



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

unicef 
for every child

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

Sub-regional webinar for South Asia

9 MARCH 2021



Housekeeping Rules

- Panelists/Gov't representatives: Please make sure to **mute your mics** during presentations/when others are speaking.
- Panelists & Attendees: Please **use the chatbox to ask questions.**
- Panelists & Attendees: Please **use the 'raise hand function'** to let us know that you have something to share, and we can unmute you!
- If you are having **any trouble, reach out to the host** (Emma) **or co-host** (Katelyn) at any time through the chat for support.

NOTE: Please change your Zoom name to your **Name + your affiliation.**
This can be done by hovering over your name in the Participant List.

Agenda

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

Opening Welcome Remarks by Jim Ackers, UNICEF ROSA Regional Education Adviser

Introduction by Ivan Coursac, Education Specialist UNICEF ROSA

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

Presentation 1: Continuity of learning: access, participation and learning during/after the pandemic by Cambridge Education

Moderated discussion facilitated by Ivan Coursac, Education Specialist, UNICEF ROSA with support from UNESCO

Presentation 2: Safe school reopening and operations, health and well-being by Cambridge Education

Moderated discussion facilitated by Jim Ackers, Regional Education Adviser, UNICEF ROSA with support from UNESCO

Presentation 3: Building back better to improve learning and increase system resilience by Cambridge Education

Moderated discussion facilitated by Frank van Cappelle, Education Specialist, UNICEF ROSA with support from UNESCO

Next Steps: Summary of Jamboard inputs, priority actions and identified areas for support, led by Mita Gupta and Ivan Coursac, Education Specialists, UNICEF ROSA

Closing from Nyi Nyi Thaung, Programme Specialist UNESCO

Effects of and responses to COVID-19 in Asia

Situational Analysis for
UNICEF/UNESCO

Objectives of the Situational 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.

3

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

Scope of Situational Analysis

Target Groups

1. Teachers
2. Learners
3. Parents
4. Government education systems

How they have been supported by other organisations?

Where are examples of best practice and learning from the **private, civil society and non-governmental** sector which could be replicated?

Asia

South Asia

Southeast Asia

East Asia

Cross-cutting

Where information is available, we will focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups in society:

girls

refugees

children with disabilities

people from remote communities

ethnic minorities

tribal groups

Situational Analysis

Reporting

- An overview of the three sub-regions
- An in-depth look at a specific dimension in each of 14 countries, including the whole of South Asia

Finding

- Examples of effective country approaches which could be replicated or adapted for use in other countries.
- Plans for 'building back better'

Identifying

- Lessons learnt
- Progress against SDG 4 targets
- Policy and investment priorities for Education Systems



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

South Asia Webinar



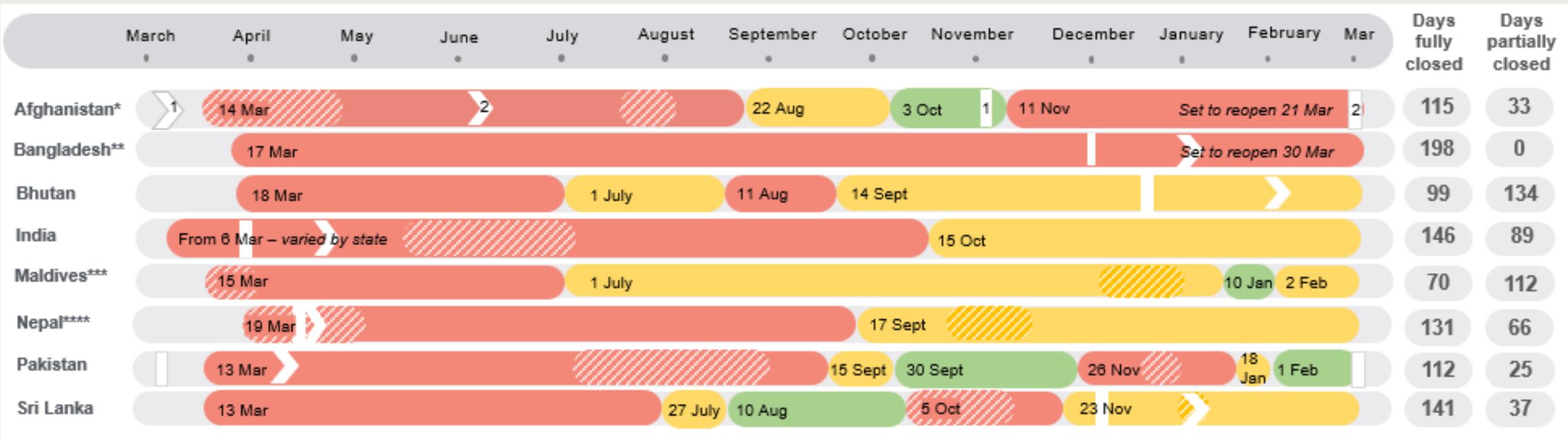
Presentation 1

Continuity of Learning

Access, participation & learning during the pandemic



School closure, opening and reopening through the pandemic



*Afghanistan: Number 1 represents academic year for schools in cold climate, number 2 represents academic year for schools in hot climate.

**Bangladesh: Bangladesh started remote learning initiatives after school closures. Within less than two weeks, on 29 March and 07 April 2020 respectively, primary and secondary recorded classes were aired on a TV platform to ensure education continuity.

