COVID-19 EDUCATION: CONTIGENCY PLANNING, RISK REDUCTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

RISK REDUCTION AND PREPAREDNESS • Support Government with education sector risk assessments, contingency and response plans • Advocate and support governments for schools, teachers and families to be prepared for school closures and school re-opening
RESPONSE 1 • Implement the safe school operations guidance with government and local partners
RESPONSE 2 • Develop context appropriate strategies for continuous learning that **allow pupils, teachers and schools to utilize flexible and remote/ home-based learning, which may include homework** assignments, reading material, Radio, TV, online content, and internet-based learning
MONITORING AND EVALUATION • Develop and implement simple monitoring and evaluation systems of learning activities and education response plans (to feed into country, regional and global SitReps and post-action evaluations).

Please note this document is aligned with and complementary to ***Programme guidance for COVID-19*** (see here).

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

RESPONSE 1: IMPLEMENT THE SAFE SCHOOL OPERATIONS GUIDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL PARTNERS

CONTINGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

- Develop costed contingency plans for school closure and/or re-opening of schools
- Support Government as required with education sector risk assessments, and the development of contingency and response plans for the closure and/ or re-opening of schools
- Contingency Plans should include all areas included in the ***Key messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools*** (see here) as well as:
    - supply needs, expanded considerations for remote/distance learning
    - specific activities for reaching the most vulnerable children (children on the move, with disabilities, minorities)
    - specific activities for non-formal education settings (camps, madrassas, etc.)
- Consider any challenges with regards to gender differences or for children with disabilities in accessing home-based learning
- Identify the most vulnerable groups who may need additional support.
- Consider how teachers will stay engaged with their classes and students to monitor progress, assign new lessons and to give required PSS - or share information on referral services.

- Identify the mechanism to support learning that will reach the most children (see decision tree)
- Consider needs to support Government with - preparing learning packages (texts, worksheets, reading materials), prepare for radio/ tv programme development, identify online learning options, establishment of teacher. Class contact groups with partners/ caregivers. In several countries, teachers are either conducting home visits to check assignments on children's progress, or checking via the phone, WhatsApp, email etc.
- If safe to do so, consider identifying locations for small groups of children to meet with their teacher on a regular basis.
- Where actions are cross- sectoral liaise with colleagues from WASH, C4D, Child Protection etc.
- Please note, pay attention to Gender- (evaluations show that this has not been adequately addressed in all previous EVD responses).
- If your target population cannot access regular affordable connectivity, but online learning is a good option otherwise, then engaging with the appropriate Government Office (e.g. Ministry of Telco, Infrastructure, etc.) to request learning sites and applications to be zero-rated is of priority. This will enable affordable access to the tools described in the accompanying linked document.

IMPLEMENT THE SAFE SCHOOL OPERATIONS GUIDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL PARTNERS (see here)

- Consider needs of supporting government to contextualize the guidance, including translation into local languages

Response 2: ENSURE CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

Please see accompanying *The continuous remote learning decision tree (see here).*

CONTINGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

- Identify who the most vulnerable children will be in the case of schools being closed.
- Teachers should obtain the phone numbers of the parents/ caregivers of the children in the class and create WhatsApp groups (or other communication applications) to facilitate discussions, check in on children's progress and share more assignments.
- Ensure referral mechanisms are in place should MH issues be apparent from home visits
- Hold parents' evenings to discuss the plans
- Hold meetings with the governance bodies (SMCs, board of governors)- so all are aware
- Visit/ Phone homes where parents/ guardians are unable to come to the school.
- Ensure referral mechanisms are in place should MH issues be apparent over the school closure period

- A community engagement approach with clear communication and information sharing is important in all situations, as is promoting positive learning environment and practices at home, including:
  a. Reading together
  b. Playing together

If your target population (students, parents, teachers) <u>DOES NOT HAVE access</u> to affordable connectivity and devices (mobile, desktop) at home

Printed: Consider paper based individual home learning assignments. (textbooks, pamphlets, worksheets, reading books etc.).

