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.
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<td><strong>Next Steps:</strong> Summary of Jamboard inputs, priority actions and identified areas for support, led by Mita Gupta and Ivan Coursac, Education Specialists, UNICEF ROSA</td>
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<td><strong>Closing</strong> from Nyi Nyi Thaung, Programme Specialist UNESCO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?

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
Continuity of Learning

Access, participation & learning during the pandemic
# School closure, opening and reopening through the pandemic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Days fully closed</th>
<th>Days partially closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>14 Mar</td>
<td>22 Aug</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>17 Mar</td>
<td>3 Oct</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>18 Mar</td>
<td>14 Sept</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>From 6 Mar – varied by state</td>
<td>15 Oct</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>15 Mar</td>
<td>15 Oct</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>19 Mar</td>
<td>17 Sept</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>13 Mar</td>
<td>26 Nov</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>13 Mar</td>
<td>23 Nov</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.

Source: Human Capital Accumulation and Disasters: Evidence from the Pakistan Earthquake of 2005 | RISE Programme
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

Source: based on data from UNICEF-led household surveys across the region (2020)
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.

Low levels of learning

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

- **No remediation**: -1.03
- **One year remediation**: -0.54
- **One year remediation and ongoing instruction reorientation**: 1.28

**Source**: Brooking 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
  

• 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.
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
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.
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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Drinking Water</th>
<th>Sanitation</th>
<th>Hygiene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cambridge Education
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 services 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.

**Disclaimer:** The information shown on this map does not imply official recognition or endorsement of and physical, political boundaries or feature names by the UN or other collaborative organizations. UN OCHA and affiliated organizations are not liable for damages of any kind related to the use of this data. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.
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

**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

**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

**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 adaptions and cross-sectoral planning at all levels mobilises resources more effectively
Recommendations

**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

**Health**
- Plan and budget for essential health and social services for children and young people

**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 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
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Strategic Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible learning to suit out-of-school and working children, reducing reliance on fixed times and locations and increasing learner autonomy and independence</td>
<td>• Could increase the digital divide and exclude groups of marginalised children eg: children with disabilities</td>
<td>• Innovative approaches focused on the most marginalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can provide unique learning pathways for students</td>
<td>• Commercialisation of education widening the digital divide</td>
<td>• T4L policy development and governance structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support for classroom teaching</td>
<td>• Focus on technology rather than learning</td>
<td>• Integrate technology in teacher education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

- Focus on the youngest and on marginalised learners
- Teachers
- Curriculum reform
- Alternative learning solutions
- Safe Schools
- Blended learning
- Use of data
- Education investment

- Investment in building skills and capacity for teachers and learning supporters
- Deeper knowledge of fewer things, encouraging independent learning
- Working in local partnerships with communities and parents
- Prioritise wellbeing and safeguarding
- A phased plan to increase funding to education
- Information about learning for all groups and what's working
- Recognise that technology is not the whole solution

Cambridge Education
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.

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**Education budgets relative to the UNESCO guideline, 2014-19**

![Graph showing education budgets relative to the UNESCO guideline, 2014-19](image-url)
Is there fiscal space to increase spending on education?

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

The fiscal diamond

- Revenue increase (GDP growth and tax)
- Increased aid
- Expenditure reprioritisation
- Cross-sector budgeting
- Debt financing

Analysis of GDP Revenue and Spend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Tax Revenue as % of GDP</th>
<th>Education as % of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OECD members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO guideline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
Thank you!