***Maldives: Academic year started in Jan 2020 and has been extended until June 2021.

****Nepal: Current academic year has been extended by 2 months, until 14 June 2021.



Data sources: UNICEF, UNESCO | Creation date: 26 Feb 2021

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 S Asia

Reach and coverage

- **Governments** were challenged by the vast digital divide, with only 13% of children and young people having access to internet at home.
- **Teachers and learners** faced challenges with electricity supply, access to devices, digital literacy and support (especially ECE).

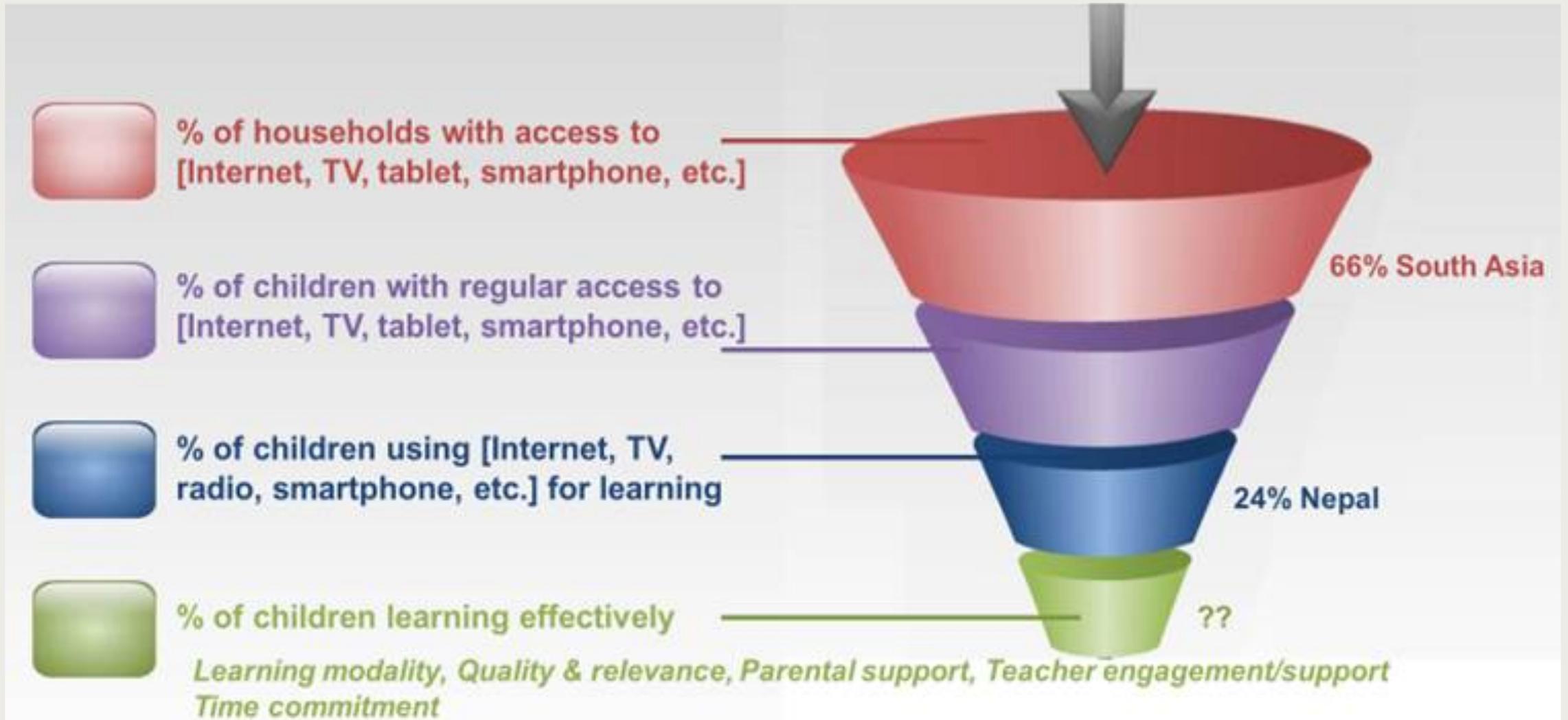
Addressing marginalisation and inequalities

- **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.

Low levels of learning

- 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.

Estimated reach vs actual reach



Positive responses

Reach and coverage

Nepal: Seven categories of response for learners.

India: **Assam** distributed worksheets with mid-day meals; **Kerala** focused on textbook distribution and WhatsApp groups

Pakistan: **Punjab** analysed penetration of different technologies and used the information to inform their response.

Addressing marginalisation and inequalities

Afghanistan: CBE implementing partners worked together with the Ministry of Education and teacher trainers to prepare child-friendly, self-study materials in Dari and Pashtu.

Bangladesh: partnerships with NGOs at local level to find ways to reach into communities.

Low levels of learning

Bhutan: prioritised curriculum during school closures and adapted curriculum on reopening.

Sri Lanka: **UVA Province** MoE with support from UNICEF, conducted diagnostic tests with students in grades 1 to 4, based on the findings the curriculum was reorganised to prioritise competencies to help children catch up.

Maldives: catalytic effect of accelerating teachers' and school managers' uptake of digital opportunities for teaching and learning.

Lessons learnt about continuity of learning

Reach and coverage

Equitable access to devices and effective combinations of low tech/ no tech...



...along with stronger digital literacy of teachers, and learners...



...creates opportunities to harness digital / blended learning

Addressing marginalisation and inequalities

Stronger monitoring systems and real time monitoring...



...supports local decision making and adaptation...



...allowing an increased focus on reaching marginalised children

Low levels of learning

When assessment took place during school closures...