- Schools should prepare reading and assignment packages- following the curriculum
- Identify the textbooks and reading books that would be sent home and prepare the necessary release slips for these.
- If safe to do so identify locations for small groups of children to meet with their teacher on a regular basis,
- Teachers could be deployed for home visits to check assignments on children's progress.
- Use WhatsApp- (see above), or U-report, home visits to check children are listening, engaging and learning

TV: Past evidence has shown that delivering curriculum via television can be an effective way of maintaining the learning process and student engagement. Checking in with parents and caregivers on children's engagement with the programmes are an important part of the monitoring process.

Governments may choose this option if there is wide tv coverage and programmes are already prepared, easily accessible or the necessary infrastructure to create new programmes quickly (including programmes from neighbouring countries in the same languages). To create programmes:

- Use the visual medium to its maximum potential.
- Broadcast and make the programmes available for catch up if possible
- Try and ensure diverse representation of presenters
- Do engage lively enthusiastic presenters to deliver the lessons.
- Lessons should be as interactive as possible, promote play and games
- There is potential for children and youth to also present in the programmes
- You may consider also include key messages on combating stigma and promoting preventative measures at the beginning and end of lessons
- Consider sign language, and subtitles for children with disabilities

Radio: Radio delivery of the curriculum has been used in several contexts when access to school has been disrupted.

If radio programmes are already available, or easily obtained consider the following actions:
- Widely disseminate schedule of the programmes within schools and communities and ensure the schedule is adhered to (lesson learnt- if you move programs around people stop listening)
- Broadcast on to get the widest catchment of children (either Governments networks or negotiate space on multiple private radio stations as required).

If radio programmes are not widely available but the required infrastructure is available to quickly develop and air programmes, in addition to the above consider the following actions (from lessons learnt)

- Do engage lively enthusiastic communicators to deliver the lessons.
- Follow the curriculum
- Broadcast live, and make the programmes available for download
- Use quizzes and promote games
- Encourage children and youth to also present in the programmes
- Lessons should be as interactive as possible
- Beginning and end of lessons can include key messages on combating stigma and promoting preventative measures
- Widely disseminate schedule of the programmes within schools and communities and ensure the schedule is adhered to (lesson learnt- if you move programs around people stop listening)
- Broadcast on to get the widest catchment of children (either Governments networks or negotiate space on private radio stations).

For both radio and TV distance learning, teachers could be deployed for home visits to check assignments on children's progress. Use WhatsApp- (see above), or U-report, home visits to check children are listening, engaging and learning

If your target population cannot access regularly affordable connectivity due to cost, but online learning is a good option,

Please consider engaging with the appropriate Government Office (e.g. Ministry of Telco, Infrastructure, etc.) to request learning sites and applications to be zero-rated is of priority. This will enable affordable access to the tools described above.
Consider how teachers will support to children's learning- such as checking children's progress, giving new assignments. This is relevant for all the different options for continuous learning, and may be by conducting home visits or checking via the phone, WhatsApp, email etc.

If your target population (students, parents, teachers) HAS ACCESS to affordable connectivity and devices (mobile, desktop) at home:

Individual Learning:
There are several free tools that can be leveraged to support individual learning at home. Depending on your country, you may decide to reach out directly to households, via communication and communication for development campaigns, to inform caregivers and students of tools that can be used to engage in digital learning during school closure.

Among those tools are:
1. **Digital reading materials**

   African Storybook. Provides open access to picture storybooks in 189 languages spoken in the African content. Can be played in desktop and mobile. For more information: https://www.africanstorybook.org/

eLimu. Digital educational content provider in East Africa. Its 'Hadithi, Hadithi!' app aims to improve literacy rates for 6 and 7-year-olds in the first two years of primary education through interactive stories. These stories are written by local teachers and illustrated by artists across East Africa. Available on mobile and desktop, and via Google Play. For more information: http://e-limu.org/hadithi-hadithi/

Global Digital Library. Promotes early-grade literacy by making digital storybooks and other reading materials available in multiple languages. Can be played on a desktop. Multiple languages. More information: https://www.digitallibrary.io/

Let's Read.   Digital library of books for children in Asia. Currently it includes over 2,500 books in 25 languages. Can be played via mobile and desktop; also available on Google Play. For more information: https://asiafoundation.org/what-we-do/books-for-asia/lets-read/

StoryWeaver. Digital repository of multilingual stories for children. Can be played in mobile and desktop. More information: https://storyweaver.org.in/

