COVID-19 response – organizing for the response

Supporting the response to COVID-19 with effective organization

Version 2 as of July 2020
These materials are provided “as is” solely for informational purposes. The materials are not a legal, health, or safety resource, and organizations should engage their own experts to ensure compliance with applicable laws and standards. The materials are current as of the date indicated and may not incorporate the most recently available information. McKinsey does not express an opinion or recommendation in the materials concerning the opening or operation of educational institutions in light of COVID-19.
01
Introduction

→ Context, objectives, structure of this document
→ The focus of this chapter is on organizing for the response
→ How can this chapter be used?
→ Executive summary
Context, objectives, structure of this document

In the context of the Global Education Coalition, formed by UNESCO to support governments in their educational response to COVID-19, UNESCO has collaborated with partners to develop a COVID-19 Response Toolkit in Education. This toolkit contains nine chapters, five of which are being developed in collaboration with McKinsey & Company – see next page for additional detail.

Objective

The goal of these chapters is to support countries in their K–12 educational response to COVID-19 by providing practices and examples, concrete steps for intervention, and tactical action checklists. This particular chapter focuses on the topic of organizing for the response.

Structure

This chapter contains the following sections:

- **The problem – why it is important:** Defining the chapter’s topic and providing context on the challenge at stake
- **The response – framework and practices:** Providing a framework of response including practices from other country responses in previous crises or during COVID-19
- **The checklist – summary of actions:** Synthesizing the framework into a series of tactical actions that a country can take to prepare and implement its response
- **Case studies – lessons learnt:** Providing case examples from other countries’ response during COVID-19 or other crises, including context, approach, impact and key learnings

While treated as a standalone topic in this chapter, Organizing for the response supports and complements the other chapters in four key ways:

- Allowing a coordinated response across all topics (including external stakeholders and partnerships)
- Ensuring that the required capabilities are available for an effective response at all levels
- Monitoring the progress of COVID-19, evaluating the effectiveness of the response, and adjusting its course
- Ensuring information management, participation, accountability
The focus of this chapter is on Organizing for the response

1. Remote learning strategy
   - Defining and continuously improving remote learning measures
   - Supporting key stakeholders (students, parents, teachers) for effective use of these solutions
   - Monitoring and quality assurance

2. Remote learning platforms
   - Compendium of remote learning solutions, tools, and platforms
   - Developing an evaluation framework to help identify which solutions, tools, and platforms are most relevant to the local context

3. Health, safety and resurgence protocols
   - Evaluating the trade-offs to school reopening and reclosing
   - Defining health and safety measures to put in place before and after reopening

4. Re-enrolment
   - Identifying students at risk of dropout
   - Engaging students, parents and communities to ensure all students are back to school

5. Remediation
   - Bringing students to learning competency level, and catching up lost learning deriving from school closures and pre-existing learning gaps

6. Hybrid learning
   - Defining a learning approach combining remote and in classroom learning during school reopening and in preparation for potential resurgence

7. Recommitment and reform
   - Identifying longer-term implications of the crisis
   - Rethinking the new education system and reforming accordingly

8. Organizing for the response
   - Defining a new architecture to plan, coordinate, and manage stakeholders and external partnerships
   - Developing the required capabilities for an effective response

In collaboration with McKinsey & Company
How can this chapter be used?

If you are a ... You can use the chapter by ...

Policy-maker or advisor

• Reading the problem statement to validate that the chapter is relevant to your context
• Reviewing the framework of response to test which areas are currently covered in your response and where the gaps are
• Jumping to the relevant sections to deep dive on the specific gaps that you identified
• Testing your local organization against the checklist or using it for inspiration to draft your own school or class checklist, keeping in mind the guidance issued by the higher administrative levels in your school system
• Checking additional resources in the appendix for more information

Teacher or school principal

• Reading the problem statement to validate that the chapter is relevant to your school system
• Reviewing the framework of response from the perspective of the local level, focusing on what can be implemented in your context and locally
• Testing your local organization against the checklist or using it for inspiration to draft your own school or class checklist, keeping in mind the guidance issued by the higher administrative levels in your school system
• Checking additional resources in the appendix for more information

Other

• Reading the problem statement to get an overview of the topic and its importance
• Reviewing the framework of response to inform yourself about the key steps that countries take to organize for the response
• Looking through relevant case studies to understand how countries tactically organize for the response
Executive summary (1/2)

This chapter exposes the challenges of organizing for the response in education and provides a tactical framework for countries to do so.

The problem: with 1.5 billion students confronting a new reality with COVID-19, school systems are faced with the challenge of responding to new demands (including financial, health related, etc.). The unprecedented nature of the response demands good organization and fast delivery.

- Stakeholders are facing a new reality in education
  - Parents may be anxious and uncertain on sending children to school, which will likely result in lower attendance.
  - Teachers will likely face higher workloads being at the frontline of readiness and response during reopening.
  - Learning gaps may have increased for students from the lockdown period, more so for at-risk students.
  - There may be tighter budgets, especially given the additional measures schools will be required to take.
  - Supporting infrastructure such as transportation or catering services may lack readiness or resources to follow the additional safeguards mandate.

- And, whilst each system has its own particularities (e.g., severity of the crisis), all will have to address certain unprecedented common factors, including school closures, back and forth in confinement measures, and new public health measures.