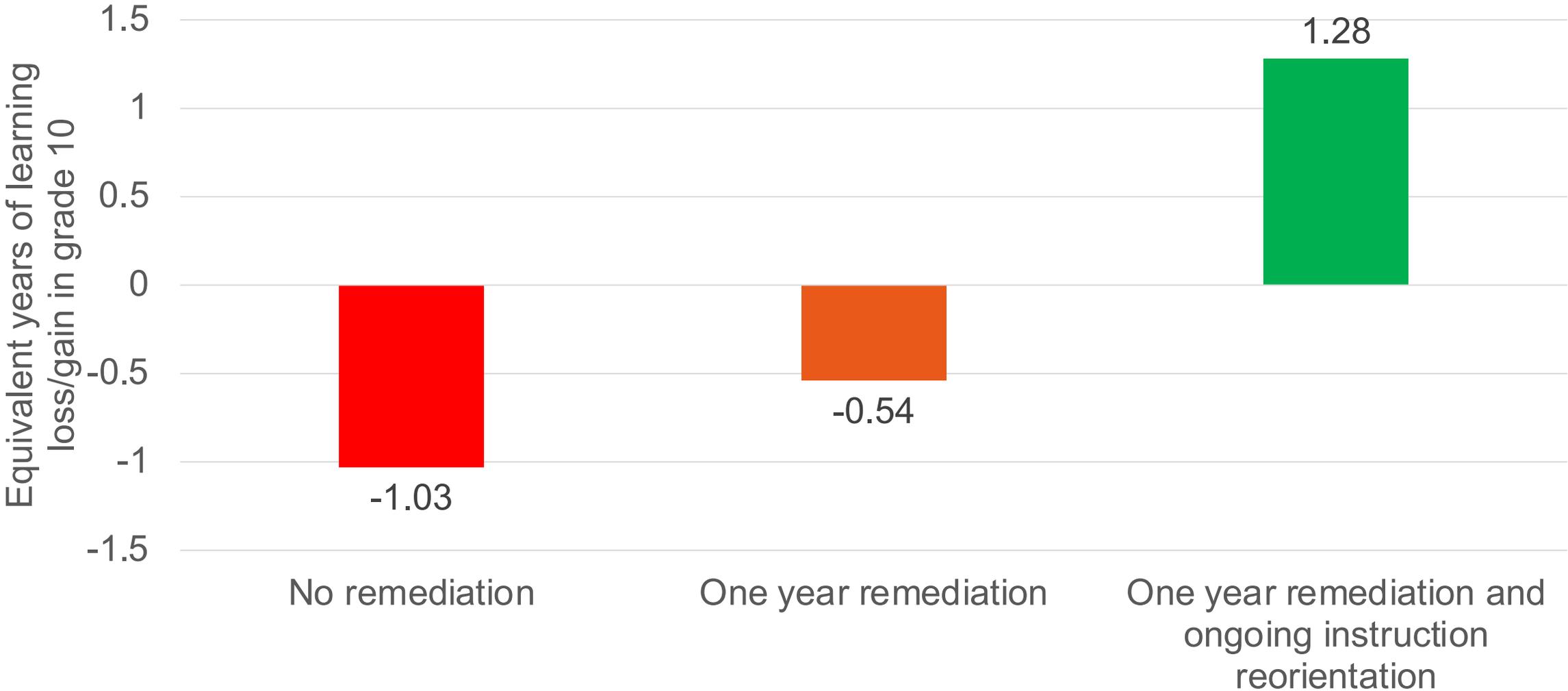


...teachers understood their learners' achievements...



...facilitating the continuity of learning once schools reopened.

What can be done to mitigate long term learning loss?



Source: Brookings Institute in [Modelling the Long-Run Learning Impact of the COVID-19 Learning Shock: Actions to \(More Than\) Mitigate Loss | RISE Programme](#)

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

Target the different modalities of distance learning to reach the most marginalised and refocus on ECE.

Medium - long term

Evaluate how distance learning can be used for OOSC and children unable to get into schools

Develop infrastructure to enable blended learning: electricity, mobile network, internet connectivity etc especially in hard-to-reach areas

2 Addressing marginalisation and inequalities

Short term

Use data to develop plans that respond to the needs of the most marginalised learners.

Provide holistic support for ECE learners.

Form local partnerships to engage with marginalised communities.

Medium - long term

Change social norms and behaviour to support the poorest and most vulnerable members of society

Expand implementation of pro-poor policies and consider introducing universal child benefit.

3 Low levels of learning

Short term

Develop formative assessment strategies and support teachers to assess learning and provide differentiated support.

Prioritise learning content and introduce remediation plans.

Build on existing parental and community support for learning.

Medium - long term

Increase digital literacy of learners.

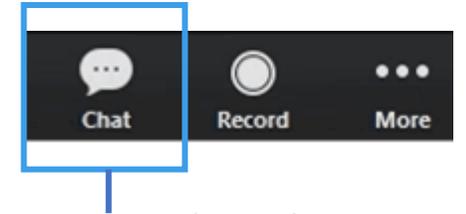
Develop teachers' skills to facilitate, assess and support differentiated and blended approaches to learning.

Thank you



Jamboard Discussion Activities

- 3 Jamboards - one for each discussion
- Each Jamboard has a **separate link** which will be shared in the Zoom chatbox



Jamboard 1: <http://bit.ly/DiscussionOne>

Jamboard 2: <http://bit.ly/DiscussionTwo>

Jamboard 3: <http://bit.ly/DiscussionThree>

- **Please note:** The Jamboards are intended for Government representatives to engage with
 - Other participants are welcome to click and **observe only**

DISCUSSION

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

As you reopen and strive to sustain safe operations, what plan or strategies do you envisage to mitigate learning loss, especially for the most marginalized?

