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Building Resilient Education Systems beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Considerations for education decision-makers at national, local and school levels

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Introduction

Building Resilient Education Systems beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic: Considerations for decision-makers at national, local and school levels aims to support governments, ministry officials and other education decision-makers at the national level, local governments and schools to plan for education recovery and normalisation following the spring 2020 school closure and education disruption. The premises of these Considerations are that education system resilience in Europe and Central Asia will reduce the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on learning, ensure greater preparedness for future potential crises and significantly contribute to improving inclusive, quality education for all girls and boys in the region.

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in school closures in 20 countries and pre-school closures in 19 countries in Europe and Central Asia. This affected a total of 49.8 million children of pre-primary to upper secondary age, who have had a very disrupted last school term, if any, at the peak of school closure.

The pandemic has deeply exacerbated existing education and social inequities in the region. Children from low-income families, children living in rural areas with poor infrastructure, children from ethnic and linguistic minorities, children with disabilities, migrant and refugee children, children in conflict with the law, out-of-school children and youth and boys and girls otherwise living in difficult circumstances or abusive homes were already facing significant barriers to participation in education and learning and experiencing lower education and social outcomes than their peers.

Schools are not only a place for academic learning but also for social and emotional learning, social interaction and social support. School closure has not only disrupted children's learning, but also access to school meals, well-being support and referrals to basic health and social services.

The challenge ahead, for teachers, school leaders, education officers and decision-makers at local and national levels, is significant. **Failing to rise to this challenge would have a life-long impact on children, young people, families, communities and societies more broadly in both social and economic terms**. This is why improving the resilience of the education system by planning purposively for quality inclusive education for the most marginalised children should be a top priority for the upcoming months and years and the core principle of building back better education and schools.

Purpose

This document intends to contribute to improving the resilience of education systems—systems that are more flexible, fully dedicated to ALL children learning through a range of learning modalities and technologies and better equipped to face potential crises. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it aims to operationalise and contextualise the recommendations of the multi-agency Framework for Reopening Schools (UNESCO et al., 2020). It seeks to help maintain and promote quality, inclusive education and learning for ALL children and young people throughout and beyond the outbreak and recovery phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on the most marginalised children.

These Considerations provide school leaders and education officers in local authorities, district education offices and ministries of education with an overall framework and a set of thematic considerations to inform their decision-making, planning, and policy development processes.

The hope is that these considerations will encourage the education community to address the major inequalities in access to quality, inclusive education provision and the significant learning disparities across groups of children during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The document does not tell school leaders and education officials to implement specific activities or strategies. Rather, it proposes questions that must be answered: (i) to ensure that ALL children and young people can participate in quality, inclusive education, can learn and can be adequately cared for and supported so that all barriers to participation, learning and well-being are removed; and, (ii) to strengthen the resilience of the system and the capacities of schools, teachers and education officers to deliver inclusive quality education for ALL children including in times of crisis.

The basic premises of the document are that education systems need to analyse, plan, do, review and sustain strategies in four critical interrelated areas:

1. Access to education provision

2. Quality and inclusive learning
3. Well-being (Mental health and psychosocial support)
4. Safe schools

Building Resilient Education Systems beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic: Considerations for decision-makers at national, local and school levels complements UNICEF's ongoing efforts to ensure that ALL children grow, develop and learn. They draw from UNICEF's past and ongoing work across the region on inclusive education, out-of-school children and dropout prevention and overall education policy planning support at the system level.

Scope of the document

After this introduction, readers will find the following information:

Section 1: Considerations for PLANNING in a context of uncertainty

Section 2: Considerations for ensuring ACCESS to education for all children and adolescents

Section 3: Considerations for ensuring inclusive and quality LEARNING for all children and adolescents

Section 4: Considerations for ensuring the WELL-BEING of all children and adolescents, teachers and parents

Section 5: Considerations for SAFE schools for children and adolescents

How to use the guidance

While Section 1 provides general considerations about planning, the four remaining sections include:

- A summary of main risk and opportunities for building back better education
- Key priorities for planning
- A series of questions to help decision-makers address key challenges ahead and ensure inclusive and quality education provision for ALL children.

Questions can be considered at different levels by:

- Schools
- Local authorities
- District Education Authorities or Administrations
- National level decision makers: Ministries of education, national education agencies and other relevant national stakeholders from the education or other sectors.

A symbol (◆■●♦) indicates which level(s) should consider addressing a given question.

Questions can be considered at different points in time, and require action in the short-term ■, medium-term ■ or longer term ■. For the purpose of this guidance:

- Short term embraces the period from now until mid-October 2020
- Medium term refers to mid-October 2020 to September 2021
- Long term is the 2021-2022 academic year

Below is a summary of the symbols and colour codes used throughout the document.

S ◆	LA ■	DEA ●	N ♦	ST ■	MT ■	LT ■
Schools	Local authorities	District education authorities	National level	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term

Terminology

School is used for convenience as a broad term covering all types of education institutions, formal and informal, at all levels of education. Where relevant, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions and non-formal education centres and provision are referred to specifically.

It is recognised that while education institutions mostly depend on education ministries, some children are educated in special institutions, residential care institutions, detention centres, closed educational institutions, hospitals and sanatoriums that might be attached to other line ministries, including ministries of health, social affairs (e.g. kindergartens), the interior or justice.

The Considerations are, to some extent, relevant to all types of education institutions but are not comprehensively addressing the reopening specificities of each institution with the exception of regular schools.

School reopening refers to schools reopening shared physical spaces for students and teachers.

Marginalised children refer to individual or groups of children who are socially and educationally excluded. In Europe and Central Asia, these children are typically Roma children and children from other ethnic or linguistic minorities, children with disabilities, migrant and refugee children, internally displaced children, children in conflict with the law, children from dysfunctional or vulnerable households, children living and working in the street, out-of-school children, and other children living in difficult circumstances, including girls at risk of child, early or forced marriage, pregnant girls, young mothers and young fathers, girls and boys caring for siblings or sick parents, and girls and boys who are victim of gender-based violence. Marginalised children can be girls and/or boys, depending on contexts.

It is recognised that gender is an important aspect of marginalisation, which intersects with other dimensions of exclusion. It is also recognised that the COVID-19 crisis might have resulted in increased domestic violence and gender-based violence (GBV), which disproportionately affects girls and women.

This document also recognises that 'families', 'parents' and 'communities' reflect multiple realities and are not homogeneous groups. Single-parent headed households or young parents have specific needs and might require matching support. Engaging with parents might require adopting differentiated strategies for mothers and fathers.

Emergency Remote Teaching (or Emergency Remote Learning) encompasses the idea that courses are offered through distance learning in response to a crisis, rather than having been planned or designed for the purpose of distance education. It refers to a sudden (and often rushed) transition from classroom-based teaching to distance education and/or virtual classrooms. Many are calling for a distinction between online learning, underpinned by inclusive pedagogy, and remote learning in recognition of the fact that online learning has been planned and designed while remote learning is mostly about using technology to conduct tasks designed for classroom-based teaching.[1]

Distance learning (distance education) is defined as education provided to students remotely without regular face-to-face contact with a teacher in the classroom. Distance education, once implemented via correspondence, includes learning through take-home printed materials, radio or television programmes, and online.

Online learning is usually understood as education that takes place over the internet. It can be part of distance education programmes but also used to complement classroom-based teaching (blended learning). Students can study online at home or in their classrooms and with their peers. Online learning uses a range of formats, often combining internet-based technology and education technology applications that can be used offline.

Blended learning combines multiple modalities, including in-person teaching and learning, the use of education technology applications and students' interactions with online learning. In this case, education technology applications and online learning are some of the teaching strategies to support students in reaching their learning goals. Blended learning can also include distance learning.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) covers any type of support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental health conditions. MHPSS underscores the need for diverse (education, health, social…), complementary approaches in providing appropriate support.

[1] https://edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2020/05/emergency-remote-teaching-rigorous-online-learning-perfcon

Socio-emotional skills: Socio-emotional skills "refer to the abilities to regulate one's thoughts, emotions and behaviour" (OECD, 2018). These skills enable children and adults to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.[2] Socio-emotional skills are labelled differently by different agencies. The OECD organises socio-emotional skills around five big domains: Task Performance, Emotional Regulation, Collaboration, Open-mindedness, Engaging with others, plus an additional Compound skills domain comprising self-efficacy, critical thinking/independence, and self-reflection and metacognition (OECD, 2018). For the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), socio-emotional skills relate to self-awareness (e.g. identifying emotions, recognising strengths, self-efficacy), self-management (e.g. stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal setting, organisation skills), social awareness (empathy and respect for others), relationships (e.g. communication, team work), and responsible decision-making (e.g. identifying problems, analysing situations, solving problems, evaluating, reflecting).

Recovery is used in the document to indicate a return to a normal state. 'Learning recovery' covers steps and interventions to address the learning loss caused by school closures and the pandemic. 'COVID-19 recovery phase' refers to a return to life as we knew it or to a life closely related to the one before the pandemic.