Worldreader. Provides free access to a large library of digital books and stories that can be accessed via mobile and desktop devices. Available on Google Play Store. More information: https://www.worldreader.org/

2. **Learning applications:**

   a. <u>**Language learning:**</u>
   Akelius. Language learning application and web-based platform, focusing on students without basic literacy in their mother tongue that need to learn a second language (ex. refugees, migrants). Mobile, Desktop, and available on Google Play. Available languages: Greek, English, French, Swedish. Access here: https://www.akelius.com/en/language-course or download app on Google Play.
   Duolingo. Language learning application can be accessed via Mobile and Desktop. Available on Google Play, App Store. More information here: https://www.duolingo.com/

   b. <u>**Basic Literacy or numeracy:**</u>
   Google Bolo. Application to support literacy. Available for mobile on Google Play in India and test countries.   Multiple languages. For more information: Search on Google Play if it is available in your country.
   Age of Learning (ABC Mouse and other products). Products that support early literacy and numeracy. For COVID-19 response the company provided UNICEF a download code to make its suite of products free to affected households during school closures. Available in English and (partially) in Spanish.

3. **Learning platforms with diverse content (esp. useful for older, motivated learners, or with active engagement of caregivers/teachers)**

   Alison. Free online courses on diverse subject areas. Available on desktop. Available languages: English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese. Access here: https://alison.com/

Coursera. Online courses taught by instructors from recognized universities and companies. Mobile and Desktop.   Most courses in English. https://www.coursera.org/

Edraak. Free online education in Arabic for K-12 and continuous learning. Can be accessed on desktop. For teachers, learners, and parents.   More information: https://www.edraak.org/en/

EdX.   Free online courses from educational institutions worldwide. Available on mobile and desktop. Available on Apple store, Google Play. Most courses are in English. https://www.edx.org/

EkStep. An open learning platform with a collection of learning resources in literacy & numeracy.   Mobile and Desktop. Available on Google Play.   Mostly in English. Learner-facing content access tool. More information: https://ekstep.in/

Khan Academy. Free online courses, lessons and practice. Mobile and Desktop. Available on Google Play, App Store, Amazon App Store.   Multiple languages. More information: https://www.khanacademy.org/

Kolibri. Open-source digital learning platform designed for resource-constrained communities capable of running offline. Can be played on desktop. Multiple languages. More information: https://learningequality.org/kolibri/

Alternative delivery channels for curriculum:

If you have access to digitized curriculum, continuing the learning process digitally is an option. Given the connectivity available and tools that teachers and learners have access to, there are several possible tools to choose from:

1. **The Learning Passport** *(UNICEF supported)***:**
   If you have the national curriculum in digital form or if you have textbooks that you can scan into PDF, the Learning Passport is a vehicle you can use to provide curriculum to students with an internet connection at home. The Learning Passport is a platform developed by UNICEF (with partners Cambridge University and Microsoft) that can provide your national curriculum, with supplemental video content, to any student with an internet connection.

   The learning passport team will set up a space for your country and curriculum and help you structure this curriculum into lessons that students can use. Each student will be able to create an account which will be used to track their progress through different lessons and subjects, thereby creating an individual record of learning per student, which teachers can track.

   Anyone can access the Learning Passport platform via an internet browser, on a phone, tablet, or computer. Reach out to: mglovinsky@unicef.org for more

Social Media, Messaging and Internet Platforms

1. **Digital Classrooms: Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, many others:** While the requirements of good and consistent connectivity may be a barrier, these tools create a digital classroom environment, with multiple functionalities that recreate a physical

classroom environment online, like group and individual activities and assignment functionalities, and classroom management options.

2. **Video Conferencing Platforms: Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, others:** Video communications platforms where teachers can simulate classroom activities, over video, with students. Note that these options often require relatively good connectivity.

3. **Messaging Platforms: WeChat, Telegram, WhatsApp, Slack, others:** One on one or group-based communication channels, where a teacher can interact with students individually or in groups, give assignments, create Q&A sessions, or mirror other class-based activities, via mobile phones.

4. **Youtube:** A teacher can upload video recordings of lessons or create a playlist of material that maps to your curriculum, that students can watch.

For any clarifications or support for this technical guidance feel free to contact:

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In all cases please copy Linda Jones and your Regional Office EiE focal point