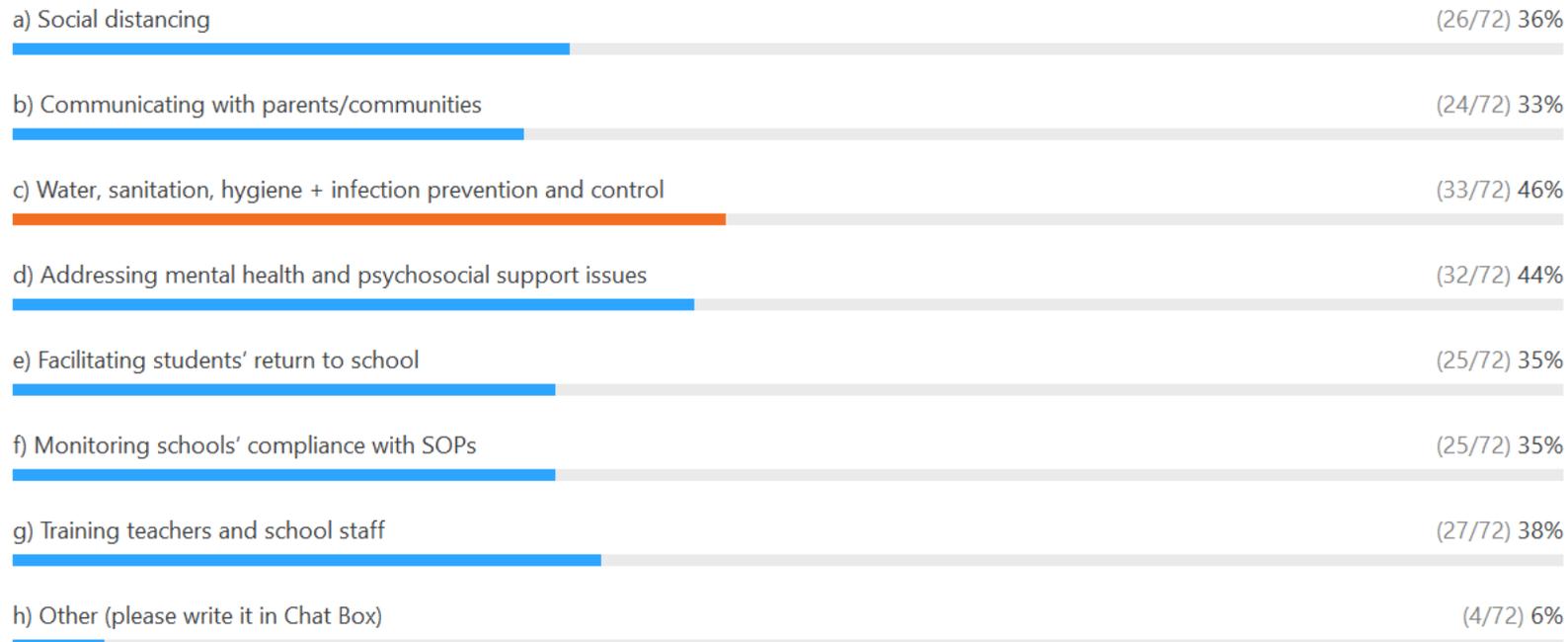
- **Reach and coverage:** blended approach, PPP to bridge digital divides, support to parents/families, independent learning
- **Addressing marginalization and inequalities:** combine different modalities, neglected ECE, NFE, CWD
- **Levels of learning loss:** need for strong (real-time) monitoring, teacher capacity and new roles as facilitators, importance of foundational learning

Country experience

- **Indonesia:** Internet company, free quota, challenge of teachers' capacity
- **Thailand:** 99% schools connected but not stable and lack of individual devices in remote areas

(2-a) Safe School Operation

1. Q-2: What are your key challenges in keeping schools safely open and how do you plan to address those challenges?
[Choose max 3 choices] (Multiple choice)