Community engagement refers to working with traditional, community, civil society, government, and opinion groups and leaders; and expanding collective or group roles in addressing the issues that affect their lives. Community engagement empowers social groups and social networks, builds upon local strengths and capacities and improves local participation, ownership, adaptation and communication.

[2] https://casel.org/

Considerations for planning

Governments, ministries, and schools are faced with the challenge of planning for education delivery in very uncertain times. After a major learning disruption due to school closures and lockdowns, countries have gradually lifted restrictions, while maintaining key protective measures, particularly around physical distancing. In Europe and Central Asia, many countries have decided not to re-open schools before September 2020. Yet, with the virus still in circulation globally, and no vaccine to date, societies are getting prepared to a 'new normal' where education will be different than students, teachers and families have known it. Some countries are planning for different scenarios for the new academic year, with schools reopening or with distance education.

While schools will re-open, they will not be able to welcome all students full-time due to physical distancing rules and other protective measures. School calendars will be modified, re-entry staggered and teaching provided in shifts. Reduced timetables will be complemented by remote learning activities. Blended learning periods might look different for different students. While some students might go back to schools a few hours or a few days a week, and study through distance learning the rest of the time, others might only study remotely. It is also possible that some students will be receiving more face-to-face instruction than others depending on their age, level of education and personal learning needs or family and social circumstances. For instance, children of key personnel, such as nurses and doctors, and socially excluded and marginalised children, might be given priority over other children for on-site education.

Planning in such an environment is no trivial task. With so many unknowns, a learning loss that will have lasting effects on students for years to come, and anxiety and stress among education staff, children and families, following sound decision-making principles is more important than ever and is a prerequisite to improving the resilience of education systems.

Below are some considerations for planning to build resilient education systems beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure that ALL children receive inclusive quality education.

Addressing drivers of exclusion

The pandemic has amplified the drivers of social exclusion: low income, unemployment, ill health, social capital, housing, local networks (supportive neighbourhoods, transport, etc.) and education.

Education attainment is typically influenced by factors operating at four levels:

- **The child and the family**: gender, ethnicity, income, health, mobility
- **The school**: resources, teaching and learning practices, ethos, care and support
- **The community**: school-community relationships, engagement of local authorities, of civil society
- **The national level**: policies, investments, gender and social norms

Building back better education means addressing drivers of exclusion as a priority and at all four levels simultaneously. Building back better education is not only about additional provision for the most marginalised children. It is about ensuring that national and local efforts converge to support the transformation of schools with a focus on two critical aspects:

- **Transforming pedagogy** by developing more inclusive and flexible curriculum and instructional practices that respond to the individual needs of each child, and
- **Transforming school ethos**, structures and organisation so that inclusion, care, respect and holistic support are at the core of schools' missions and practices.

Planning in a context of uncertainty

With this goal in mind, education stakeholders can **stay true to their mission and long-term goal** of enabling ALL children to realise their education rights and reach their full potential. Education policy makers might not have control over political decisions on national health and protective measures, but they can **focus on what they know and what is under their control and remit**, i.e., teaching students protective gestures, the quality of learning, the provision of inclusive and caring education services and the well-being of the education workforce. While education stakeholders do not have the means or mandate to address **all** possible children and family circumstances, they do have the power and the duty to ensure that every child is welcome at school, valued for who s/he is, respected, cared for and supported so that s/he can participate in school activities and learn in a thriving and inclusive environment. Building back better

education requires a vision shared by the society as a whole. **Wide stakeholder engagement at all levels and at all steps of the planning cycle** is critical to shaping interventions and ensuring buy-in, particularly at times of uncertainty. Empowering local communities to make their own choices about education, **building on innovative school practices and nurturing local exchange and sharing of knowledge** and practices plays an important role in responding to the very diverse local contexts. **Scenario planning** might be necessary for the next 24 months or so, depending on the evolution of the pandemic. For this reason, **planning early, mobilising human resources early and revising plans regularly** as the situation evolves is key. Planning for the 2021 exams, for instance, requires participatory scenario planning now so that students and teachers know what to expect from the beginning of the new academic year. In uncertain times, assuring that plans and strategies are well understood by stakeholders, users and beneficiaries is of upmost importance. **Communicating transparently** on the planning process, ensuring genuine opportunities for **community engagement** and **communicating clearly and regularly** will play a critical role in reassuring families about the readiness of schools to welcome back children, in reassuring the education workforce that their challenges are understood and that they will be supported to face them, and in reassuring children that education provision and school practices will be transformed to support them to learn. Ensuring **continuous monitoring**, including of how proposed measures and their implementation are perceived by students, teachers, parents and the education community more broadly, will create feedback loops between "users" and policy makers and enable re-adjustment and appropriate messaging to address stakeholders' concerns.

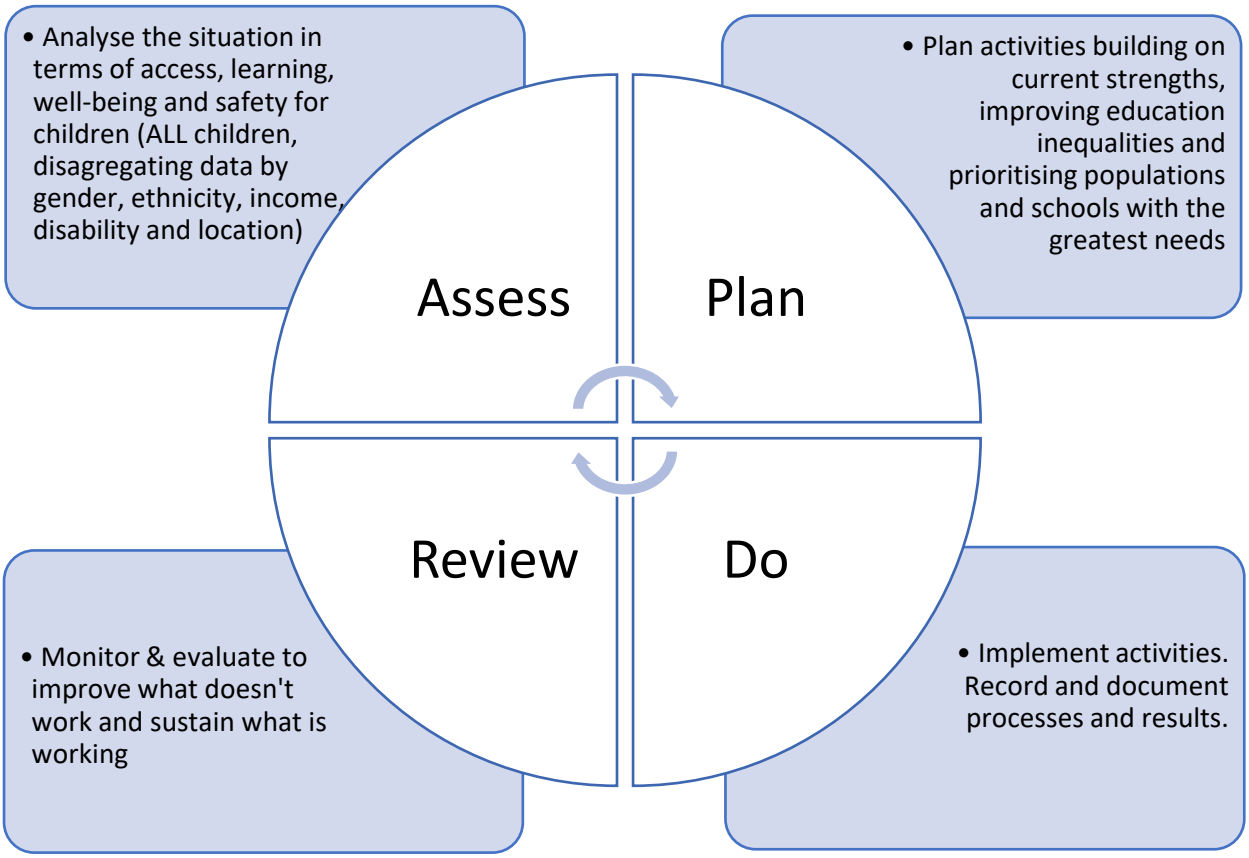
FIGURE 1 PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING UNDER UNCERTAINTY

Seizing the opportunity for building back better

While the pandemic has significantly disrupted education provision and deepened inequalities, it has also provided opportunities for transforming pedagogy and transforming the school ethos: new ways of teaching and learning, new ways of communicating with children and families and new roles to increase the overall level of care for student well-being.

Countries have a lot to gain from the creative education responses to the pandemic at school, local and national levels. Valuable experiences will have taken place, valuable lessons will be learned, which can feed into education planning and reform processes for years to come. This is an opportunity not to be missed, which requires a planning process that continuously assesses the situation, plans to address inequalities, encourages recording and documenting intervention processes and results and monitors and evaluates practices to improve their effectiveness and sustain what works.

FIGURE 2 FOUR-STEP PLANNING FOR SCHOOL, LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS



Area 1: Access

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENSURING ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In this section, "access" is understood broadly and encompasses all aspects of enrolment, dropout prevention and support measures for children to return to and participate in education. Elements that are specific to learning have been included in Area 2: Learning.