The key is to get organized and avoid common pitfalls:

- Inadequate discovery – optimism bias, lack of adequate “sensing mechanisms”, overreliance on past patterns, risk rationalization.
- Constrained solution design – many crises shift “normal” boundaries, and hence need new solutions to be designed.
- Slow or bad decision quality – groupthink, political pressures, high-emotion situations; unfamiliarity and pattern recognition-driven thinking fails; desire to wait for more facts that slows response.
- Inadequate delivery (execution failures) – chaos during disruptions that frequently translates into lack of direction and accountability.
Executive summary (2/2)

The response: countries can avoid these pitfalls and get organized fast by **taking three key steps:** deciding on the mandate and role that the crisis requires, designing the structure and operating model of the structure based on the existing system, and enabling key functions that the organizing should fulfill.

1. **Mandate and role:** countries first should **understand what the crisis needs from an organizing structure,** what key decisions and activities are needed to enable the response to work smoothly, and where the responsibility for each of these should lie.

   1A. Countries **list key decisions and activities needed** for a smooth implementation of the response (e.g., when should schools reopen, which health protocols should be put in place?).

   1B. Countries should **understand where each of these decisions or activities ought to sit horizontally** (e.g., health protocols should be decided in close coordination with health department).

   1C. Countries should **understand where each of these decisions or activities ought to sit vertically** across the levels of the school system (e.g., should regions be responsible for curricula?)

2. **Structure and operation model:** now that countries have diagnosed which activities and decisions are needed and where the responsibility for them lies, they can **design the structure of the organization,** taking into account what they already have in place.

   2A. Countries should **agree on what roles the organization should fulfill and which principles it should follow** and, building on the current organization, can **define the architecture of the “nerve center” of the response.**

   2B. Once the structure is designed, countries can **source the required talent and capabilities** to make sure it can function smoothly.

   2C. Countries can then set up the working model of their structure relying on agile principles.

3. **Functions and capabilities:** once the nerve center or structure of the response has been developed, countries should **set up the key functions** that the structure is responsible for providing, based on the list of the key activities and decisions listed in 1a. These key functions should include: defining decision-making protocols, setting up effective data and monitoring systems, liaising with external and internal partners, developing effective supporting functions (e.g., finance, legal), align on communication protocols and monitoring the performance of the response.
The problem

Why it is important

→ Definition of organizing for the response

→ Schools, students, parents, and teachers will confront a new reality during COVID-19 that will presumably require schools to deliver in the face of significant challenges

→ The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis and the globally shared uncertainty of this situation demands a response that is extremely well-planned, yet delivered fast
Definition of organizing for the response

Organizing for the response can be defined as the effort by policy-makers to define or refine an architecture to plan, coordinate, and manage stakeholders and external partnerships, as well as develop the required capabilities for an effective response.
Schools, students, parents, and teachers will confront a new reality during COVID-19 …

Parents may be anxious and uncertain on sending children to school which will likely result in lower attendance.

Each system will face unique circumstances that may influence the measures to be adapted by schools …

- Availability of resources (financial, human and technical)
- Severity and impact of the crisis
- Policy responses of government

… however, there will also likely be commonalities across all systems

- Long closures and “blackout” periods
- Potential back-and-forth between ease and strictness of confinement measures
- Need for hybrid learning during partial reopening
- Difficulty in navigating demanding new public health measures for all involved (including schools, teachers, parents, students)
- Challenge of reaching vulnerable groups

In this context, what is needed to plan and deliver during COVID-19 in a way that is impactful and efficient?

Getting organized is key

Tight governance could enable effective monitoring and quick decision-making

While school systems can aim towards comprehensive health safeguards, they may also need to adapt to local context, realities on the ground, and include the needs of school staff, students, and parents who will need to live these safeguards daily.
The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis and the globally shared uncertainty of this situation demands a response that is extremely well-planned, yet delivered fast.

When organizations are tasked with crisis management, four causes usually emerge that impede an effective response or cause crises failures:

- **Inadequate discovery** – optimism bias, lack of adequate “sensing mechanisms”, overreliance on past patterns, risk rationalization
- **Constrained solution design** – many crises shift “normal” boundaries, and hence need new solutions to be designed
- **Slow decision-making, or poor-quality decision** – groupthink, political pressures, high-emotion situations; unfamiliarity and pattern recognition-driven thinking fails; desire to wait longer than may be necessary for more facts that slows response
- **Inadequate delivery** (execution failures) – chaos during disruptions that frequently translates into lack of direction and accountability

COVID-19 fits all these criteria with its determining features and requires a well-run engine to manage the response:

- The disruption is unfolding faster than organizations can understand or interpret using the usual approaches, and school systems need to stay updated consistently
- The situation is novel due to the nature or scale of the threat, which distinguishes it from a “routine emergency” and requires solutions in both the near and long terms
- Decision-making requires input from multiple stakeholders to assess the situation, and consider and choose plans of action
- Since the situation evolves almost daily and differently for various locations, effective coordination is a must for delivery; stakeholders may execute simultaneously as they make decisions
- Systems may have weak capacity to respond to ensure the right of education for all
The response
Framework and practices

Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach:

- Mandate and role
- Structure and operating model
- Functions and capabilities
Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach

01 Mandate and role
Agree on key decisions and activities needed and where the responsibility lies within the response

> 1A Identify the key decisions and activities that are needed for a smooth implementation of the response

> 1B Understand what coordination is needed across ministries, partners and main sectors (horizontally)

> 1C Identify, within the educational system, how responsibilities will be distributed across levels (vertically)

02 Structure and operating model
Shape your response nerve centre, talent strategy, and working model

> 2A Align on key principles and roles of the structure and define the architecture for the “nerve centre” of the response building on the existing organization

> 2B Choose and implement a talent strategy (e.g., which people and capabilities are needed)