NOTE: Government representatives, please use the link in the chatbox to access the Jamboards to share your country experience.



©UNICEF/Pakistan



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

South Asia Webinar

Presentation 2

Safe school (re)opening and operations, health & wellbeing



Number of COVID-19 infections and peak infection months

Country	Infections per 100,000
Maldives	3,916
Nepal	960
India	822
Sri Lanka	393
Bangladesh	338
Pakistan	273
Afghanistan	147
Bhutan	114

In South Asia, there are disproportionate risks to girls in terms of child protection issues (GBV, sexual risks, exploitation and trafficking) This has been exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19.

Peak infection periods



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 wellbeing** 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 wellbeing 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**

Wellbeing

- **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

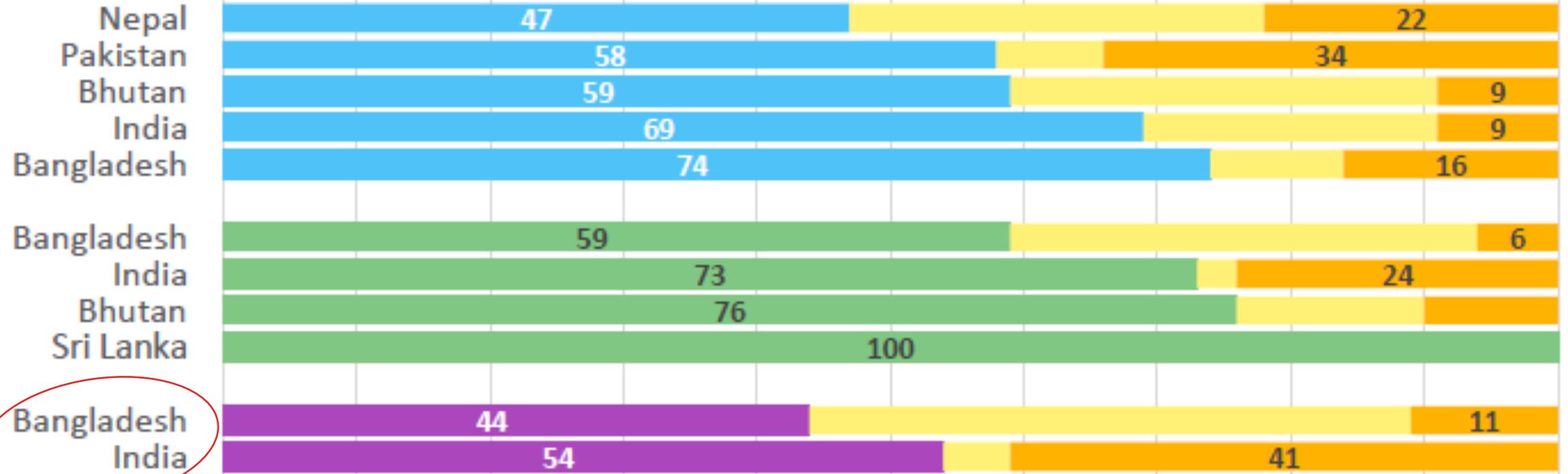
- **Social distancing** in large classes
- Lack of adequate **WASH facilities** and lack of data
- **Schools** and **government** lack a comprehensive real-time planning, monitoring and response system

Learning on (re)opening

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

Only two of the eight countries in South Asia have comprehensive data on the WASH situation in schools

Countries



Drinking water

- No service
- Limited service
- Basic service

Sanitation

- No service
- Limited service
- Basic service

Hygiene

- No service
- Limited service
- Basic service

Positive responses

Afghanistan

Teachers disseminated health messages as trusted members of the community and received some training to do this.

