

# UNICEF Education & COVID-19 Case Study

Chad – Accelerating school reopening in Chad using an integrated approach

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In March 2020, when the Government of Chad closed schools to curb the spread of COVID-19, over [3 million children](#) aged 3 to 17 (1,282,699 girls), including over 214,000 children already affected by emergencies, experienced disruptions to their schooling. Faced with the unprecedented scale of school closures, the Government responded by adopting flexible educational programming based on the principle of “holding no child back” and, supported by UNICEF, by offering distance education alternatives. At the same time, efforts to improve school hygiene and spread effective COVID-19 prevention messages were undertaken to prepare for safe school reopening. As a result, the progressive implementation of educational and sanitation programmes enabled in-person classes to resume in June 2020 for secondary school students with final examinations. In October 2020, all students from pre-primary to secondary were invited to return to school. School reopening in Chad has not been a single event but rather an integrated process over time. This case study examines the intersectoral nature of reopening schools in Chad after the first wave of the COVID-19 outbreak.

## RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- **Policy decision not to hold children back and to maintain flexible pathways are key aspects of school reopening.** While a formative assessment to measure children’s learning levels was not undertaken upon their return to classroom, no child was held back or penalized by disruptions caused by school closure. In the context of COVID-19, the Government authorized all students to move to the next grade and resume their regular coursework when the new academic year started in November 2020. UNICEF Chad also collaborated with the Ministry of National Education to distribute school supplies for 37,000 refugee, internally displaced and host community students. To respond to the overlapping emergencies in Chad, a mix of in-person and home-based learning modalities were

promoted during the closure of schools and adapted further to the reopening of school in October 2020. By the end of April 2021, 968,077 pupils aged 7 to 19 (370,616 girls), or 32 per cent of the 3 million affected children, have benefited from distance education programmes delivered via radio, television and mobile phone in partnership with the non-governmental organization [TECHNIDEV](#).

- **Education, risk communication, water, sanitation and hygiene work hand-in-hand.** To promote a safer return to school, UNICEF Chad provided hand-washing kits, soap and bleach to at least 1,083 primary schools and is planning to build an additional 192 water points. UNICEF also distributed at least 110,000 posters with awareness-raising messages on COVID-19 prevention and protection, including hygiene management, which were distributed to 13,677 primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools across the country. The messages reached at least 134,368 students (36,273 girls), 14,128 teachers (358 female) and 5,658 members of the parent–teacher associations (1,001 women), who in turn advocated for adopting these key practices within their communities.
- **Awareness-raising messages around COVID-19 through a child-friendly comic character enabled a safer return to school for children.** In April 2020, UNICEF Chad, with support from the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO), developed a comic book called [Lafya](#), which means ‘peace’ in Ngambaye, one of Chad’s local languages. Lafya, the 8-year-old heroine who cannot go to school because of the spread of COVID-19, learns about the symptoms of the disease and how it affects children. Through the eyes of Lafya, the comic book informs the readers of children’s right to education and how to stay safe until schools reopen. About 18,000 copies of the comic were printed and distributed along with posters and stickers, [online](#) versions, 2D animations and audio books in French, Arabic and Ngambaye. UNICEF also helped develop a child-friendly radio programme inspired by Lafya in these languages in collaboration with “Hadre Dounia,” a local theatre company. To date, UNICEF Chad has reached 164,920 children (81,661 girls) through Lafya’s child-friendly stories about preventing COVID-19 transmission, helping to save lives and increase interest among school children, their parents and teachers in adopting safe practices against COVID-19.



## NEXT STEPS

As country goes through another COVID-19 wave, support for distance and school-based learning and the provision of school materials will continue, incorporating [lessons learned](#) from the 2020 COVID-19 response. In 2021, in addition to the distribution of hygiene products such as bleach and soap, UNICEF aims to reach 223,500 children (3-18 years old) with learning materials through Education Cannot Wait funding, and more than 2 million children (8-11 years old) with school textbooks purchased through Global Partnership for Education funding. UNICEF Chad and partners also plan to scale up the Lafya initiative, which has gained positive influence among children and teachers. A mobile application of Lafya is currently in development to increase access to information on COVID-19 preventive measures in schools and communities.

### *Cost effectiveness*

In 2020, UNICEF, with support from ECHO, provided more than \$US 14,000 to design the Lafya initiative in Chad, reaching 164,920 students with powerful messages on how to fight COVID-19, helping to accelerate the adoption of key practices within communities for preventing COVID-19.

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