Main risk:
• Increased number of out-of-school children: children not enrolling in Grade 1, not transitioning to the next level of education, particularly upper secondary, children dropping out from school or non-formal provision • Girls' and boys' specific dropout risks: child and early marriage, safe access to adequate sanitation, contribution to family income, discrimination in entering the job market • Education opportunity costs preventing families from sending children back to schools; increased child labour • Parent and community fear and reluctance to send their children back to school • Digital gap preventing marginalised children to participate in distance or blended learning • Weak attendance monitoring; weak monitoring of engagement in learning opportunities
Main opportunities to build back better:
• Strengthening identification of students out-of-school and at risk of dropping out • Improving EMIS to identify out-of-school and dropout students, to include student tracking systems during school transfers, education cycles or formal and non-formal systems, and to enable meaningful data disaggregation (including for migrant and refugee children and children with disabilities) • Enabling the transition of children from residential care institutions to regular schools • Strengthening dropout prevention interventions in schools and localities • Strengthening school and local level case management practices for students at risk of dropping out • Strengthening school-home communication and parent involvement in education • Removing financial, administrative and other barriers to access and participation in education • Strengthening horizontal and vertical coordination, including cross-sectoral

Planning priorities

Timing	Summary of key planning priorities
Short-term	• Identifying students at risk of not (re-)enrolling and of dropping out • Deciding on return-to-school policies and phasing • Addressing digital divide *[more information is provided under Area 2: learning]* • Engaging with parents and families to support return to school • Adapting transition support between education cycles • Setting up school networks to share practices • Assessing the impact of the crisis on education budgets • Securing additional funds for the 2020 year and allocating funds to most impacted schools, regions and students
Medium-term	• Back-to-school welcoming strategies for students and parents • Dropout prevention interventions: supporting access, learning and socio-emotional well-being • Continuous parent and family engagement • Connecting out-of-school youth to second chance and skills training programmes • Improving EMIS and tracking systems
Long-term	• Policies and investment for more sensitive and disaggregated EMIS and tracking systems • Improved cross-sector coordination for supporting education access and participation for the most marginalised

	• Comprehensive policies and investments in removing all barriers to access and participation in education for the most marginalised including children with disabilities • Improved alternative and second chance education programmes

Considerations for ensuring access to education for all children and adolescents

Questions for consideration	S ◆	LA ■	DEA ●	N ♦	ST ■	MT ■	LT ■
Identification of children out-of-school and students at risk of dropping out							
Data systems							
How will existing systems for identifying out-of-school children and students at risk of dropping out (through EMIS, school-based dropout early warning systems or any other system in place) be reviewed, adapted and strengthened to enable schools and local authorities to identify all children at risk of not re-enrolling (or not enrolled), of dropping out after schools reopen, or of not participating in distance or online learning?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
What new indicators will be included in such systems to cover a wide range of dropout predictors, including non-engagement in distance or blended learning, MHPSS risks, protection risks and overall socio-emotional risks due to the COVID-19 crisis?	◆			♦	■	■	
How will education data be triangulated with health, social services, family mobility data, and NGO data to ensure that all out-of-school children are identified, including migrant and refugee children and children with disabilities?		■	●	♦	■	■	
How will students' transition between two levels of education be monitored and tracked before the start of the new academic year?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will school transfers be tracked and followed-up to ascertain that children transferring schools before school reopening have re-enrolled and attended their new school?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will school absenteeism data be collected and reported and at which frequency during distance and blended learning periods?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will schools monitor student learning engagement during distance and blended learning periods? (See also LEARNING considerations) How will schools collaborate with parents, students and NGOs where relevant, to track student engagement, including through projects, assignments, remote learning logs and one-to-one or group engagement with teachers in classrooms or remotely? What partnerships with civil society organisations will be necessary to support data collection on participation in distance and blended learning?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will all data above: • Be aggregated at school, local and national levels to identify at-risk student profiles (particularly gender-related, disability related, age-related, marginalisation-related risks as well as geographical pockets)? • Inform the prioritisation of districts, localities and schools for dropout prevention and response work? • Inform national and local out-of-school children and dropout prevention and response interventions and policies?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	

How will good practices on the use of data systems and use of disaggregated data be collected and shared to inform policy development at school, local and national level on (i) the identification of children out-of-school and children at risk of dropping out and on (ii) tracking students during transitions across levels of education?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
Identification protocols							
Who will be in charge of identifying out-of-school children and youth and students at risk of dropping out?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
What protocols and processes will be used, adapted or created for dealing with cases of out-of-school children or student at risk of dropping out? (see also below, Case Management)	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
What protocols will be used when children are not transitioning from one education cycle to another?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
What protocols will be established to ensure that all children having reached the age of school entry by September will have been identified, registered in schools and enrolled in Grade 1?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
What protocols will be specifically established for vulnerable children, namely children educated in residential care institutions, informal education centres, detention centres and health institutions (hospitals, sanatoriums)?							
Case management							
Who will be nominated (individuals or teams) to outreach to children and/or students who have not come back to school? Who are at high risk of dropping out? What will be their role and responsibilities?	◆	■	●		■	■	
How will individual cases of children out of school or at high risk of dropping out be managed? What protocols will be used? What needs assessment will be conducted? What re-enrolment plan or school retention plan be developed?	◆	■	●		■	■	
How will existing referral mechanisms between education, health, social and protection services be reviewed and adapted to best respond to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on out-of-school and dropout risks?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
How will the most vulnerable children, particularly children formerly educated in Residential Care Institutions, detention centres, non-formal education centres or health institutions be supported to enrol in regular schools?							
What partnerships with local authorities, social services, child protection services, NGOs, the police, community groups and community leaders will be established to undertake outreach work for students who have not come back to school or those at high risk of dropping out?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
How will all parties ensure that the support provided is constructive and not stigmatising for students and families?	◆	■	●		■	■	
Preparing school reopening and the return to school							
Decision-making process *(see also Area 4 below on Safe Schools)*							

How will countries ensure flexibility in school closure/reopening and school calendar decision-making processes at national and local levels to accommodate various local epidemiologic situations? How will health authorities and education authorities work closely together on decision-making processes?		■		♦	■	■	
How will national and local decision-making be informed by extensive consultation with local authorities, schools, teachers, teacher unions, parents, parent associations, students and student associations, Disabled People Organisations (DPOs), NGOs working with marginalised groups, including Roma NGOs and migrant and refugee groups?	♦	■	●	♦	■	■	
How will national decision-making address a variety of parameters for school re-opening? • health parameters • geographical parameters • age and grade parameters, so that priority is given to children in younger grades and young people in exam years • personal circumstances parameters, so that priority is given to the most marginalised children, particularly children with disabilities needing access to special services, children living in unsupportive family environments, children with limited access to online learning • parental and community readiness, willingness and expectations				♦	■	■	
How will local decision-making about school reopening take into account a variety of parameters? • national guidelines • local health parameters • availability of school infrastructure and facilities • demographics and social profiles of the locality • parental and community readiness, willingness and expectations	♦	■			■	■	
Communication process for reengaging, reopening and re-enrolment							
How will decisions on school reopening be communicated at national and local levels to avoid confusion for schools, parents and students?	♦	■		♦	■	■	
What will be the nature and scope of the messages to students, parents and communities to support engagement in distance and blended learning and re-enrolment? How will messaging take into consideration gender, ethnicity, language, culture and disability?	♦	■	●	♦	■	■	
What specific information will need to be provided to families of students entering Grade 1, secondary, upper secondary, TVET, university or any alternative education programme in the new academic year?	♦	■	●	♦	■	■	
What communication channels and media will be used to ensure that information is provided in relevant languages, accessible formats and tailored to the needs of the most marginalised communities and families? What partnership with the media and mobile phone companies will be sought to enhance the effectiveness of information campaigns?		■	●	♦	■	■	

What community engagement activities will be implemented, and through which partnerships, to help parents, particularly parents from the most marginalised communities, and students, understand the importance of maintaining learning and of sending their children back to school as soon as they have the opportunity?	◆	■	●		■	■	
What partnerships with health staff (e.g. visiting nurses, health mediators), social services, NGOs, community leaders and community groups (e.g. women and parents groups) will be developed to support timely enrolment in Grade 1, particularly for marginalised families and families with children with disabilities?		■	●	◆	■	■	
What measures will be taken to prevent stigmatisation and discrimination of vulnerable populations, especially migrants, refugees and minority populations who may be viewed as "carriers of the virus"?		■	●	◆	■	■	
Parent engagement strategies							
What channels of communication and engagement mechanisms will schools establish with parents (mothers and fathers) for periods of school closure, distance learning and blended learning? What specific communication and engagement mechanisms will schools develop for marginalised communities and hard-to-reach parents, particularly parents from linguistic minorities?	◆				■	■	
How can the good practices of parent engagement during the pandemic inform and strengthen the regular home-school communication mechanisms and feedback loops?	◆				■	■	■
What parental concerns to school re-enrolment or school transition do schools foresee and how will they address these through differentiated parent engagement strategies?	◆				■	■	
What will be the role of parent-teacher associations in relaying information, involving parents in decision-making, reaching out to the most marginalised and establishing parents' support groups, including fathers' and mothers' groups where relevant?	◆		●		■	■	
What new or extended roles will school mediators take on (or pedagogical assistants, teacher assistants or community mediators) to facilitate home-school communication, particularly with marginalised groups, migrant and refugee groups, hard-to-reach parents and vulnerable families?	◆	■	●	◆	■	■	
What processes will be established for schools to relay information to parents about available support to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic? • Support to re-enrolment (removal of administrative barriers, fees, economic support, school meals, school transportation, scholarships and other social benefits, etc…) • Learning support (particularly for students at risk of the greatest learning loss) • Mental health support (for students and families, including gender-based and domestic violence support)	◆	■		◆	■	■	
Supporting school re-enrolment and preventing dropout							
School-based interventions *[More information is also provided in Area 3: Well-being and Area 4: Safe Schools, particularly on school-based violence and GBV, skills development and menstrual health and hygiene]*							