> 2C Set up an agile working model

03 Functions and capabilities
Set up capabilities and operate key functions

> 3A Define decision-making protocols

> 3B Set up effective data and monitoring systems

> 3C Liaise with external and internal partners

> 3D Develop effective supporting functions

> 3E Align on clear and consistent communication protocols

> 3F Monitor the performance of the response and compliance with requirements
Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach

**01 Mandate and role**
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Set up capabilities and operate key functions

- **3A** Define decision-making protocols
- **3B** Set up effective data and monitoring systems
- **3C** Liaise with external and internal partners
- **3D** Develop effective supporting functions
- **3E** Align on clear and consistent communication protocols
- **3F** Monitor the performance of the response and compliance with requirements
1A The response may require a series of potential activities and decisions (1/2)

### Remote learning

- Determine current state of digital infrastructure, budget, capabilities
- Design a strategy for remote teaching, practice, and feedback across ages and subjects
- Provide guidance to schools on privacy and potential risks regarding certain remote learning solutions
- Develop a mix of remote learning solutions across, taking into account budgetary constraints
- Communicate guidance to teachers, families, and students
- Develop training for teachers
- Make remote learning solutions accessible to students
- Ensure feedback loop, monitoring, and improvement through KPIs

### Remote learning platforms

- Determine which needs and criteria a remote learning platform should fulfill (including privacy)
- Identify a shortlist of platforms able to suit this purpose
- Provide guidance to schools on privacy and potential risks regarding certain remote learning platforms
- Decide on remote learning platform(s)
- Align on timeline and method of rollout
- Ensure monitoring and improvement processes are in place

### Planning to reopen safely

- Ensure that guidance and coordination is provided around 6 key topics: safe operations, learning, including the most marginalized, wellbeing and protection, policy and financing
- Liaise closely with health and safety departments to surveil epidemiological conditions
- Agree on a series of criteria and constraints to ensure that schools reopen safely; may consider the latest available guidance including from UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF and other partners
- Decide which segments of students should be readmitted in person
- Ensure supply chain readiness for materials needed (e.g., masks, learning materials, posters)

### Re-enrolment

- Identify which students are at risk of dropping out and why (including economic/health reasons)
- Evaluate which strategies are most appropriate based on complexity and relevance
- Choose re-enrolment interventions
- Prepare for rollout by understanding key requirements for operationalization (including budget, human resources)
- Activate response system to roll out interventions (e.g., presidential awareness campaign)
- Communicate with relevant stakeholders, including families, religious leaders, community leaders
- Issue guidance to principals, schools, and teachers on protocols to address risk of dropout
- Set up a feedback mechanism to ensure continuous relevance
- Track progress of the program and adjust accordingly

### Remediation

- Determine who needs remediation and how much
- Assess academic and nonacademic needs for remediation
- Choose levers of remediation, channels of delivery, and timeline
- Identify requirements for operationalization and consider strategies to address capacity gaps
- Coordinate across schools to ensure uniformity
- Communicate with key stakeholders, including families, teachers, students
- Agree on rollout timeline
- Issue guidance on widely applicable remediation solutions for schools (e.g., prioritize core subjects)
- Monitor and adjust remediation plan through feedback loop

### Decisions

- Which mix of remote learning solutions does one choose?
- How does one engage key stakeholders to roll them out?
- Which platform will be chosen for remote learning in our system?
- How does one ensure that the privacy of students and teachers is safeguarded?
- How and when should one roll it out?
- When should schools be reopened and under what conditions?
- Who should schools reopen for (e.g., student segments)?
- How can health and safety of students, school staff, and communities be ensured when schools reopen?
- How should students who have dropped out or are at risk be re-enrolled?
- Which gaps should one remediate or deprioritize?
- When and how should these gaps be filled?

### NOT EXHAUSTIVE

Activity requires coordination with departments of health or economics.

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HOW CAN THIS CHAPTER BE USED?

UNESCO, in collaboration with McKinsey and Company
### 1A The response may require a series of potential activities and decisions (2/2)

#### Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Determine what the response will require in terms of infrastructure, human resources, budget, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Map out potential avenues to plan for surge capacities, including maximizing current capacity, innovating, or collaborating with partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Activate necessary stakeholders and partners to ensure feasibility (e.g., ministry of finance, NGOs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Create mechanism of feedback to ensure continuous relevance</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Closely monitor changes in the response’s needs and anticipate challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Issue guidance to other layers of the educational system (including schools) to identify local resurgence strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What needs should one plan for?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>When does the added capacity need to be ready?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Hybrid learning

- Assess student needs for remote and in-person learning
- Assess capabilities and effectiveness of current remote learning solutions
- Understand teacher capacity, availability of physical space, flexibility of support levers (e.g., cleaning)
- Determine which student segments should be prioritized for return to school
- Determine degree of prioritization of vulnerable students
- Determine the split between remote and in-person learning across grades and subjects
- Develop standardized guidance on hybrid learning protocols for schools and teachers (including shift system, teacher allocation model)

#### Recommitment and reform

- Collect feedback from different levels of the system and key stakeholders to understand what should be changed or kept
- Ensure the availability of a continuous feedback mechanism
- Share reform input with policy makers

#### Cross-cutting

- Issue key guidance on topics that should be or could be standardized (e.g., health protocols, reopening guidance)
- Engage and liaise with other parts of the response (horizontally, e.g., with ministry of finance, NGOs, health organizations), and within the school system (vertically, e.g., with regional levels, schools)
- Collect data and make it available to lower levels to support decision making
- Build monitoring and adjustment mechanism to collect feedback and ensure the response is continuously relevant
- Communicate with parents, families, and students to keep them informed about the development of the situation

