

# UNICEF Education COVID-19 Case Study

Viet Nam – Opening up schools better

28 May 2020

unicef   
for every child



Photo taken by teachers of their students returning to classes in Lao Cai province

©UNICEF / 2020 / Vu Thi Tuyet Thanh, Nguyen Thi Thuy, & Ngo Thao Nguyen

On 4 May 2020, Viet Nam started the partial reopening of the nation's 44,000 schools. It began with Grades 9 and 12 giving priority to the lower and upper secondary students preparing for end-of-year exams, followed by the gradual reopening of kindergartens and primary schools.

UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in the planning and implementation of the [Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools](#) and the [Framework for Reopening Schools](#) to produce contextualized clear and actionable guidance for schools, teachers, caregivers/parents and students to ensure schools are safe and welcoming for children. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) the dissemination of the operational guidelines and the roll-out of a 'back to school' campaign.

## KEY FEATURES

- **Alignment with the Framework for Reopening of Schools.** UNICEF is supporting the ministry around the six domains in the joint Framework: policy reforms, financing requirements, safe school operations, bridging the learning gap and reaching the most marginalized, inclusive of wellness and protection. Notably, policy reforms include the cutting back on curriculum, distance learning, regulation of online teaching, an adjusted school and exam calendar, and criteria to ensure safety for students returning to school. The financing priorities are focused on clean water at schools and distance learning.

- **Evidence-based policy.** The prioritization of establishing water points in the areas with the highest need was based on data from a survey of water and sanitation facilities in schools, which revealed that approximately 30% of schools lacked running water. These findings catalyzed urgent action by a range of partners to address the gap.
- **Putting children’s well-being first.** The adjustment of the curriculum – dropping certain tests and modules and carrying over others to the next school year – is meant to give boys and girls the whole of next year to catch up their missed learning, which will reduce academic pressure and psycho-social stress.
- **School readiness assessment prior to reopening.** The School Safety Assessment Criteria sets out 15 criteria to determine whether a school is considered safe to reopen, organized to cover three time periods: *before school*, *during school hours* and *after school* for schools.
- **Phased reopening with physical distancing measures.** The MOET decided to implement a double shift system to allow physical distancing and requested that children with connectivity continue their online learning at home, delaying their return to the school. At the request of the MOET, UNICEF prepared messages for caregivers/parents to help them understand this decision.
- **Tailored messages in the back to school campaign.** UNICEF provided the MOET with back to school videos with age-appropriate messages for children and adolescents (translating [videos](#) previously prepared by UNICEF China).

## EMERGENT LESSONS LEARNED

- The phased reopening of schools in Viet Nam is premised on some students continuing their online learning. This approach, while challenging given the stark digital divide, also offers opportunities to invest in online learning and devices and expand of internet connectivity to reach all children, especially those living in rural and underserved areas, sparking increased engagement and new partnerships with SAP, Microsoft and other technology firms. It raises the possibility of the adoption of a single online education platform, such as the Learning Passport to host the new curriculum that encompasses digital skills. To learn more, an [article](#) and [video](#) in which Rana Flowers, UNICEF Representative in Viet Nam, offers her first-hand account of the challenges and opportunities during the COVID-19 outbreak and Lao Cai schools re-opening.

## OTHER RESOURCES

For other resources, including more case studies, please click [here](#) and filter by “Area of Work” (Education).

For more information, please see:

The Viet Nam Country Office website: <https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/>

© UNICEF May 2020