How will schools maintain contact with students throughout distance and blended learning periods, including students without internet or phone access? How will regular check-ins with students be organised, particularly with the most marginalised and those without access to phones and the internet?	◆				■	■	
What measures will schools put in place to support school re-enrolment and prevent dropout? How will schools ensure that measures are holistic and gender differentiated where needed, covering: • Attendance support (removing administrative barriers, welcome to school strategies, nutrition support, psychosocial support – see also Area 3 : Well-being) • Learning support (see also Area 2: Learning, including for supporting access to distance and blended learning) • Socio-emotional support • MHPSS support (see also Area 3: Well-being and Area 4: Health)	◆				■	■	
What measures will schools apply to all students/children (universal intervention)? to particular groups of students/children (targeted interventions)? to specific individuals at high risk of not returning/dropping out (individual interventions)?	◆				■	■	
Incentives							
What specific incentives to school re-enrolment will be provided to the most economically vulnerable girls and boys who would otherwise contribute to family income following the COVID-19 pandemic economic hit? How would the incentive schemes span across compulsory and non-compulsory education levels, so that girls and boys are encouraged to continue education and training after Grade 9?		■		♦	■	■	
How can subsidy mechanisms for preschool children be increased to maximise entry from September onwards should conditions permit?		■		♦	■	■	
What measures will ensure that existing sanctions, such as withdrawal of social benefits following school absenteeism, are removed during distance and blended learning phases?		■		♦	■	■	
How will general safety nets and social protection mechanisms be adapted to support the poorest families and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?				♦	■	■	
How will authorities engage with businesses and farms to prevent an increase in child labour and provide financial assistance to children and their families to enable them to attend school-based, distance and remote learning?		■	●	♦	■	■	
How will national and local authorities ensure that free school meals and nutrition programmes are delivered throughout the summer?		■		♦	■		
School transport							
How will school transport be organised during the recovery period and while schools operate in shifts and/or staggered hours? How will bus routes and schedules be reviewed where appropriate? How fee policies will be adapted and waived where necessary?		■	●	♦	■	■	

What reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities will be made in the area of school transport when schools reopen?		■	●	♦	■	■	
How will transport stakeholders (authorities, providers, users) participate in decision-making over school transportation issues?		■	●	♦	■	■	
Transition support between school cycles							
How will regular transition support programmes (such as open days, information sharing sessions by teachers, students and alumni to new cohorts) be organised to adapt to physical distancing and other protection measures and regulations?	◆				■		
What school readiness programmes will be organised over the summer to prepare children's entry to Grade 1, particularly from the most marginalised communities?	◆	■	●	♦	■		
What optional learning support will be provided over the summer for children to continue learning? How will the most marginalised students and those at risk of dropping out be targeted and prioritised for such programmes?	◆	■	●	♦	■		
What partnerships will be established or strengthened to support students through transitions between education cycles over the summer?	◆	■	●	♦	■		
How could schools, community learning centres, businesses, job centres, academia, university students, women's groups, youth associations and the civil society contribute to these efforts, particularly for students transitioning into post-compulsory education?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
What induction and welcome strategies will be implemented in schools to welcome new cohorts (particularly Grade 1 cohorts and first years of lower secondary, upper secondary and post-compulsory programmes)? To what extent will induction and welcome strategies pay attention to students' mental health support? To the most marginalised children, particularly students with disabilities and students from traditionally discriminated minorities?	◆		●	♦		■	
Alternative education pathways							
How will out-of-school youth and young people above the compulsory education age be connected to second chance education programmes, skills training or future employment?		■	●	♦		■	
What second chance education programmes will be established where they do not exist or to respond to the possible increase in out-of-school youth? How will these be planned, implemented, and financed? Through which partnerships?		■	●	♦		■	
What will need to be in place in terms of regulation, protocols, planning and funding to ensure that alternative education pathways are adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
What support will be implemented for students enrolling as independent/evening class learners next academic year? Will support be holistic to cover (i) attendance (removing administrative barriers and fees), (ii) learning support (iii) socio-emotional learning (iv) mental health and psychosocial support (v) pregnant and young mothers' support (vi) young parents support?	◆	■	●	♦		■	
Supporting the capacity of teachers and schools *(more information on teachers' professional and financial capacities is available in Area 2: Learning)*							

Supporting teacher and other school staff professional development							
What professional development training and activities will be conducted to increase the capacities of teachers and other school staff (pedagogues, psychologists, directors, mediators, resource teachers, teacher assistants, etc.) in: • Communication and parent engagement strategies • Dropout prevention			●	♦	■	■	
Supporting schools							
How will local teams, including local authority staff, social workers, the police, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders be trained to follow-up on cases of compulsory-school age not returning to school (or education more broadly)?		■	●	♦	■	■	
What guidelines will be provided to schools regarding absenteeism monitoring during emergency remote learning, distance learning and blended learning?			●	♦	■	■	
What guidelines will be provided to schools regarding the enrolment of vulnerable children, particularly children formally educated in residential care institutions, detention centres or equivalent?							
What legislative changes will be implemented to remove administrative hurdles and proof of prior learning when (re-)enrolling children?				♦	■		
What additional funding will be provided to schools to support re-enrolment and dropout prevention activities (e.g. block grants, communication and transport costs, school meal costs, costs for schools opening during the summer holiday, etc.)? *[See also Area 4: Safe Schools]*				♦	■	■	
How will good practices to support re-enrolment, transition and dropout prevention be collected and shared with schools and local authorities?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
How will knowledge exchange and practice sharing be promoted between schools, local authorities, regions?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
How will countries update education quality standards to reflect the role of schools in identifying and supporting student at risk of dropping out?				♦		■	■
Monitoring, evaluation and accountability							
How will the impact of the crisis on access to education be evaluated, particularly in terms of: • School registration and enrolment in Grade 1 • Transition to post-secondary education, TVET programmes, university programmes and other training for youth • Registration and enrolment in compulsory education programmes delivered through evening classes or independent studies • Enrolment in and/or demand for alternative education programme for adolescents and youth (second chance or evening/independent study programmes)? • Number of out-of-school children and students at risk of dropping out and profiles of risk groups		■	●	♦	■	■	■

• School absenteeism How will this information inform measures to support enrolment, re-entry and transition? How will this information contribute to future contingency planning?							
How will national policies and local practices regarding school closures, school reopening, and support to re-enrolment and dropout prevention be monitored and evaluated?	◆	■	●	♦		■	■
How will this information contribute to policy development for improving access to and participation in education for all children and young people, particularly the most marginalised (children with disabilities, ethnic and linguistic minorities, migrant and refugee children and otherwise marginalised boys and girls)?				♦		■	■

Area 2: Learning

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENSURING THAT ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE LEARNING

In this section, "learning" is understood broadly and encompasses all aspects of teaching and learning, assessment and support to socio-emotional learning. Elements that are specific to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support are presented in Area 3: Well-being. Elements that are specific to access to education are presented in Area 1: Access.