Pakistan

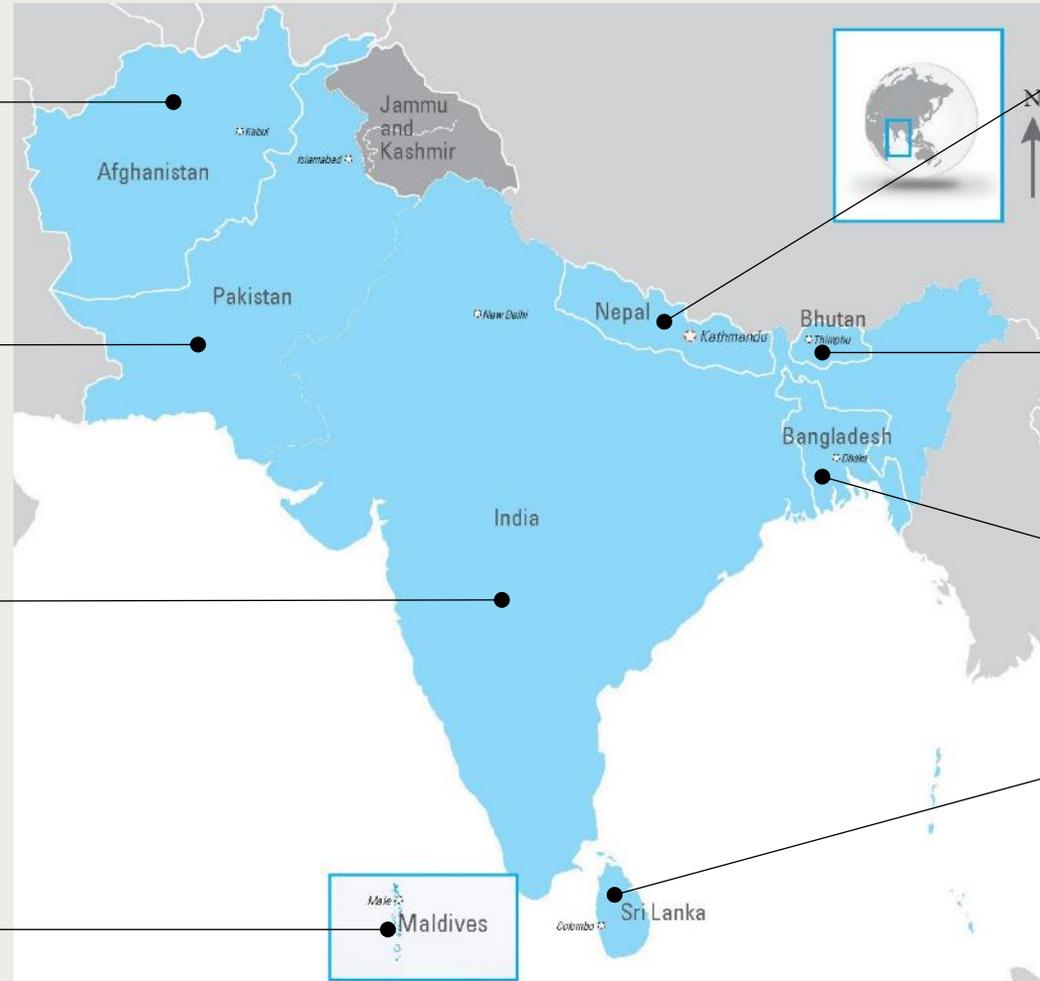
launched a \$900 million cash transfer program secured to support 12 million vulnerable families

India

provided rice/wheat and pulses to 800 million people for three months

Maldives

the MoE coordinated with schools to support the activities for the mental wellbeing of students



Nepal

2,520 people (1,306 males, 1,168 females and 46 third gender) were reached with individual psychosocial counselling service through existing helplines, online platforms and one to one counselling

Bhutan

10,000 most vulnerable learners were given take-home food rations.

Bangladesh

High-energy take-home biscuits have been distributed to nearly three million school children throughout the country.

Sri Lanka

Health professionals were re-deployed to support broader services and immunisations were conducted in schools as soon as an area was low-risk
Substantial consultations especially with provincial education authorities allowed school reopening based on local needs.

Lessons learnt

Health

Clear and consistent messaging is key for behaviour change

Feedback through surveys can improve messaging

Cross-sectoral collaboration at different levels improves effectiveness of response especially when health services are affected by school closures

Wellbeing

It is critical for teachers to feel safe in school and for them to understand and implement safe operations

Education is more than academic knowledge and includes skills like resilience to strengthen wellbeing

Protection

Social protection can provide safety nets for families

During lockdowns, alternative support mechanisms are needed to support victims of violence and emotional abuse

Use of data to track helpline use can help prioritise areas of need to tackle social norms

Safe school (re)opening and operations

Current monitoring systems don't provide information on whether schools are safe or not and don't link health and education data together

Adapting national plans to local context & involving all stakeholders improves confidence in safety responses

Adequate resources are needed for schools to make necessary adaptations and cross-sectoral planning at all levels mobilises resources more effectively

Recommendations

Health

Plan and budget for essential health and social services for children and young people

Wellbeing

Train teachers on supporting learner wellbeing

Provide support services for more serious wellbeing referrals

Protection

Collect data about vulnerable children

Implement Universal Child Benefit

Change social norms for those at risk of violence and abuse

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

Consider introducing blended learning

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

Checklist to support schools re-opening and preparation for COVID-19 resurgences or similar public health crises



World Health Organization



Thank you



DISCUSSION

Safe school reopening and 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: Government representatives, please use the link in the chatbox to access the Jamboards to share your country experience.





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

South Asia Webinar



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.

