Draft Framework/Plan of Action for supporting special education needs learners in the current period and the reopening of schools

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Planning and Policy Level
Ministries of Education

School Level
Pre-School
Primary
Secondary

Community Level
School and home communities
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<th>Planning and Policy Development Level</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Community Level</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Policy, Guidelines and Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>Key Policy refers to either those existing or to be drafted which will promote safety, efficiency, risk reduction, and curricula modifications/adaptations. These are mandatory and will require guidelines for effective implementation and monitoring. Guidelines provide the framework to operationalize policy and so a set of recommendations or instructions will be necessary, and may vary based on the context for implementation.</td>
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<td><strong>School Operations</strong></td>
<td>School operations relate to the management of resources to ensure a safe, caring and effective teaching and learning environment. This includes the management of the human, physical and financial resources of the school, and the curriculum and its implementation. School operations align with policies and standards outlined by the Ministry of Education.</td>
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<td><strong>Communication Consultations and Coordination</strong></td>
<td>A communication plan plays an important role in change management. Consultation with stakeholders is of primary importance to solicit stakeholder buy-in and maintaining good relationships. It clearly defines who needs to be communicated with, the type of information to be communicated, the timing and frequency, and the preferred method of communication.</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment of Learning Needs</strong></td>
<td>The magnitude of the impact of the closing of schools since March, 2020 on students’ performance is not known. To determine the level of intervention and possible curriculum modifications by grade and subject, an assessment of students’ current level of functioning will be required.</td>
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<td><strong>Human Resource</strong></td>
<td>Human resource includes all the people who work at the school to include, for example, administrators, teachers, teacher assistants, school nurses, custodial workers, food service workers, office personnel, grounds workers, transportation workers, volunteers, and anyone else who is involved in the school’s daily operations.</td>
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<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>School infrastructure refers to safe, suitable spaces to learn including, for example, classrooms, laboratories, fields for games, equipment, dormitories and sanitation facilities. Sufficient space per child, electricity and internet connectivity are also important features of infrastructure.</td>
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<td><strong>Resource Management</strong></td>
<td>Resource management for the purpose of this report includes the material, and financial resources necessary to efficiently operate the school. Material resources include school furniture, equipment, technology, curriculum materials, manipulatives, textbooks, and any other materials within the school. Financial resources include cash and lines of credit.</td>
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QUESTIONS FOR GROUP 1

School Operations
What changes and adjustments will be made to special schools’ operations and general education schools where students with special needs are included to facilitate their reopening and continuation? Consider areas such as:

➢ Class size
➢ Drop off and Pickups/Transportation
➢ Reducing the use of shared items
➢ Modifying curriculum/curriculum adaptation
➢ Blended in person and distant learning among others
➢ How to stagger school reopening
➢ How to schedule (by shift, by day, by week)?
➢ Which students, which schools, or which areas of the country get priority?

Assessment of students’ learning needs and programme revisions
What assessment and teaching strategies and programmes will be implemented to consolidate, accelerate and enrich the learning needs of students with SEN?
QUESTIONS FOR GROUP 2

Key Policies, Guidelines and Monitoring Mechanism

❖ What guidelines and policies with well-defined criteria regarding hygiene and social distancing, physical infrastructure, scheduling and staffing, food and other services, transportation, health and behaviour policies and norms will be established?
❖ How and by whom will schools’ implementation of all pre-opening and opening activities be monitored?
❖ What data will be used to inform decision makers about adjustments to the schools’ curriculum as well as the risk associated with the reopening and continuation of learning and teaching activities in the projected new environment?

Resources
❖ What additional financial resource will the schools require for improved hygiene conditions, physical protection, professional training, staff development, additional staffing, and infrastructural modifications?
❖ What assistive devices/technologies will be required to enhance and enrich teaching and learning?
QUESTIONS FOR GROUP 3

Human Resource
❖ What training programmes will be developed for staff and other support staff in the areas such as safety and hygiene practices, physical distancing, psychosocial support, and information and communication technology support?
❖ When will these training programmes begin?
❖ Will there be need for additional staffing?
❖ What consideration will be given to the mental health and wellbeing of students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders in this new environment?
❖ What considerations will be given to marginalized students or students at risk in general education inclusive settings?
❖ What considerations are being given to support the parents and caregivers of children with SEN who may not be able to return to school in the immediate future?

Infrastructure
❖ What modifications will be necessary to facilitate improved hygiene protocols and social distancing?
QUESTIONS FOR GROUP 4

Communication, Consultations and Coordination

➢ Who should coordinate/mobilize the communication and consultations with the stakeholders, and what format should this take?

➢ Who should participate/be consulted/be informed re the decision about schools’ reopening at a system level and at the school and community levels?

➢ What methodologies should be used to disseminate information to all stakeholders in a timely manner?

➢ What education programme will be put in place to reassure all stakeholders (students, parents, staff) about their personal safety and health?
✓ Recognize that these are extremely difficult circumstances, and that unavoidably the choices that will have to be made, will be far from ideal.

✓ Rather than to give one advice, present the options (for instance for mechanisms for student assessment) and the key implications of each option. Or present one option or one example, clearly indicating that this is only one option, with its implications.

✓ Whenever advice has to be somewhat generic or self-evident, recognize its limits, and point out that this will demand creativity from those who will have to act on that advice, and, if possible, give a few examples.

✓ Always keep in mind the contexts within which our participants and we work, without however refusing all possibility for improvement. This is probably the most difficult balancing act: to be positive, while remaining realist. In more concrete terms: to find successful examples, that can inspire, without being too far fetched.

✓ Finally, maybe most importantly, remain humble: recognize that nobody has all the answers at this stage.

Anton De Grauwe, UNESCO