Main risks:
• Stress and anxiety affecting concentration and learning • Digital divide affecting most students particularly the vulnerable; gender gaps in access to technology • Teachers' digital and pedagogical competences insufficient to fully embark on distance and blended learning • Learning loss due to learning disruption and long periods of school closure • Unsupportive or little nurturing home learning environments in most vulnerable households • Stigmatisation of 2020 cohorts whose exams or validation of certification have been adjusted or waived • Limited understanding or practices of formative assessment methodologies and blended learning • Teacher additional financial burden for IT equipment, internet access and data credit
Main opportunities to build back better:
• Reforming curriculum and assessment policies to reflect new practices and individualised learning pathways • Transforming pedagogic practice • Developing innovative learning support strategies • Embedding socio-emotional skills in instruction design • Individualising instructional delivery • Addressing the digital divide (location, income, gender) • Harnessing the potential of online learning environments • Improving parental engagement in learning

Planning priorities

Timing	Summary of key planning priorities
Short-term	• Decisions over progression and examinations • Amending school calendars • Supporting parents to plan and support home learning • Mobilising learning experts to work on guidance and training packages for teachers • Provision of IT devices and internet access to the most marginalised
Medium-term	• Assessing learning gaps • Curriculum adaptation • Developing online learning environments and blended learning approaches • Teacher and school support staff professional development and support • Learning support programmes for students • Guidance for schools on learning recovery and assessment practices • Managing teacher workloads
Long-term	• Mainstreaming socio-emotional skills in curricula, teaching and learning practices and school ethos and planning • Addressing digital divide • Transforming pedagogical practice, including the use of blended learning • Evaluating impact of 2020 school closure on learning (disaggregated data)

Considerations for ensuring inclusive and quality LEARNING for all children and adolescents

Questions for consideration	S ◆	LA ■	DEA ●	N ♦	ST ■	MT ■	LT ■
Progression, transition and examination							
Progression and transition							
What approach will be used in decisions on student progression to the next grade and transition to the next level of education (automatic progression to the next grade with remedial programmes in the new academic year, continuous assessment in the remaining months…)? Will guidelines cover all areas of education including TVET, where apprenticeships schemes might have been disrupted and bridge programmes (between pathways, streams, non-formal and formal education)? Will school have full autonomy to decide on student progression? On student transition?				♦	■		
What mechanisms will ensure the fairness of progression and transition decisions across students, schools and regions?				♦	■		
Examination							
Will the decision-making process for the 2020 examination be based on wide consultations with relevant ministries (higher education, TVET and labour), schools, teachers, teacher unions, parent associations, student associations, DPOs and NGOs, universities and professional trade associations?				♦	■		
Where exams have been waived and replaced by continuous assessment and/or estimated grades, how will fairness across schools, regions and with previous cohorts be ensured?	◆		●	♦	■		
Where high stake exams have been waived in upper secondary, will students be provided with the opportunity to attend mock exams, on a voluntary basis, to experience exam situations in preparation of their post-secondary education? How will countries ensure that all students, including marginalised students can access such opportunities?	◆		●	♦	■		
Where exams have been postponed or adjusted (take-home exams, online exams, or unifying exams with university entrance exams), how will access, preparation, and fairness be addressed, particularly for those children who did not have full access to distance or blended learning opportunities?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
Where exams have been postponed or adjusted, how will planning reflect the need for coordination with health authorities and for flexibility to comply with physical distancing and other protective measures in the exam setting?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
What measures will enable children with health conditions and chronic diseases to sit their exams in the best conditions or be provided fair alternatives?			●	♦	■	■	

What measures will be taken to recognise and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of adolescents when marking the exams?			●	♦	■	■	
How will employers and trade unions from all professional branches be engaged in national level discussions about examination, qualification awards and informal recognition of achievements?				♦	■	■	
How will TVET-related exams ensure work-based assessment of practical skills?				♦	■	■	
How will stigmatisation be avoided for the 2020 exam cohorts and how will countries ensure that employers and universities are not discriminating students?				♦		■	■
What adjustment will be made to the content of examination in 2021 and 2022 to take into account the learning loss of 2020?				♦		■	■
How will countries, particularly those with high-stake examinations, use lessons from adjusting or waiving exams to reflect on possible future innovative assessment and certification and new national evaluation frameworks?				♦			■
Transition to work							
Where exams have been waived, what remedial learning programmes will be provided to students aiming to transition to work in the new academic year? What transition to work support programmes (e.g. coaching) will be provided to young compulsory or secondary education graduates, particularly the most marginalised? How will the above-mentioned programmes address the gender-differentiated barriers to transition from school to work?		■	●	♦	■	■	■
What partnerships with career and job centres will be sought to provide such support? How could the private sector and specialists in the field contribute on a pro-bono or otherwise basis?		■	●	♦	■	■	■
Flexible and fair assessment of learning							
Monitoring engagement in learning							
How will engagement in learning be monitored throughout distance and blended learning phases?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
Assessment strategies							
How will assessment be adapted to distance and blended learning phases? To combined classroom, distance and online based teaching and learning?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will assessment strategies be included in the overall learning approach of teachers and schools and maximise the use of varied techniques the enable teachers to adapt and differentiate instructions for different children?	◆		●	♦	■	■	

How will formative assessment methodologies be prioritised during the distance and blended learning phases so that student fully benefit from feedback that help them know what to learn next?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will assessment strategies avoid stigmatisation and stress for students of various ages, backgrounds, and abilities?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
To what extent will a range of assessment techniques be encouraged, including formative assessment, self-assessment and peer assessment?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will learning achievements be documented, including through learning diaries and student portfolio?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will lessons learned from assessment practices during distance and blended learning be used to inform future curriculum and assessment reforms, training on assessment literacy skills for teachers and teaching practices?				♦		■	■
How will information from various forms of assessment be aggregated to understand the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on learning and inform planning?	◆		●	♦		■	■
Where exams have been postponed or waived, how will the impact of COVID-19 on learning still be assessed for planning for recovery?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
Evaluation of learning							
How will learning loss be evaluated nationally overtime to feed into education policy development?				♦			
How will countries secure participation in international learning assessment to benefit from benchmarking data to inform policy making in the long term?				♦			
Organisation of learning recovery							
Academic calendar							
How will the academic calendar be modified to accommodate for various public health scenarios?				♦	■	■	■
How will decision-making over school calendar modifications take place? How will consultation with teachers, parents, students and organisations that represent them (unions, professional organisations, associations) be organised?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
How will academic calendar adjustments in the next 6 to 18 months maximise opportunities for provision of additional learning support for the most marginalised students?				♦	■	■	■
Learning support							
How will learning support for students transitioning between two education levels be organised (i) from preschool to Grade 1 (ii) from lower to upper secondary education (iii) from secondary to tertiary education?	◆		●	♦	■	■	

How will learning support for children and adolescent boys and girls transitioning from non-formal to formal education or from residential care institutions or detention centres to regular schools be organised?							
To what extent will learning support for students transitioning between two education levels be provided through a continuum of activities before and after transition?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will the transition of the most marginalised children and students with special education needs be specifically supported?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
Where summer learning programmes are envisaged, what age, grade and students will be prioritised? To what extent will priority be given to the most marginalised students and to students in early grades who are less autonomous in their learning and need strong learning foundations? How will students' need for summer recuperation be taken into account?	◆	■	●	♦	■		
Learning recovery							
In decisions regarding staggering the re-opening of schools and grades, how will students be prioritised for school re-entry? How will countries ensure that marginalised students, students at risk of abuse, and students who have been excluded from distance, remote and blended learning throughout the crisis are prioritised for returning to school?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
How will plans for blended learning throughout the pandemic reflect the various needs of learners depending on their age, grade, geographical locations, personal circumstances (be they COVID-19 related or otherwise) and their physical, social, psychological and digital readiness to learn?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
What mechanisms will ensure a smooth transition from distance to blended learning for all students, particularly the most marginalised?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
What options will be made available to students, who, for some reasons, do not or cannot return to school or engage in blended learning activities?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will the anticipated impact of progression and transition decisions be mitigated in the learning approaches of schools and teachers from the start of the new academic year?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
Teaching and learning							
Curriculum							
How will curriculum be prioritised and adapted in the new academic year so as to emphasise foundation academic and meta cognitive skills? How will curriculum and delivery modalities be adjusted to meet key learning objectives for the early grades in particular?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will ministries and schools ensure that curriculum prioritisation does not overlook students' needs for recreation, play, sports and creative activities?	◆		●	♦	■	■	

How will ministries, national agencies and schools ensure that teaching and learning materials will be accessible to all students, including students with disabilities, free of gender, racial, disability, ethnicity, language and sexual orientation bias and actively promoting social inclusion, tolerance and peace?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
What stakeholder coordination will inform policy decision-making on curriculum adaptation?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
Where remedial or catch-up programmes are organised, to what extent will they be informed by accelerated education principles?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will lessons learned from curriculum adaptation contribute to on-going or future curriculum reforms?				♦		■	■
Instructional delivery							
How will distance and blended learning instructional delivery give teachers flexibility to deviate from the curriculum to best respond to students' individual learning needs?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will distance and blended learning instructional delivery prioritise individual learning pathways based on students' interests and learning needs?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will distance and blended learning instructional delivery equip students with socio-emotional skills including skills for self-directed learning and 'learning how to learn'?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will distance and blended learning instructional delivery foster the principles of collaborative learning between students, grades, classes and schools?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will distance and blended learning instructional delivery maximise the potential of peer learning, students taking responsibility for group learning, and peer mentoring or peer tutoring opportunities within and across grades?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will distance and blended learning instructional materials, including digital materials, be underpinned by the principles of Universal Design for Learning?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will distance and blended learning instructional delivery embed socio-emotional skills (self-motivation, self-efficacy, goal setting, communication, organisation skills, decision-making skills, etc.)?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will assignment techniques be selected so teachers can save marking time for providing feedback and supporting students individually?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
What accommodations will be made for students with disabilities to access distance and blended learning materials?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will distance and blended learning instructional delivery reflect students' voices?	◆				■	■	■
How will lessons on teaching and pedagogical practices throughout the crisis recovery be collected to inform future curriculum and assessment reforms, teacher training, teaching practices and school-level learning support practices?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■