### Mapping out the series of activities and decisions required by the response should include considering what the current capacities of the system are to respond

- Some of these activities and decisions will require coordination across other entities and departments, while others should take place within the education system (including department or ministry of education)
The response > Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach > Mandate and role

Some activities and decisions will require continuous coordination across departments

**Ministry or department of health and safety**
- Provides feedback on guidance
- Keeps records of COVID-19 cases
- Adapts guidelines to specific context

**Ministry or department of education**
- Applies for further funding or grants
- Reports management of funds
- Provides considerations on reopening of the economy

**Ministry or department of economics and finance**
- Provides additional support for specific initiatives
- Issues guidance on budget use and monitoring
- Provides feedback on guidance
- Keeps records of COVID-19 cases
- Adapts guidelines to specific context

### How can this coordination be managed?

The centralization of the coordination between sectors can be achieved by

- **Leveraging current structures** (e.g., ministries of health, education, finance)
- **Creating a new ad hoc structure** for the response that centralizes all coordination (e.g., COVID-19 Task Force)
Other activities and decisions will be spread within the educational system and cascaded through three main layers, which may vary across countries.

Central administration

Includes federal policymakers or ministries of education

Responsibilities¹

- Responsible for setting core policies, protocols, measures, and guidelines
- Responsible for central funding and resource guidelines as well as stimulus packages
- Sets curriculum and assessment standards¹

Middle layer²

Includes region-, municipality- or district-level policymakers that may set guidelines in the local context

- May also be responsible for school performance measurement, support, and compliance
- Sets guidelines on assessments, school hours, staff trainings, and funding allocation
- Enforces policy and ensures schools meet guidelines in its specific regional domain

School level

Includes school principals, administrators, teachers

- Responsible for day-to-day management of the learning environment
- Enforces mandated measures at school level and puts additional measures in place where necessary (e.g., if school is overcrowded)
- Procures supplies essential to learning, and maintains communication with parents
- Communicates school needs (including on any large-scale procurement) to district level and liaises with parents and communities

Note: middle layers may vary considerably across countries and regions (or may not even exist) depending on a number of factors, including:

- Level of decentralization and coordination between central vs. regional layers
- Size and resources of school districts
- Private vs. public schools in a country or district
- Structure of government

Many countries have established Emergency in Education (EiE) mechanisms already in place. Planning the response should start from strengthening these mechanisms instead of creating new ones.

1. Varies by country
2. May or may not exist based on the structure of the country’s government and its size
Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach

**01 Mandate and role**
Agree on key decisions and activities needed and where the responsibility lies within the response

- **1A** Identify the key decisions and activities that are needed for a smooth implementation of the response
- **1B** Understand what coordination is needed across ministries, partners and main sectors (horizontally)
- **1C** Identify, within the educational system, how responsibilities will be distributed across levels (vertically)

**02 Structure and operating model**
Shape your response nerve centre, talent strategy, and working model

- **2A** Align on key principles and roles of the structure and define the architecture for the “nerve centre” of the response building on the existing organization
- **2B** Choose and implement a talent strategy (e.g., which people and capabilities are needed)
- **2C** Set up an agile working model

**03 Functions and capabilities**
Set up capabilities and operate key functions

- **3A** Define decision-making protocols
- **3B** Set up effective data and monitoring systems
- **3C** Liaise with external and internal partners
- **3D** Develop effective supporting functions
- **3E** Align on clear and consistent communication protocols
- **3F** Monitor the performance of the response and compliance with requirements
The organization of the response should fulfil four key roles

1. **Support high-level policy-making**
   - Provide bottom-up insights and data to senior decision makers to inform decisions and support the building of the strategy.

2. **Provide shared services for the educational system**
   - Address the needs of the educational system at all levels by providing a set of shared services: data collection and analytics, budget prioritization, practices and standardized processes, linkages with other parts of the response, capabilities, monitoring mechanisms.

3. **Monitor performance, accountability and steer the response**
   - Track and assess key performance indicators across the system, collect feedback from school administrators, students, families, and teachers, provide guidance to adapt the response accordingly and ensure compliance.

4. **Engage external and internal partners and communicate**
   - Liaise with key stakeholders between layers of the educational system, engage partners horizontally (including other ministries, NGOs), and communicate uniformly to all concerned parties.
2A How these roles will be structured in the response will depend on guiding principles, applicable regardless of the system type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider centralizing what can benefit from a coordinated approach</th>
<th>Consider decentralizing what can benefit from a bottom-up or tailored approach</th>
<th>At a central level, group activities with strong synergies</th>
<th>Build on what you have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centralize activities requiring</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strategy, policy, and coordination</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prioritize the use of existing structures to expedite the response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Issue flagging</td>
<td>Communication and external relations</td>
<td>Leverage capabilities from existing department, units, and talent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External relations</td>
<td>Case reporting</td>
<td>Support functions (e.g., legal, supply chain)</td>
<td>Balance organizing an efficient and structured response and safeguarding existing processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Local outreach and stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>Data and analytics</td>
<td><strong>A system view</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compliance and performance management</td>
<td><strong>Economies of scale</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Procurement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A system view**
- Communication
- External relations
- Strategy
- Policy
- Coordination

**Economies of scale**
- Procurement
- Information technology
- Supply chain and distribution
- Finance and budgeting
- Legal

