One year into COVID: Prioritizing education recovery to avoid a generational catastrophe
High-level ministerial meeting
29 March 2021

Session 2
School dropout & learning loss

Speakers’ presentations
Schooling disrupted – schooling rethought

UNESCO

Andreas Schleicher
• Place education at the centre of efforts on recovery and resilience (Itay)
  • School closures reversed decades of learning gains (Albania)
    • long-lasting economic and social effects, amplifying disadvantage

• A whole-of society project
  • Co-operation with other Ministries (Ecuador)
  • Focus on vulnerable children (including refugees), protecting rights of children (Iran)
Immediate concerns

• Keep schools open and safe
  • Reconcile medical and health considerations, ensure teacher vaccination (Canada)

• Investment in multi-modal contingency strategies
  • Adjustment of school curricula, investment in digital and non-digital resources as well as teacher capacity (India, Lao PDR, Mauritius, Oman)

• Getting priorities right
  • Where school capacity is limited, prioritise young children and disadvantage for presential learning (Bahrain, Maldives)
  • Cater for special needs, including through new technologies (Bahrain)
  • Invest in lateral capacity development and incentivise experience sharing (Portugal)
  • Balancing cognitive, social and emotional capabilities and mental health (Canada, Portugal)

• Ensure reliability and predictability of services for students and parents
  • Ensure all students have regular and dedicated contact and strengthen social services in schools (Congo, Venezuela)
  • ‘Learn at home’, social and emotional support for students and families (Ecuador)
  • Avoid long phases of distant learning, daily schedules for hybrid learning work better than weekly or monthly schedules
  • Combine transparent criteria for service operability with flexibility to implement these at the frontline, focus on multimodal digital solutions (Bahrain)
Focus on equity
- Address dropout and geographic disparity (China, Portugal)
- Redouble investments in remedial education (Canada, Romania)
- Recognise and support the role of teachers in addressing inequality (Portugal, Romania)
- Better align resources with needs, use funding formulas to ensure that resources reflect social and economic conditions of students and schools (Ecuador, Oman)
- Redesign technical and professional education to reduce dropout (Italy)

Invest in development, provision and quality assurance of digital technologies
- Recognise both the potential and the limits of digital technologies (Romania)
- Subsidise digital access and collaborate with internet providers (Ecuador, Malta)
- Include teachers in the design of digital solutions, involve teachers in coaching, mentoring and knowledge mobilisation (India)

Strengthen resilience of school systems
- ‘Help schools to be the last institutions to close’ (Romania)
Quality of learning outcomes and instructional days lost

Source: OECD/UIS/UNESCO/UNICEF/WB Special Survey on Covid, March 2021

- Austria
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Slovak Republic
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- Chile
- Colombia
- Estonia
- Israel
- Slovenia
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Costa Rica
- Portugal
- New-Zealand
- Belgium
- Korea
- Finland
- Ireland
- Slovakia
- France
- Norway
- United Kingdom
- Denmark

$R^2 = 0.5306$

Number of instruction days where upper secondary schools were fully closed in 2020

PISA 2018 performance in reading

Source: OECD/UIS/UNESCO/UNICEF/WB Special Survey on Covid, March 2021
Quality of learning outcomes and instruction days lost


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R² = 0.5306

Number of instruction days where upper secondary schools were fully closed in 2020

Size of bubbles represents number of COVID-19 cases per million inhabitants in 2020

PISA 2018 performance in reading

Quality of learning outcomes and instruction days lost


Number of instruction days where upper secondary schools were fully closed in 2020

Size of bubbles represents number of COVID-19 cases per million inhabitants in 2020

R² = 0.5306 (remains 0.29 after accounting for GDP/capita)

PISA 2018 performance in reading

## Current and planned increases/decreases in educational investment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public expenditure in school year 2019/2020</th>
<th>Public expenditure in school year 2020/2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increases</strong></td>
<td>Belgium (flemish community), Colombia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan¹, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Russian Federation</td>
<td>Austria, Belgium (flemish community), Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan¹, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Slo}nvia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Russian Federation,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No changes</strong></td>
<td>Austria, Canada, Chile², Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland</td>
<td>Costa Rica, Hungary, Slovak Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don't know</strong></td>
<td>Denmark, Korea, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland</td>
<td>Chile², Denmark, Italy, Korea, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School and university dropout & learning loss

School Closures reversed decades of gains in learning

Silvia Montoya  Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics  March, 2021
School Closures reversed decades of gains in learning

A deep economic crisis with heterogeneous effects on living conditions and countries capacities.
School Closures caused a disruption that forced countries to deploy emergency teaching and learning strategies.

Understanding Impact on Learning

- Variety of departing points, context and capacity to respond.
- Important inequity levels at departing point.
- Heterogeneous closures in terms of lengths and nature of disruption.
- Country capability and capacity to monitor changes and identify ‘bright spots’ and best-practices.

Emergency learning and teaching responses

- Different natures of emergency remote teaching - such as the delivery of educational content via internet, television or radio.
- Targeted support at groups in disadvantage desired but not very common.
- Impact on budget and economic situation restricts response.

Focus on ensuring sound policy responses.
The increase in absolute numbers of children BELOW the minimum level of proficiency (MPL) is related directly with the length of closures and the percentage of children close to the the MPL.

Evidences shows 1.5 to 2 weeks of learning lost per week lost of face to face instruction. Average loss per student is 25 weeks in 2020.
Learning Inequality has increased as a consequence of COVID-19

The loss could be diminished with mitigation and remediation strategies.

Without mitigation programmes
Losses equivalent to a year worth of learning for third grader students by grade 10 that is 10% of the years spent in schooling.

With remedial actions
The impact gets reduced to half loss, allowing the student to recover, at least partially, the initial losses.