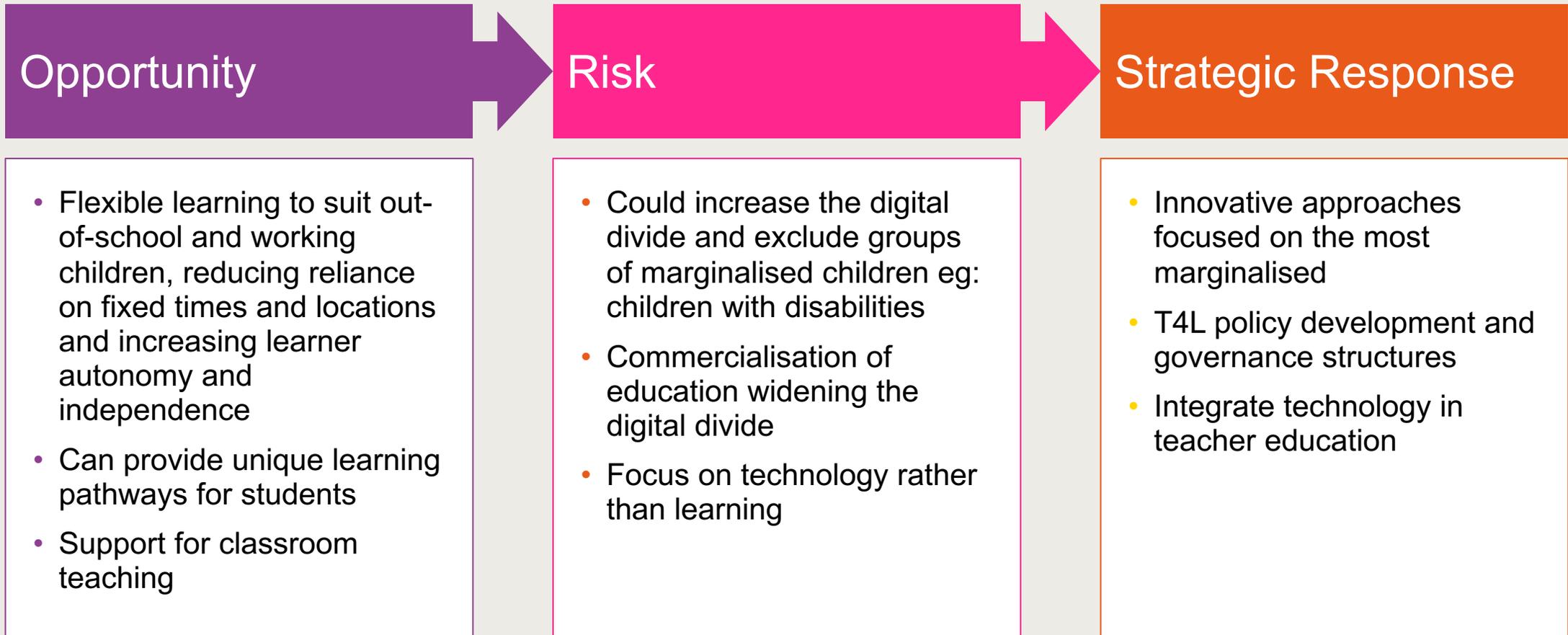
Source: South Asia Rapid situation analysis on effects and responses to COVID-19 on the education sector in Asia Sub-regional Report

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

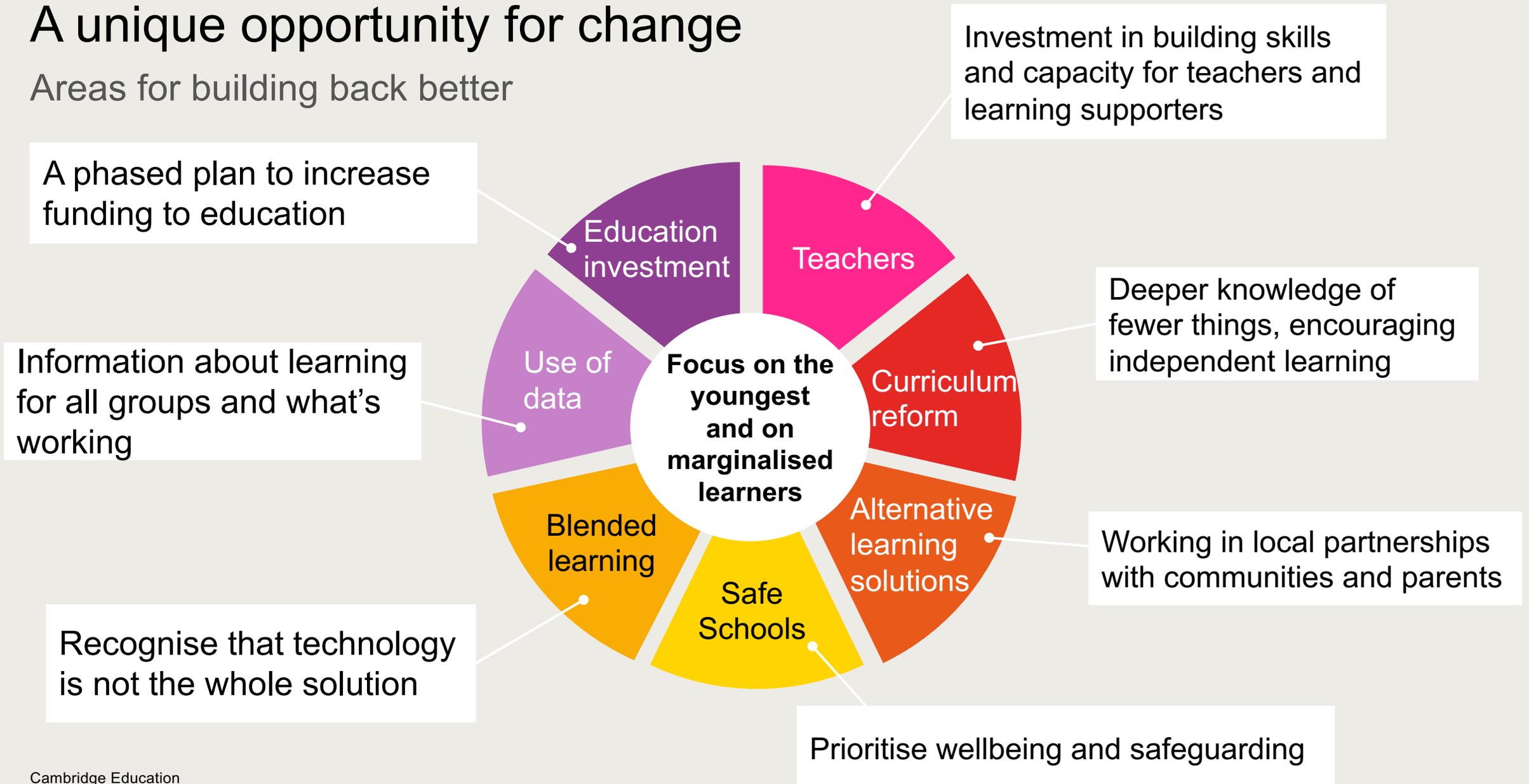
...with teachers, parents, community leaders, children themselves, as well as officials within the system.