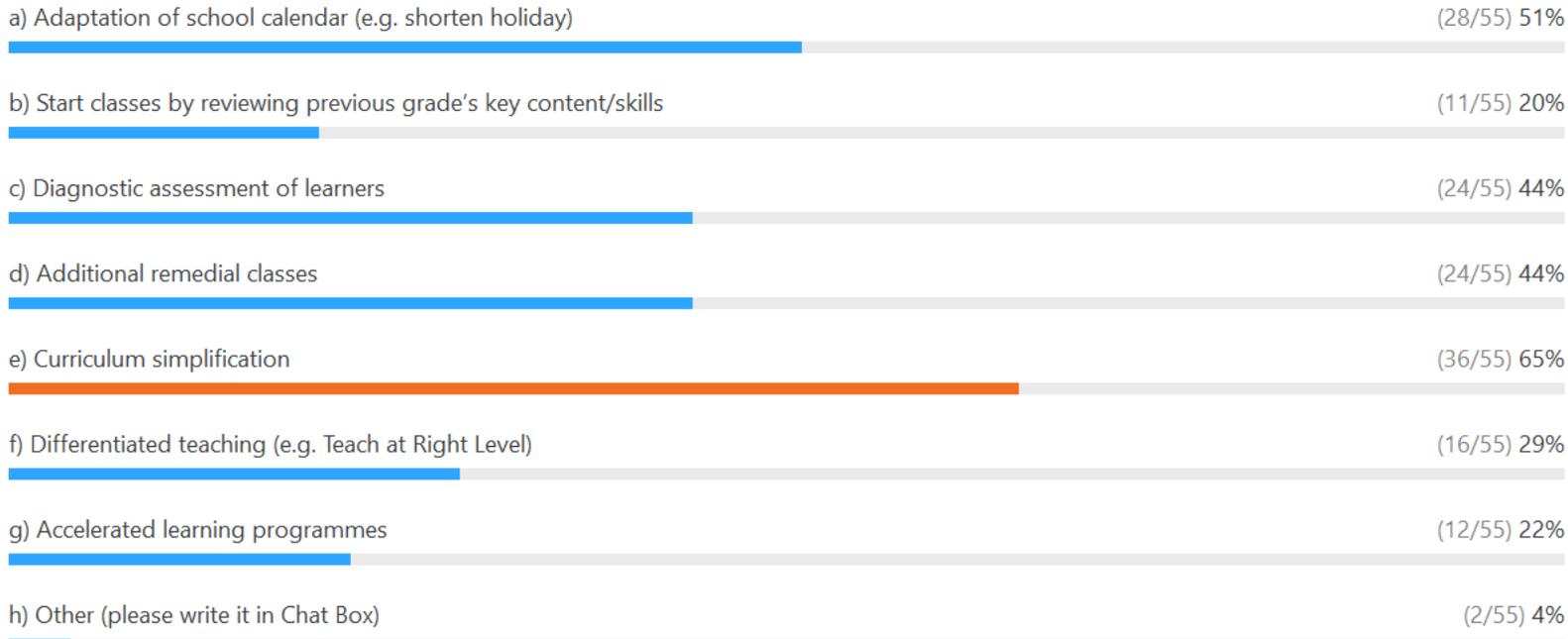
- **Health/nutrition:** immunization, feeding
- **Well-being:** mental health and stress (learners, parents, teachers)
- **Protection:** child abuse, labor, marriage, social protection/cash transfer
- **Reopening:** cross-sectoral collaboration by various stakeholders, safe protocols (WASH, distancing), importance of risk communication, real-time monitoring, issues of teacher vaccination, decision-making of re-closure and re-opening

Country experience

- **China:** WASH, protective equipment, quarantine space, monitoring etc.
- **Philippines:** inter-sectoral approach

(2-b) Mitigate Learning Loss

1. Q-3: What key plans/strategies do you have (or are already implementing) to mitigate learning loss after the school reopening, especially for the most marginalized? [Choose max 3 choices] (Multiple choice)