41 are learning below minimum
5 Fall and need time to recover
5 could be recovered with remedial

46 are learning
3 were to increase learning levels before shock
Immediate distance learning platforms were offered to mitigate disruption.

- Nearly 90% used online platforms or television.
- Though online was used in 64% of low-income countries, there are concerns about equity in access.
- 56% reported considerations for students with disabilities.
- 40% created self-paced learning platforms.
Equity is at the center of the design of remediation policies.

- Remediation strategies focused on reducing detected learning gaps and learning of students without access to distant learning platforms.
- Students on risk of drop-outs and in transition between ISCED levels are in the second priority group.

The chart illustrates the percentage of students addressed by remediation strategies:

- On all students transitioning from one ISCED level to the next: 11%
- On students in upper secondary grades with a national examination: 11%
- On students in programmes with a vocational orientation: 5%
- On immigrant and refugee students, ethnic minorities or indigenous: 3%
- On students at risk of drop-out or grade repetition: 12%
- On students who were unable to access distance learning: 18%
- On disadvantaged students: 9%
- To reduce student learning gaps (for all students who need it): 21%
- Other: 6%
- None/Not Applicable: 3%
Multiple strategies have been administered with the aim of granting access to all

- High income countries focused on expansion of online learning (education through mobile phones or internet fees subsidies).
- Dropping non-core subjects (arts, music, physical education, etc.) was a frequent choice in 2020.
- Low-income countries face a more limited set of options
Perceived effectiveness has mixed reviews with online being ranked the highest globally

- Online learning seemingly the most effective among the modes offered
- Low-income countries do not consider remote learning effective, except for radio – likely due to this being most accessible tool in rural and economically disadvantaged communities.
Support to teachers centered around increasing capacity to deliver on remote learning

- Increased staffing: 1 in 3 countries recruited additional teachers | 1 in 4 countries recruited non-teaching staff
- Support to teachers varies across income groups, but most were provided with instructions to operate the distance learning platforms and/or to adapt content for distant learning
Addressing immediate and medium term need for the most vulnerable and the poor demands information

**Projections** on scenarios, no real data

Quantify relationship between duration/nature of disruption and magnitude of learning losses

- Impact of *distance learning* mechanisms
- Effects of other factors affecting schools meals *shocks*
- Country capacity to monitor learning

Learning losses due to school closures could continue to **accumulate** after children return to school and some others (such as pre-primary and pedagogical materials) were simply not provided
UNESCO study on monitoring and evaluating Learning Impact of COVID (MILO) will provide insights on emergency responses.
Learning losses also affect lives: COVID-19 recovery demands a monitoring strategy that scales up successes and corrects weaknesses

- **UIS MILO Study** – Monitoring the Impact on Learning outcome
- **UNESCO/IEA REDS** – Responses to educational disruption survey
- **UNESCO Rapid regional assessments**, with set of 10 country case studies of short-term impact of crisis in two regions: Asia Pacific, West /Central Africa
- **Joint Survey UNESCO/UNICEF/WBG**
- **UNESCO School Closure Tracker** (closures, length, teacher’s vaccination, )

**COVID-19 Virus**

**School Disruptions** (learning loss)

**Emergency responses, prevention, detection through testing (e.g. PCR) and prioritization**

**Emergency Teaching and Learning Responses, assessment and prioritization**

**Vaccines** (development, monitoring, deployment and scaling-up)

**Remediation, Acceleration, Experimentation** (development, monitoring deployment and scale-up)
Thank you.

Learn more [http://uis.unesco.org/](http://uis.unesco.org/)

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School dropouts & learning losses: findings from Global Education Coalition Surveys
UNESCO’s global monitoring of school closure and reopening started and continues...

- Rapid assessment of national high-stakes exams
- UNESCO/UNICEF/WB joint survey (1st wave)
- GPE-funded gendered dimensions on school closure
- TVET responses to COVID-19
- Responses to Education Disruptions Survey (REDS) with IEA/EC
- UNESCO/UNICEF/WB joint survey (2nd wave)
- Focus on Teachers Sentiment (Education Development Trust)
- UNESCO/UNICEF/WB joint survey (3rd wave)
- Projection of dropouts/at risk students
- Monitoring of allocation to education out of national fiscal responses
- National Education Responses Survey
- UNESCO chairs survey on higher education
- Monitoring of allocation to education out of national fiscal responses
- Survey to monitor allocation to education out of national fiscal responses

GEC joint

GEC UNESCO-led
Distance education delivery systems to ensure continuity of learning

Source: UNECSCO/UNICEF/WB Joint Survey (1st wave), May-June 2020
Number of learners affected by partial or full closures

From pre-primary to secondary level

Partially open
Closed due to COVID-19
Duration of partial or full school closures (in weeks)

(Until 12 Mar 2021)

WORLD AVERAGE:

Schools have been fully or partially closed for an average of 26 weeks
How many students are at risk of not returning to school

Increase (percentage) and number of at-risk students (180 countries and territories)
High-income countries have been able to allocate much more financial resources than lower-income countries for education out of the stimulus packages, with risk of further deepening and widening pre-COVID educational inequalities between countries.
Countries are Investing in Remote Learning: Education Fiscal Response Survey

Developing remote learning in primary and secondary education is the top priority worldwide due to school closure.
School closure does not mean learning loss for all students, but learning inequalities have certainly deepened and widened.

Most students will return to school, but what about the most fragile, disadvantaged, especially girls, and how to get them all back?

Teaching and learning moved online/offline as different measures were deployed, how effective was the teaching and learning?

Continuity & transition to normal learning to catch up: remediation, acceleration, alternative? What priority learning domains?
Thank you

Learn more: www.unesco.org/education

@UNESCO

Gwang-Chol Chang
UNESCO
gc.chang@unesco.org