**Standardization**
- Data and analytics
- Performance management
- Compliance
2A Across countries, a wide range of formats are being implemented from decentralized to centralized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Format and Decision-Making Model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centralized</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Decision-making and planning led centrally, typically by the Federal Ministry of Education in coordination with the Ministry of Health. Detailed set of guidelines deployed at the center, with schools individually responsible to comply.</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Overall guidelines for reopening and practices (by school level) set by the Federal Ministry of Children and Education in coordination with the National Board of Health. Heads of schools, in collaboration with local municipalities, responsible for organizing reopening in a way that meets healthcare guidelines. Follow-up group established with participation of primary school stakeholders, that support schools in implementation and adoption.</td>
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<td>China</td>
<td>In China, the decision to reopen schools is decentralized to the provincial level with general guidance from the national Ministry of Education. Task forces set up at county levels reinforce health protocols and manage associated logistics. They develop region-specific vetting processes and establish rapid response mechanisms, working closely with local health authorities to decide on school reclosure if resurgence is experienced.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>In Viet Nam, local municipal authorities and city education departments decide how long local schools should be closed based on the situation in these areas, while using direction from the Ministry of Education. Aside from some common policy actions deployed from the center, provincial authorities given mandate to plan response at a village and commune level. Compliance strictly enforced by authorities utilizing state security when needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decentralized</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>In response to the crisis, the Ministry of Education of Kenya has appointed a centralized and national level nine-member committee to “take charge of the process of exploring the best possible strategies of restoring normalcy in the education sector”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>In Switzerland, there is no middle party between the Federal Council Coronavirus Crisis Unit and the schools. Federal Office of Public Health published specific guidelines for schools to reopen that apply nationwide with input from Conference of Education Ministers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>In Norway, Provisional Regulations to the Education Act deployed at center. A detailed infection control guide published that has both legally binding “must-follow” regulations and “should-follow” advice. For example, schools must follow minimum physical distances allowed in classrooms, but can change school opening hours, schedule of classes, or grade of students required to attend per day to be able to manage.</td>
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<td>In Viet Nam, local municipal authorities and city education departments decide how long local schools should be closed based on the situation in these areas, while using direction from the Ministry of Education. Aside from some common policy actions deployed from the center, provincial authorities given mandate to plan response at a village and commune level. Compliance strictly enforced by authorities utilizing state security when needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Federal Ministry for Education, Science, and Research
2. Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care, and Consumer Protection

Source: Link for Kenya; Link for Austria; Link for Norway; Link and Link for Denmark; Link; Link and Link for Vietnam; Link for China; Link and Link for Japan
2A Among these, centralized structures or “nerve centres” have potential benefits when navigating novel, complex needs at high velocity

**Clear responsibilities via restructured organizations or dedicated teams**
- Reorganized to meet new needs – outside of old reporting lines
- Explicit decision-making authority, roles, responsibilities
- Milestones for each function or department (dates, owners, results)

**Disciplined operating model, enabled by**
- A daily cadence, observed closely by leadership
- Use of uniform templates and agendas

**Increased agility**
- Continuous stakeholder consultation means more relevant and appropriate response
- Higher visibility of risks leading to improved readiness for their mitigation

**Note:** For a centralized system to respond effectively to the crisis, certain pre-requisites need to be in place (e.g., availability of timely information)
2A Lessons from the past also show reopening is more effective when dedicated teams enable structured, well-integrated, and focused efforts

Case examples

Special taskforces set up in Sierra Leone and Liberia to respond to the Ebola crisis, with participation of the ministry of education, development partners, and NGOs

Responsibilities

Three working groups formed2, each responsible for a specific task (distance learning, social mobilization, teacher training)

Issuing health guidelines and protocols to ensure the safety and security of students and teachers

Making decisions concerning priority issues, such as high-stake examinations

Mobilizing resources with the help of partners and disinfecting schools

Carrying out rapid assessments to ascertain the status of school buildings, furniture, wash facilities, etc., and supplying hygiene kits as well as monitoring compliance

Training teachers on psychosocial support and school safety (at least two teachers in each school)

Benefits seen

Increased readiness of teachers, parents and society at reopening

Improved readiness of schools – both for infrastructure and pedagogy – driving a quicker return to normal

Improved outreach, especially for vulnerable children or students with learning gaps

Higher funding coverage achieved

Education in Emergencies Working Group established in 2012 in Nigeria with the distinct purpose of coordinating education response in the Northeast states affected by the Boko Haram insurgency

Responsibilities

Working to ensure that all children affected by emergencies in North East of Nigeria receive timely, well-coordinated and equitable education

Serving as a liaising and coordination agency between schools, various government stakeholders (e.g., education ministry, assessment boards) and private sector (e.g., UN agencies, NGOs)

Managing data collection and monitoring progress, and running a single response dashboard for common reporting across various entities

Overseeing provision of teaching materials, equipment, and hygiene facilities

Leading training for teachers and administrators, and helping prepare schools for emergencies

Advocating for policy change at the centre, where necessary

1. Specific to Sierra Leone

Source: Press search (humanitarianresponse.info; reliefweb.int); EiEWG 2019 report; UNESCO COVID-19 Education Response: Preparing the reopening of schools
2A In practice, a central COVID-19 response team can operate at three levels and group activities that are highly synergistic to facilitate the response.