Work-based instruction							
How will work-based instruction and learning be organised in schools and/or in work-based stations for students enrolled in TVET or apprenticeship, non-formal or second chance education programmes?							
Distance and online learning							
Addressing the digital divide							
How will access to distance and online learning devices be expanded for all children, particularly the most marginalised? How will access to distance and online learning devices be expanded for all teachers?		■		♦	■	■	■
What partnerships will national and local governments initiate across ministries and between public and private sector organisations to ensure affordable quality broadband for all, including in remote areas.		■		♦	■	■	■
What plans at both national and local levels will address the digital divide and remove household-level technology and digital gaps, including gender gaps?		■		♦	■	■	■
How will boys and girls be protected from digital risks and have their security and privacy respected? How will schools and local education authorities be protected from digital risks and data breeches?	◆			♦	■	■	■
What strategies, partnerships and financial investments will address the improvement of online learning environments and of digital pedagogical resources that are fully accessible to all students, enable collaborative learning, and promote individual learning pathways?				♦	■	■	■
Developing online learning environments							
How will online learning environments and blended learning strategies be prioritised, planned for and developed in preparation of the new academic year?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
What standards will be adopted to ensure that hardware, software and digital content chosen or developed during and beyond the recovery phase are fully accessible for all students regardless of language, disability or education institution (e.g. detention centres, sanatoriums…)?	◆			♦	■	■	■
What strategies, partnerships and financial investments will support the development and democratisation of assistive technology and devices for students with disabilities?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
How will countries harness innovations in learning technology and the potential of open education resources to improve instructional delivery through blended learning approaches in the future? How will best practices in digital communication and learning, including collaborative learning, be collected to inform future curriculum reforms?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
What safeguards will guarantee that the shift towards remote and online learning does not hinder students' physical and socio-emotional development and that human physical interaction remain at the core of the students' education experience?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■

How will boys' and girls' digital skills be built, according to age, education cycle and ability, to support their engagement in remote and online learning instruction?	◆			◆	■	■	■
What will be the policy implications of the development of distance and blended learning? What policies, standards and guidelines will be necessary on online learning environments and content development?				◆	■	■	■
Parent and community engagement							
How will contact be maintained with families, particularly marginalised families, throughout distance and blended learning?	◆		●		■	■	
What parent resources will be created to help them support their children's education at home through distance and blended learning? How will parents' potential concerns over their children's increased screen time be mitigated with accurate and accessible information?	◆		●	◆	■	■	■
How will these resources be tailored to the various needs of different groups in terms of content, language and media? Will resources be specifically developed for parents of students with disabilities or special educational needs to ensure all children can attend and participate in distance and blended learning activities?	◆		●	◆	■	■	■
What networks and partnerships at national and local levels will be activated or established to support marginalised families' engagement with the learning of their children? To support parents of students with disabilities or special educational needs?	◆	■	●	◆	■	■	
How will parents' increased role in their children's learning will be harnessed to inform future parental involvement strategies?	◆		●		■	■	■
How will community engagement be initiated and maintained for learning provision and support outside of school hours (homework clubs, after school programmes combining learning, sports and skills development, etc)?	◆	■	●		■	■	■
How will parent experiences, opinions, concerns and expectations be continuously monitored? What feedback mechanisms will be set-up between parents, schools and education decision-makers?	◆	■	●	◆	■	■	■
Capacity of teachers and schools							
Professional development of teachers and other school staff							
How will teachers be trained and supported on critical elements of the education recovery phase, particularly: • Pedagogical principles and skills that will enable them to individualised and differentiated teaching and manage groups of students receiving instruction through different or combined delivery modes? • Learning gaps assessment and particularly formative assessment methodologies? • Distance and blended learning and combining classroom and digital learning environments? • Managing diversity and learning heterogeneity? • Supporting the development of students' socio-emotional skills?	◆		●	◆	■	■	■

• Digital competences? • Student well-being and mental health issues (see Area 3: Well-being for more details)							
How will school support staff (pedagogues, social-pedagogues, resource teachers, psychologists) be trained and supported on roles and responsibilities, working with and supporting teachers, student learning support methodologies and family engagement in children's learning?	◆		●	◆	■	■	■
What innovative support mechanisms such as mentoring schemes, school networks, online professional community of practices, or online learning will be used to ensure timely and ongoing support of teachers?	◆		●	◆	■	■	■
What curriculum, pedagogical and other methodological guidelines, tools and resources will be made available to teachers and how? To what extent will guidelines equip teachers with the necessary pedagogical and assessment principles to enable them to provide individual and differentiated learning? How will methodological guidelines reflect literacy and numeracy priorities and the specific needs of early grades students?	◆		●	◆	■	■	■
How will countries update teacher professional standards to reflect the need for digital skills, distance and online learning skills, and skills for designing blended individual learning pathways for students?				◆		■	■
Human and financial support for schools							
What will be the human resource implications (workload, etc.) of periods of distance and blended learning, and of partial re-opening of schools on all categories of school staff (teachers, directors, support staff). What mitigation plans will be established to protect the rights of teachers and other education staff? Will any compensation schemes need to be developed?	◆		●	◆	■	■	
How will teachers be supported financially or through phone, data credits and technology devices to work at home and stay in contact with students and their families?				◆	■	■	
What guidance will be shared with schools on distance and blended learning, online learning and planning for learning recovery?			●	◆	■	■	
How will good practices on distance and blended learning, online learning and learning recovery be collected and shared with schools and local authorities?	◆		●	◆	■	■	■
What financial provision will be allocated to schools for extra learning support for marginalised students, students who have not been able to follow distance and blended learning, and students with disabilities?				◆	■	■	■
What partnerships will be sought with universities and teacher training providers to mobilise expertise for working on curricula, teaching and learning materials, assessment tools, teacher training packages and for providing direct support to teachers and schools?			●	◆	■	■	

Area 3: Well-being

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENSURING THE WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS, PARENTS AND SCHOOL STAFF

In this section, "well-being" is understood broadly and encompasses all aspects of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). Elements that are specific to socio-emotional learning have been included in Area 2: Learning.

Main risk:
• Children, parents and teachers lacking coping and resilience skills • Children affected by anxiety and stress, unable to regulate behaviours or deal with emotions • Protection risks for vulnerable children in violent and abusive homes and for migrant and refugee children • Protection of education workforce against gender-based and domestic violence • Young people entering the world of work facing a recession and high unemployment rates • Parents inability to reach out to social and other support services; food poverty • Broken referral systems • Teacher burnout
Main opportunities to build back better:
• Clearer role of schools in the social services network at community level: role in sharing information, identifying families in needs, identifying individuals at risks • Increasing and professionalising a school-based workforce for MHPSS (school psychologists, social workers, etc.) • Better MHPSS interventions and services in schools, embedded in a whole-school approach • Improving the well-being of school staff, recognising burnout risks and equiping them with the skills to cope with stress and become more resilient • Strengthening cross-sector collaboration between education, health, social and protection services

Planning priorities

Timing	Summary of key planning priorities
Short-term	• Identifying and referring students and families at risk • Provision of emergency remote well-being support for the most marginalised students • Supporting parents' well-being • Teacher workload management and teacher well-being support • Education workforce salary continuity • Progressive re-establishment of basic services including school meal alternatives
Medium-term	• Assessing students and staff well-being needs • Whole-school approach to MHPSS • Financing the increase in MHPSS in schools • MHPSS professional development for teachers • Cross-sector coordination for MHPSS support • Burnout prevention for teachers • Supporting parents
Long-term	• Policies and investment for regular adequate provision of MHPSS in schools • Education quality standards inclusive of MHPSS • Integration of MHPSS in pre-service and in-service teacher training • Evaluating long term impact of school closure and COVID-19 crisis on well-being of students and staff

Considerations for ensuring the well-being of children and adolescents, parents and school staff

Questions for consideration	S ◆	LA ■	DEA ●	N ♦	ST ■	MT ■	LT ■
Identification and referrals of students, families, and teachers at risk							
How will students and families at risk of physical (including hunger, health-related and GBV or domestic violence risks), socio-emotional and protection risks be identified during school closures? After school reopening?	◆	■			■	■	
What referral mechanisms will need to be created or amended to refer students and families to school-based services and/or to professional community-based services (social services, mental health services, child protection services, GBV and domestic violence services)?		■	●	♦	■	■	
How will teachers' socio-emotional needs be identified during distance learning and blended learning periods?	◆		●		■	■	
What mechanisms will be in place to refer teachers and school staff showing signs of burnout?	◆	■	●		■	■	
Support for students							
What physical and socio-emotional well-being support activities will be made available by schools during school closure (setting up peer groups, one-to-one contact with teachers, sharing materials and worksheets, sharing information with parents on how to access government support including food banks, etc)? After school reopening?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
What socio-emotional skills will be prioritised for support interventions (e.g. daily routines, building resilience, dealing with emotions, coping with stress, dealing with uncertainty, etc)?	◆		●		■	■	
What socio-emotional well-being support services will be made available by schools during school closure (e.g. remote access to school psychologist)? After school reopening (e.g. school meals, psychological support)?	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will schools raise student awareness about socio-emotional and mental health issues and encourage students to seek support from the school and outside school in a non-stigmatising manner?	◆				■	■	
How will schools prioritise students for targeted socio-emotional support according to age, disability, personal and family circumstances, level of education (e.g. students transitioning to another level of education, to another school, to the world of work, girls at risk of early marriage)?	◆				■	■	
What strategies will be devised so that all students, including the most marginalised, can benefit from school-based interventions and services without being stigmatised? How will this be monitored?	◆				■	■	