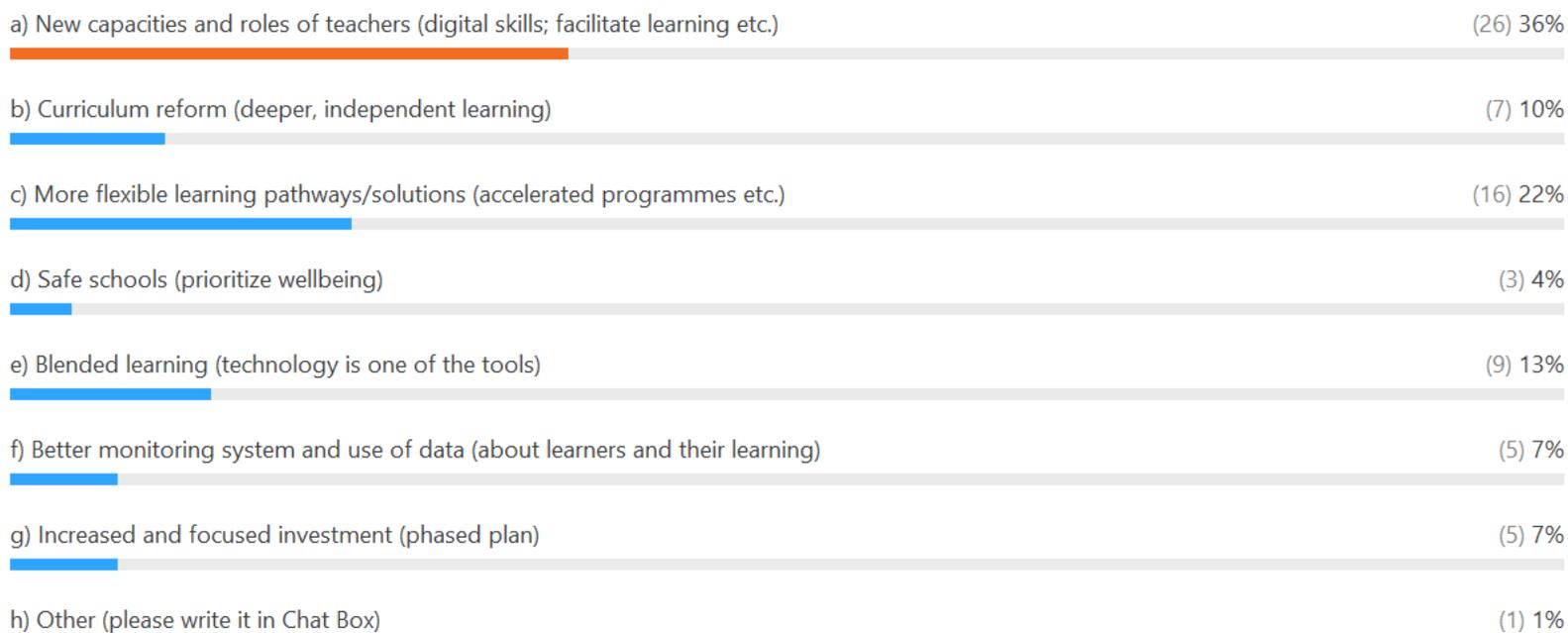
- **Vulnerable children:** former OOSC, new OOSC (non-returnees), poor, gender, disabilities, minorities, migrants et al.

Country experience

- **Malaysia:** teachers need to conduct assessment of learning gaps/losses (varied experience), to focus on certain parts of curriculum/learning areas

(3) Build Back Better

1. Q-4: What does 'building back better' mean to improve learning and enhance system resilience, particularly for the most marginalized? [Choose max 3 choices]



- **New paradigm:** historic moment of opportunity (!), flexible, adaptable, resilient, equitable, innovative, creative
- **Technology:** only a part of solutions, have a big picture/entirety of the system
- **Areas/Aspects:** teachers, curriculum, alternative pathways, blended approach, use of data, financing/investment

Country experience

- **Malaysia:** Hybrid learning, teachers and learners can use technology, other forms of media in T-L process, devices
- **China:** maintain education budget >4%
- **Indonesia:** teacher capacity for blended TL, cater for children's connectivity
- **Cambodia:** capacity of MoE staff at national and decentralized levels, response planning, EMIS/school data

Next Steps

- Finalization, publication and dissemination of the [SitAn Package](#) (14 country case studies, 3 sub-regional reports, 1 regional synthesis)
- Follow-up [webinars](#) (e.g. costing tools for SDG4; in-depth sessions on specific issues/topics; country exchanges; in-country discussions)
- How do we use the [results/lessons](#) etc. of the reports?
 - Present highlights at the Asia Pacific Education Ministers' Conference
 - Combine with the 5-year Progress Review (5PR) of the SDG4-Education 2030
 - For enhanced advocacy, resource mobilization and technical support (TWG)
 - *Any ideas? > please send to us !!*

Summary

Session 1:

Continuity of learning: access, participation and learning during/after the pandemic

Session 2:

Safe school reopening and operations, health and well-being (+ addressing learning loss)

Session 3:

Building back better to improve learning and increase system resilience



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Thank you!