Illustrative response structure

National/federal level or regional level

- Central crisis response centre
- Data and analytics
- External relations and communications
- Strategy, policy, and coordination
- Compliance and performance management
- Support functions

Local level and school level

- Local level and school level: implementation, issue flagging, case reporting, local outreach, and stakeholder and community engagement

Important to clearly define mandate at each level to leave schools with an appropriate degree of freedom to get organized.
### 2A Each unit will have specific response activities which can be mapped across chapters (1/2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics/chapters</th>
<th>Strategy, policy, and coordination</th>
<th>Data and analytics</th>
<th>External relations and communication</th>
<th>Compliance and performance management</th>
<th>Support functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remote learning</td>
<td>• Design a strategy for remote teaching, practice, and feedback across ages and subjects</td>
<td>• Determine current state of digital infrastructure, budget, capabilities</td>
<td>• Communicate guidance to teachers, families, and students</td>
<td>• Ensure feedback loop, monitoring, and improvement through KPIs</td>
<td>• Develop a mix of remote learning solutions across the learning value chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote learning platforms</td>
<td>• Determine which needs and criteria a remote learning platform should fulfill</td>
<td>• Analyze the privacy risks associated with remote learning solutions</td>
<td>• Engage experts on platforms, communicate to families, etc.</td>
<td>• Ensure monitoring and improvement processes are in place</td>
<td>• Align on timeline and method of rollout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning to reopen safely</td>
<td>• Ensure that guidance and coordination is provided around 6 key topics: safe operations, learning, including the most marginalized, wellbeing and protection, policy and financing</td>
<td>• Collect data on health KPIs, satisfaction, learning, financing, etc.</td>
<td>• Liaise closely with health and safety departments to surveil epidemiological conditions</td>
<td>• Monitor the situation closely through local authorities and schools</td>
<td>• Ensure supply chain readiness for materials needed (e.g., masks, learning materials, posters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-enrolment</td>
<td>• Identify which students are at risk of dropping out and why</td>
<td>• Track the progress of the program and adjust accordingly</td>
<td>• Communicate with relevant stakeholders (including families, religious leaders, community leaders)</td>
<td>• Set up a feedback mechanism to ensure continuous relevance</td>
<td>• Prepare for rollout by understanding key requirements for operationalization (e.g., budget, human resources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluate which strategies are most appropriate based on complexity and relevance</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide guidance to headmasters, schools, and teachers on protocols to address risk of dropout</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Activate response system to roll out interventions (e.g., presidential awareness campaign)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Choose re-enrolment interventions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOT EXHAUSTIVE**
### 2A Each unit will have specific response activities which can be mapped across chapters (2/2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics/chapters</th>
<th>Strategy, policy, and coordination</th>
<th>Data and analytics</th>
<th>External relations and communication</th>
<th>Compliance and performance management</th>
<th>Support functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Remediation     | • Choose levers of remediation, channels of delivery, and timeline  
• Agree on rollout timeline  
• Coordinate across schools to ensure uniformity | • Determine who needs remediation and how much  
• Assess academic and nonacademic needs for remediation | • Communicate with key stakeholders, including families, teachers, students  
• Issue guidance on “no-regrets” remediation solutions for schools (e.g., prioritize core subjects) | • Monitor and adjust remediation plan through feedback loop | • Identify requirements for operationalization and consider strategies to address capacity gaps |
| Resurgence planning | • Determine what the response will require in terms of infrastructure, human resources, budget, etc.  
• Create mechanism of feedback to ensure continuous relevance | | • Issue guidance to other layers of the educational system (including schools) to identify local resurgence strategies | • Closely monitor changes in the response’s needs and anticipate challenges | • Map out potential avenues to plan for surge capacities, including maximizing current capacity, innovating, or collaborating with partners  
• Activate necessary parts of the response system to ensure feasibility (e.g., ministry of finance, NGOs) |
| Hybrid learning | • Determine which student segments should be prioritized for return to school (including vulnerable students)  
• Determine the split between remote and in-person learning across grades and subjects  
• Develop standardized guidance (including shift system, teacher allocation model) | • Assess student needs for remote and in-person learning  
• Assess capabilities and effectiveness of current remote learning solutions  
• Analyze risks related to data privacy | | • Put in place a feedback mechanism and evaluation of hybrid learning experience to continuously adjust the approach | • Understand teacher capacity, availability of physical space, flexibility of support levers (e.g., cleaning) |
| Recommitment and reform | • Shape long-term changes or initiatives, in coordination with teachers, students, and families to reform the system | • Ensure the availability of a continuous feedback mechanism to support improvements | • Communicate reforms and guidelines for changes to be made | | • Identify longer-term implications of the crisis (e.g., difficulty of finding space for teaching, need for more flexibility)  
• Understand which changes should be made to the core structure and curricula to ensure readiness in the future  
• Pilot changes on small class cohorts |
| Cross-cutting | • Build a response strategy, shape policy, and coordinate stakeholders  
• Collect data and make it available to lower levels to support decision-making  
• Report on data privacy risks | • Issue guidance, engage, and liaise with other parts of the response, communicate with stakeholders | | • Build a monitoring and adjustment mechanism to collect feedback and ensure relevance | • Operationalize and support rollout and implementation |
The team managing the response, whether centralized or decentralized, will need management capabilities, analytical skills, and expertise in relevant topics.

**Team considerations**

A well-balanced team will have project management capabilities, education content expertise, and data analysis experience.

Some capabilities can be outsourced or sourced from other parts of the response.

Depending on the needs and context of each country (e.g., human resources, equipment, and funding available), the response structure can be embedded within current structures or constitute a new entity.