How will schools ensure that socio-emotional and mental health support is embedded in a whole school approach, including after school re-opening, covering (i) inclusion of socio-emotional learning into the curriculum/school, teaching practices and extra-curricular activities, (ii) provision of safe and supportive school environments (interventions and supports), and (iii) provision of positive school climate (positive peer relationships, open-communication between students and staff, violence prevention, student participation in decision-making).	◆		●	♦	■	■	■
How will students' and families' awareness be raised about available psychosocial community-based professional services during school closure? After school reopening?	◆	■	●		■	■	
Support for parents							
How will parents be encouraged and supported to provide a socio-emotionally nourishing environment for their children during distance / home learning periods?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
How will parents' physical and socio-emotional well-being be supported during distance / home learning periods? After school reopening? How will GBV and domestic violence risks be addressed?	◆	■	●		■	■	
What resources will be shared with parents to support their socio-emotional well-being during distance / home and blended learning periods? To what extent will resources be provided in different languages, through different media and communication channels to ensure that all families, including the most marginalised will be reached?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
What partnerships will be sought at national (e.g. national helpline services, national WhatsApp groups) or local level (e.g. remote support by NGOs and community groups, local WhatsApp groups) to support parent socio-emotional well-being during distance / home and blended learning periods, particularly marginalised parents and families with children with disabilities?		■	●	♦	■	■	
Support for teachers							
Supportive working environment							
What strategies will schools adopt to provide a supportive working environment and socio-emotional support for teachers and school staff throughout phases of school closures and education recovery?	◆				■	■	
How will peaks of staff absenteeism due to COVID-19 or family responsibilities be addressed so as to ensure manageable workload for remaining teachers and staff?					■	■	
What mechanisms and safeguards will ensure that teachers and school staff continue to be paid throughout periods of education disruption?		■	●	♦	■	■	
What mechanisms and safeguards will be in place to manage teacher and school staff workload and ensure adequate compensations for extra-work?	◆		●	♦	■	■	

What partnerships will be sought between health and education stakeholders to: (i) raise awareness about signs of poor mental health and burnout? (ii) devise and disseminate materials on improving socio-emotional well-being, mental health and preventing burnout? (iii) implement burnout prevention activities and (iv) increase provision of psychosocial support services for education staff?		■	●	◆	■	■	■
Teacher and school staff professional development							
How will teachers and school staff professional development be supported on: • mental health and psychosocial needs of students, parents, colleagues and oneself • identification and referrals of students, parents and colleagues' mental health and psychosocial risks • psychosocial support for students, parents and colleagues • violence and abuse, including domestic violence and gender-based violence			●	◆	■	■	■
Support for schools							
How will ministries and agencies from the education, health, social services and child protection sectors work together to review, amend and share protocols and referral mechanisms for child protection risks, social protection risks and mental health risks?	◆	■	●	◆	■	■	■
How will education staff, social workers and mental health staff work together to support children experiencing anxiety, stress, social isolation and other issues?	◆	■			■	■	
How will countries update education quality standards to reflect the role of schools in identifying and supporting student mental health and psychosocial needs? In identifying and supporting teachers' and school staff mental health and psychosocial needs?				◆		■	■
How will the increase in provision of psychosocial support services for students and education staff be planned, financed and supported?	◆	■	●	◆	■	■	
What partnerships will be sought with universities and professional associations of psychologists, coaches and other related professions to mobilise expertise for developing programmes, training packages and providing direct support to school and children?	◆	■	●	◆	■	■	■
How will countries ensure in the future that schools are adequately staffed with or have sufficient access to professionals such as school psychologists and school social workers who can provide all-year round comprehensive MHPSS support to students?				◆		■	■
How will countries ensure that MHPSS is included in pre-service and in-service teacher training?				◆		■	■
Monitoring, evaluation and accountability							
How will the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' mental health be evaluated, particularly on the most marginalised and vulnerable students?				◆		■	■
How will this information contribute to policy development for improving mental health support in schools and communities for children and young people, particularly the most marginalised?				◆		■	■

Area 4: Safe schools

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

In this section, "safe schools" refers to measures enabling safe school operations ***in line with national guidance.*** The considerations are also relevant for non-formal education settings.

Main risk:
• COVID-19 transmission among students and teachers • Stigmatisation and discrimination of student and staff infected by virus, particularly of marginalised students • Schools ill-equipped and ill-prepared for reopening, and for timely responding to health and safety evolving requirements • Lack of safe access for girls to appropriate and safe sanitation • Insufficient funds to comply to national health guidance and regulations • Parents and students lacking confidence in school safety • Low capacities from health institutions to adequately monitor schools
Main opportunities to build back better:
• Schools with better water and sanitation equipment and personal hygiene equipment and practices • Strengthening parent participation in school planning processes • Strengthening the role of students in sharing health messages

Planning priorities

Timing	Summary of key planning priorities
Short-term	• Assessing facilities, premises and school financial needs regarding water, sanitation and personal hygiene equipment • Assessing parents', teachers' and students' beliefs around COVID-19 to inform appropriate messaging • Preparing national guidance to support schools • School planning, protocols and guidance • Parent consultation • Monitoring school preparedness • Communicating health messages • Funds disbursement to schools for WASH and adaptation of learning environments • Teachers and school staff informed and trained • Resuming school vaccination and other health services
Medium-term	• Monitoring school implementation of national guidance • Schools monitoring own plans • Funds disbursement to schools for WASH and improvements of learning environments
Long-term	• Monitoring school implementation of national guidance • Schools monitoring own plans • Funds disbursement to schools for overall improvement of health and sanitation in schools • Sustaining good practices

Considerations for safe schools for children and adolescents

Questions for consideration	S ◆	LA ■	DEA ●	N ♦	ST ■	MT ■	LT ■
Needs assessment							
How will rapid assessments of school premises and infrastructure to comply with regulations for school reopening be conducted? How will rapid assessments of financial needs to comply with regulations for school reopening be conducted? To what extent will these rapid assessments cover: • Water, sanitation and personal hygiene • Cleaning and disinfecting schools • Personal protective equipment (e.g. masks) and health monitoring equipment (e.g. thermometer guns) • Students', teachers' and parents' beliefs about COVID-19	◆	■	●	♦	■		
How will school reopening information be collected and aggregated to inform decision-making and policies about how best to support students, schools and localities where teaching is the most disrupted after official school reopening?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
Consultation and coordination							
How will coordination be organised at national and local level between health, education and local authorities to decide on matters of school reopening and possible future school closure?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
How will governments and local governments ensure that changes in health and safety and school reopening regulations are planned and decided with all education stakeholders ahead of time to ensure that schools have enough time to prepare and adapt environments and practices?		■		♦	■	■	
How will parents, students and communities be widely consulted about school reopening, particularly the most marginalised?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	
School planning and preparation							
How will schools ensure that they have sound plans, protocols, guidance and case management systems when relevant to respond to: • Compliance to national health regulations and guidelines • Water, sanitation and personal hygiene procurement, management and monitoring • Cleaning and disinfecting school procurement, management and monitoring	◆		●	♦	■	■	■

• Personal protective equipment (e.g. masks) and health monitoring equipment (e.g. thermometers) procurement, management and monitoring • Safe school operations: (i) staggering arrivals, departures, playtime, outdoor time, lunch; (ii) circulation between different parts of the school, one-way systems, teacher and student movements; (iii) drop off and pick up and general arrangements for parents; (iv) school feeding preparation and distribution; (v) use of toilets blocks; (vi) sports, recreation and group activities; (v) evacuation procedures. • Physical distancing (increased separation and decreased interaction between students and groups) • Assessing the needs of students and staff who are clinically vulnerable and those who need shielding • Managing and isolating cases of students and staff showing symptoms • Maintaining contact with student and staff isolating at home and/or infected by COVID-19 • Dealing with student and staff absenteeism due to ill-health and stay at home guidance • Safe return to school for students and staff who were infected by COVID-19 • School closure following COVID-19 transmission among staff and/or students							
How will schools ensure that they have sound guidance addressing key areas of the plan: guidance for teachers, guidance for school maintenance staff, guidance for parents, guidance for students?	◆		●	♦	■	■	
How will schools mediate the protocols and guidance to students, staff and parents and support them to orientate themselves to new layouts and to new use of facilities and equipment? How will mediation and orientation be organised for students with disabilities and their families?	◆		●		■	■	
How will parents and students be involved in the creation, monitoring and revision of school plans and guidance? How will the most marginalised families be supported to participate?	◆				■	■	
What specific measures will schools take to prevent stigmatisation and discrimination for students and staff infected by COVID-19 or living in a COVID-19 infected household?	◆		●		■	■	■
How will schools monitor and review plans, protocols and guidance? Frequency? Who will be involved?	◆		●		■	■	■
Health messaging about COVID-19							
What communication mechanisms will be devised at school level, local level and national level to disseminate COVID-19 related information and messages to students, parents and education staff?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■
To what extent will communication be made available in different languages, through different media and using different channels of communication? To what extent will they be tailored to children's age and abilities? To what extent will they be accessible to children and parents with disabilities?	◆	■	●	♦	■	■	■