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.

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan :

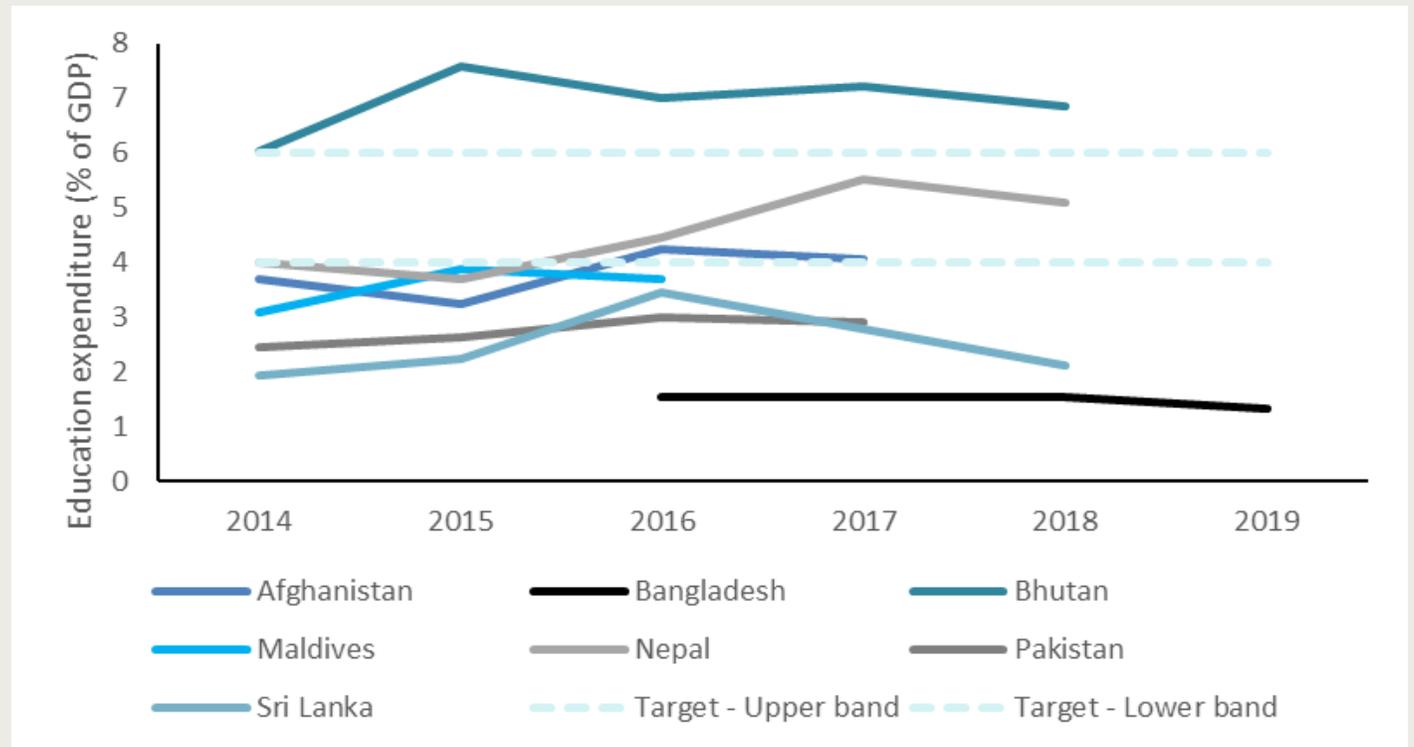
insufficient budget for recovery or accelerating progress if budgets remain at those levels.