**Team roles and capabilities to be included**

**Project Managers**
- Manage the overall process and maintain communication across stakeholders
- Set up cadence and coordination for delivery team
- Monitor progress against delivery priorities and identify any roadblocks
- Drive policy-level discussions
- Draw strategically on resources and knowledge within the rest of the response ecosystem
- Engage stakeholders vertically (within layers of educational system) and horizontally (across branches of the response)

**Experts**

**Content experts** (curriculum, remote learning, etc.)
- Issue guidance on a variety of topics (e.g., curriculum, health protocols)
- Identify and select content for updated curriculum or new programs or campaigns
- Develop training modules for headmasters, teachers, parents, and students
- Develop communication strategy and materials

**Functional experts** (communication, stakeholder engagement, etc.)
- Help with the rollout of programs and rapid teacher/school onboarding
- Track implementation, including adoption and satisfaction
- Develop feedback mechanism and surveys to capture insights from teachers, parents, and relay it to content experts to incorporate changes

**Data Analysts**
- Assess data privacy risks
- Collect data to assess needs (e.g., for remediation or re-enrolment)
- Align on IT needs, platforms, and devices needed for the response
- Engage stakeholders vertically (within layers of educational system) and horizontally (across branches of the response)

**Functional experts** (communication, stakeholder engagement, etc.)
- Draw strategically on resources and knowledge within the rest of the response ecosystem
- Engage stakeholders vertically (within layers of educational system) and horizontally (across branches of the response)
Both the nerve centre and the response as a whole can apply seven principles, which lead the path to an agile way of working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Focus on users: students, teachers, and families</strong></td>
<td>The whole response works for and with the user (e.g., teachers, students, families) throughout the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Continuous improvement through feedback</strong></td>
<td>The team continuously revises ways of working based on feedback from users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Entire response lifecycle focus</strong></td>
<td>The response covers all activities from project management to expertise and analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Cross-functional teams</strong></td>
<td>The team includes all skills needed to reach the common goal with rare expertise that can be sourced externally in other teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Connected teams</strong></td>
<td>All members are connected, collaborating closely, communicating openly, fostering transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Work in short blocks of time</strong></td>
<td>Work is broken down into chunks of small “sprints” to focus teams on delivering specific outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Stable and continuous team</strong></td>
<td>Team members dedicate 100% of their time, working towards a common purpose/goal, with the same team members from start to finish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short...

Agile teams work in short blocks of time to produce a product (e.g., strategy, solution, guidance) with relevance to the users which can then be improved iteratively with their feedback.
Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach

01 Mandate and role
Agree on key decisions and activities needed and where the responsibility lies within the response

1A Identify the key decisions and activities that are needed for a smooth implementation of the response

1B Understand what coordination is needed across ministries, partners and main sectors (horizontally)

1C Identify, within the educational system, how responsibilities will be distributed across levels (vertically)

02 Structure and operating model
Shape your response nerve centre, talent strategy, and working model

2A Align on key principles and roles of the structure and define the architecture for the “nerve centre” of the response building on the existing organization

2B Choose and implement a talent strategy (e.g., which people and capabilities are needed)

2C Set up an agile working model

03 Functions and capabilities
Set up capabilities and operate key functions

3A Define decision-making protocols

3B Set up effective data and monitoring systems

3C Liaise with external and internal partners

3D Develop effective supporting functions

3E Align on clear and consistent communication protocols

3F Monitor the performance of the response and compliance with requirements
Six key capabilities should be set up for a successful organization of the response

3A
Decide systemically
Predefined protocols and decision-making processes to ensure consistency and efficiency

3B
Be data-driven
Effective data and monitoring systems to track implementation of health measures and overall sentiment

3C
Liaise well with partners
Strong relationships to coordinate and share capabilities at policy and operational levels

3D
Support to deliver
Effective supporting functions to deliver in a disciplined and efficient way and enable readiness

3E
Communicate often
Clear, consistent communication with important stakeholder groups

3F
Monitor performance and compliance
Monitoring performance and compliance with established protocols can help in resolving issues
### Functionality required

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment clear protocols and decision-making processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather data and monitor measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise between the center, schools, and other entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for operational and infrastructure readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage stakeholders consistently with clear communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor compliance and performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Role and responsibilities of the regional/district nerve centre

- Conduct scenario planning at district/regional level and establish activation protocols based on specific scenarios and associated metrics.
- Set up guidelines on assessments, school hours, hybrid vs. in-school learning, training, procurement, etc.
- Provide a centralized data collection and analysis capability for descriptive analytics and projections.
- Define KPIs, metrics, and triggers, then collect and analyze information from school level (e.g., attendance rate, reported new cases, best sanitary practices) to fuel national dashboard.
- Escalate recommendations to central nerve centre about school closures.
- Cascade national guidelines at school level and advise schools on how to facilitate adoption.
- Communicate procurement and infrastructure needs expressed by schools to nerve centre.
- Monitor schools reopening process, day-to-day operations, and regulate implementation of protocols.
- Handle supply and distribution of PPEs at intermediary and/or local level and allocate funding.
- Ensure availability of appropriate IT systems and platforms to enable hybrid learning and data monitoring.
- Give green light to reopen, close, or partially open schools at regional level based on central guidelines.
- Set up communication or broadcast systems with parents, children, and teachers to minimize amount of time between communicated, recommended, and official school shutdown or reopening.