To what extent will children and adolescents be engaged in developing and disseminating key health messages?	◆				■	■	
How will schools and local authorities communicate with parents about safety and protective measures to boost confidence regarding school safety (and encourage return to school when choice is voluntary)?	◆	■	●		■	■	
How will schools and teachers include COVID-19 health messages in education activities conducted remotely or in school?	◆			◆	■	■	
How will schools ensure that children and adolescents are educated on recognising symptoms and actions to take if feeling unwell?	◆			◆	■	■	
Resuming regular health services in schools							
How will countries ensure that key health services are provided to students as soon as possible, particularly: • school vaccination, • sexual and reproductive health services • specialised health services for children with disabilities	◆	■	●	◆	■	■	
Supporting teachers and schools							
How will governments support school planning, school guidance and school protocol development? How will governments ensure that national guidance for schools are disseminated well ahead of schools reopening dates to ensure sufficient time for preparation?			●	◆	■		
How will governments ensure that additional funds are made available for schools to purchase hygiene related items and undertake additional cleaning, including cleaning required for confirmed or suspected coronavirus cases as per national regulations?							
How will governments ensure that funds are directed to the schools and regions (i) the hardest hit by the virus (ii) with the greatest dropout rates and lowest learning outcomes, (iii) with the greatest proportion of marginalised children?			●	◆	■	■	
How will teachers and school staff be informed and trained regarding regulations, guidance, protocols and plans related to COVID-19 prevention?			●	◆	■	■	
How will school preparedness will be assessed and how will schools be monitored in their implementation of national health regulations regarding COVID-19?		■	●	◆	■	■	■

UNICEF support in Europe and Central Asia

On-going support

In line with SDG4, UNICEF is committed to inclusive and equitable quality education for every child by 2030, no exceptions, no child left behind. UNICEF has a long and strong track record of supporting governments in Europe and Central Asia on strengthening education systems and making them more resilient so that they can respond to the challenge of quality education for ALL children.

UNICEF has worked alongside governments and schools on:

- inclusive education policies and practices,
- the implementation of competency-based curricula,
- skills development,
- quality education and learning,
- ensuring effective teacher supply and teacher training and professional development,
- the improvement of assessment practices and systems,
- supporting out-of-school children to (re)engage in education, and preventing dropout from marginalised and vulnerable children, particularly children with disabilities, Roma and other ethnic minority children, and migrant and refugee children.

This experience, particularly around flexible learning assessment, inclusive instructional design, provision of catch-up modules and embedding socio-emotional support in education activities has proven useful in the face of the COVID-19 challenges.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, UNICEF has supported education continuity and enabling student learning, with a focus on the most marginalized children. UNICEF efforts have focused on (i) supporting Ministries of Education and related Government agencies in establishing, selecting or improving distance and online learning systems; (ii) monitoring the impact of school closures on the quality of education provided, particularly through distance learning platforms, and on learning outcomes; and (iii) supporting parents and caregivers in guiding children in home-learning and in providing psychosocial support.

With countries engaging in post lockdown planning and the gradual re-opening of the economy, UNICEF education response has adopted a two-fold approach:

1. **Providing a continuum of response interventions**, from
   (i) *immediate response* to the COVID-19 outbreak, to
   (ii) *return to school*, learning assessment and identification of learning gaps, support strategies for children to catch up on their learning, and to
   (iii) *improving the overall resilience and effectiveness of education systems* through more innovative inclusive, quality education planning and delivery;
2. **Responding to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable children**, particularly children with disabilities, ethnic and linguistic minority children, migrant and refugee children, and those from socio-economically deprived or dysfunctional families.

To do so, UNICEF has provided a comprehensive response, spanning early learning, school education and non-formal education and addressing the needs of end beneficiaries (children and families), educators (teachers and training providers), other school staff (pedagogues, psychologists, directors) and policy makers and education officers. The response has been articulated around three pillars, as follows:

1. **Education Technology (EdTech)**: Activities, tools, and solutions that are required to maintain contact between students, teachers, schools and parents, to set-up distance and online education systems and to design digital learning environments for learners and teachers. The aim has been to move from

emergency remote teaching to a more structured distance learning approach, including online learning.

2. **Pedagogy**: Activities and products related to teaching and learning and well-being support, including teacher and educators professional development, curriculum and assessment related matters, development of teaching and learning materials, and inclusive pedagogy and instructional design for planning, implementing and evaluating learning in all settings (classrooms, distance learning, after school programmes, etc.).
3. **Policy and Administration**: Activities related to creating, monitoring, and evaluating teaching and learning environments, including rules and regulations, policy development, education planning, reform implementation support, organisation of education provision, funding and partnership.

Under this framework, UNICEF has launched the *LearnIn Initiative* (www.learnin.info) in partnership with of Zurich University of Teacher Education PHZH, the LabXchange and other educational content and technology providers. ***LearnIn aims to support teachers and students as lifelong learners, by providing inclusive, quality, personalized and culturally relevant learning opportunities within a digital environment, fostering collaboration and shared practice.*** LearnIn will build the capacity of teachers and schools to respond to the needs of ALL learners by providing blended learning, improving capacity in instructional design, and creating individualized learning pathways based on UNICEF's materials on inclusive quality education and vetted open-source materials

Resources for the COVID-19 pandemic education response

Useful resources for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be drawn from two major sources:

- Resources specifically published on school reopening under the COVID-19 pandemic
- Resources on quality inclusive education for ALL children published over the years by UNICEF and other agencies.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of relevant publications.

COVID-19 specific resources:

- UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, World Food Programme (2020) Framework for reopening schools. Accessible at: https://www.unicef.org/documents/framework-reopening-schools
- UNICEF (2020) Emergency Manual for Teachers. Accessible at: https://learnin.wiki/en/Workstream/emergency-manual/emergency-manual-overview
- UNICEF (2020) Key Messages and Actions for COVID19 Prevention and Control in Schools https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/guidance-covid-19-prevention-and-control-schools
- UNESCO-ILO Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2020) Supporting Teachers in back-to-school efforts. Guidance for Policy Makers. Accessible at: https://teachertaskforce.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Guidelines%20Note%20FINAL
- UNESCO-ILO Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2020) Supporting Teachers - Toolkit for School Leaders. https://teachertaskforce.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/TTF_BackToSchool_Toolkit%20for%20school%20leaders.pdf

Additional generic documents are listed in the Bibliography.

Relevant resources to support inclusive quality learning for ALL children:

- UNICEF (2013) Back to School Guide. New-York: UNICEF> Accessible at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF_Back_To_School_Guide_2013.pdf
- UNICEF (2015) Teacher Training Modules for Inclusive Education. Geneva: UNICEF Europe and Central Asia. Accessible at: https://www.unicef.org/eca/education
- UNICEF and UIS (2016) Monitoring Education Participation: Framework for Monitoring Children and Adolescents who are Out of School or At Risk of Dropping Out. Geneva: UNICEF Europe and Central Asia. Accessible at: https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/2956/file

- UNICEF (2017) Improving Education Participation: Policy and Practice Pointers for Enrolling All Children and Adolescents in School and Preventing Dropout. Geneva: UNICEF Europe and Central Asia. Accessible at: https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/2971/file
- UNICEF (2019) Draft Regional Training Modules on School Dropout Prevention: Schools can do it! Geneva: UNICEF Europe and Central Asia. (Link will be added soon.)

UNICEF offices can access these and other resources related to these Considerations on the SharePoint landing page:

- https://unicef.sharepoint.com/teams/ECARO-Education/SitePages/Considerations-for-quality-and-inclusive-education.aspx

UNICEF offices can also access additional resources related to COVID-19 and education at:

- https://unicef.sharepoint.com/teams/ECARO-Education/SitePages/Education-&-COVID-19.aspx.

Bibliography

UNICEF's *Building Resilient Education Systems beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic: Considerations for decision-makers at national, local and school levels* has been informed by:

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UNESCO-ILO (2020) Supporting teachers in back-to-school efforts Guidance for policy makers.

UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, WFP, UNHCR (2020) Framework for Reopening Schools. April 2020.

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UNICEF EAPRO (2020) Guidance Note on the Opening Up Better Schools Toolkit. Bangkok: UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific.

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World Bank (2020) The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to Education and Policy Responses. May 2020. Washington. The World Bank Group.