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

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

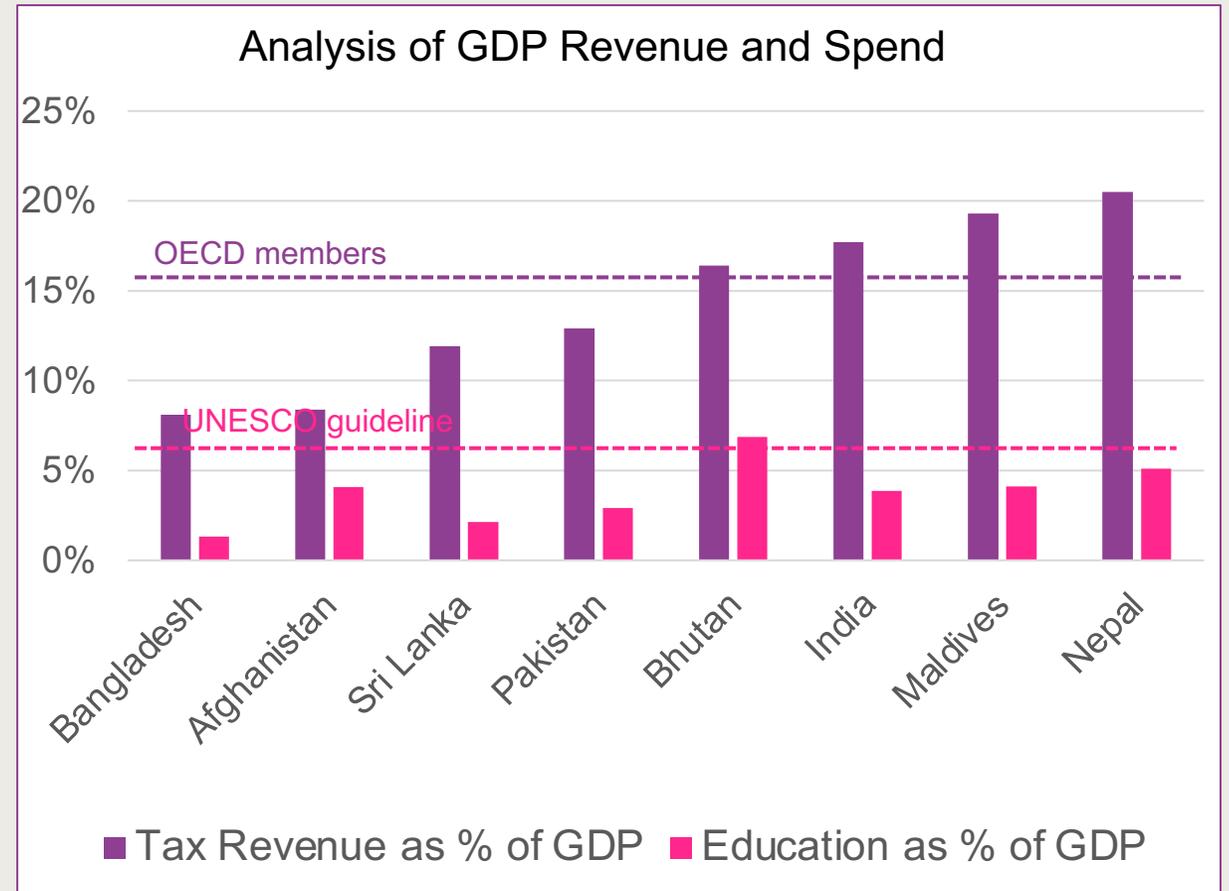
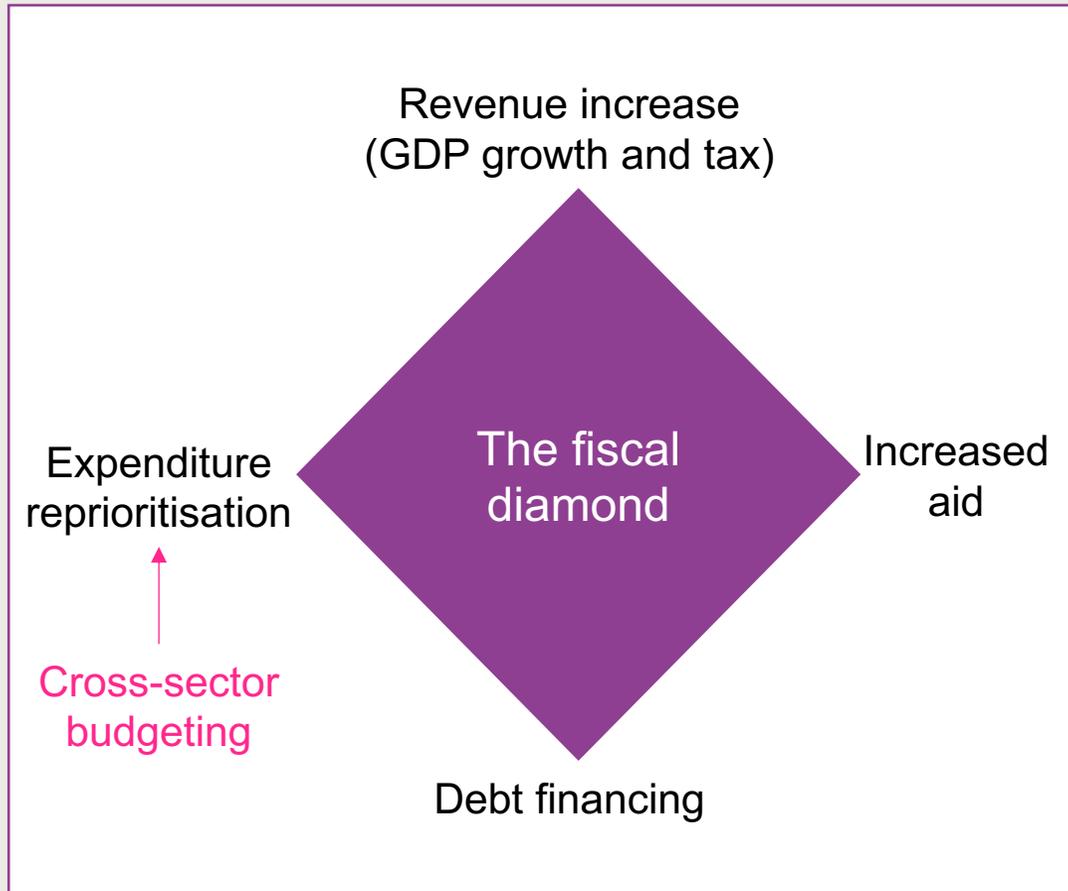
Bhutan: only SA country exceeding recommended levels

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

Building back better to improve learning and increase system resilience

What does building back better mean to improve learning and increase system resilience, what are the key challenges and needs for support/technical assistance?

NOTE: Government representatives, please use the link in the chatbox to access the Jamboards to share your country experience.



©UNICEF/UNI355755/Panjwani



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

unicef 
for every child

Thank you!