**NOT EXHAUSTIVE**
3A Protocols for systemic decision-making can be devised against three horizons around response

DECIDE SYSTEMICALLY

### Managing the response

Set guidelines on the process of the response, including strategies and actions at regional and school levels for:

- **Timing and phasing for the response at various academic levels**
- **Responsibilities and engagement of various stakeholders**
- **Allocation of budget and material resources**
- **If possible, start with smaller pilots (by region or by student levels) and expand gradually**

### Sustaining momentum once response is activated

Establish constant and ongoing monitoring mechanisms to avoid health trade-offs and setbacks in future:

- Set SOPs around resurgence and incorporate lessons learned
- Consider protocols for overall improvements to the education apparatus and for strengthening school systems in future
- Devise policy to adapt to the next normal (e.g., on distance learning) and reform for the long term

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1. These factors are context-specific to every region and may vary based on various factors

Source: UNESCO Framework and Resource Papers for Reopening Schools

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**Decision-making should also anticipate potential second or third waves of COVID-19**

See Chapter 6 Resurgence Planning for additional detail
3B A centralized data collection capability to analyze key indicators can support effective decision-making

Key segments to be analyzed

**Health and safety**
Metrics to understand compliance of health measures, school safeguarding
- Measuring respective health outcomes (e.g., number of cases) and devising appropriate tracking and tracing mechanisms as per triggers

**Academic performance and remediation**
Measuring student outcomes to gauge proportion of learning gaps for appropriate remediation strategy
- Measuring school performance to gauge efficacy of hybrid learning and to devise training support

**Re-enrolment uptake**
Measuring of public response to reopening, e.g., attendance rates, participation in online classes
- Gauging public sentiment, e.g., satisfaction scores of teachers, students, and parents to tailor communications and improve safeguards

**Potential role for the nerve centre**
- Assess data privacy risks
- Define systematic mechanisms to ensure that the latest data is always acquired immediately
- Set up recurring reporting mechanisms at fixed frequencies for all stakeholders
- Analyze data to recognize patterns and predict outcomes on ongoing basis
- Set up and manage a dashboard synchronizing data and intel cascaded from various levels and entities

Additional segments to analyze can include: remote learning access, wellbeing and protection, financing
### Metrics that are relevant to the region can be chosen against each segment to track successful implementation

To monitor successful implementation, a set of indicators needs to be chosen. These can be both process-oriented (e.g., use of protective equipment) or outcome-oriented (e.g., quantities of protective equipment available).

#### Health and safety

**Compliance to national health guidelines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preventive measures</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves, hand sanitizers) daily coverage per school</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily use of protective equipment</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of reported cases of insufficient physical distancing (i.e., 6 feet apart)/day</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily frequency of classroom sanitization</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Diagnostic measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic measures</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic test/thermometer daily coverage per school</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of reported cases with temperature above set threshold</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Re-enrolment

**Minimal attendance rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic measures</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils' continuous attendance rate</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' continuous attendance rate</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support continuous staff attendance rate</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Academic performance

**Student assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic measures</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance gap per student pre- and post-quarantine</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of students at risk</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. Difference between level of selected district and national average; 2. NB: teachers and support staff attendance rates should be sufficiently high for the school to keep operating; pupils’ attendance rate should be sufficiently high for inequalities in learning to be limited; 3. NB: a relatively high number of cases with temperature could lead to school closure; so could one positive case at school level; 4. E.g., no more than 1/2 day of school for pupils/work for staff missed over a week to ensure continuous school operations and learning.
A suite of digital tools is being used by countries to help collect timely and accurate data for analysis during reopening

Source: Govtech Singapore, TraceTogether.gov.sg, med-technews.com, lifeinnorway.net, Brasil.io

**Case example**

**Technology and tools being used for data collection and monitoring**

**Singapore** is leveraging a range of technology applications to monitor and analyze spread data.

**VigilantGantry and Self-Help Temperature scanners**, to deploy AI-driven automated temperature screening systems at entry points of educational and government institutions.

**TraceTogether**, mobile app that enables community-driven contact tracing (to help check people’s travel history at school gates).

**Leave of Absence & Stay-Home Notice Tracking Solution** allows parents and students needing a leave to report their locations to the Ministry of Manpower quickly and accurately.

**Norway** is using a range of data from various sources to develop situational awareness and forecasting models for COVID-19.

Online weekly digital questionnaire asking citizens about health, e.g., symptoms, recovery time, with a secured login system that was previously used for banking.

**State’s coronavirus tracker app “Smittestopp” uses GPS and Bluetooth to dispatch anonymized data about movement patterns to Norwegian Institute of Public Health for effective control measures.**

**Tracking data and testing results used to develop sophisticated analytics models to predict incidence, susceptibility and recovery by county and region.**

**Brazil** is using volunteers to upload covid-19 tracking information on a government platform.

**A collaborative effort of over 40 volunteers have been scraping official reports from the state Health Secretariats in order to obtain daily, city-level data about COVID-19 in Brazil.** The data is then made available as bulk CSV downloads, as a JSON API as well as a web form on the **Brasil.io open data platform.** This is the only open data source available for daily COVID-19 data in Brazil that has municipality level granularity.

**Denmark**, the first country to reopen schools in Europe has leveraged digital solutions to collect data.

**Online weekly digital questionnaire asking citizens about health, e.g., symptoms, recovery time, with a secured login system that was previously used for banking.**

**Bluetooth-enabled phone app for decentralized contact tracing to detect 1-2 meters of proximity with others that have also enabled the app’s location service.**

**State’s coronavirus tracker app “Smittestopp” uses GPS and Bluetooth to dispatch anonymized data about movement patterns to Norwegian Institute of Public Health for effective control measures.**

**Tracking data and testing results used to develop sophisticated analytics models to predict incidence, susceptibility and recovery by county and region.**

Note: References to specific products, companies, or organizations are solely for information purposes and do not constitute any endorsement or recommendation.
3C Strong relationships and partnerships at a policy and operational level are necessary to ensure consistency and leverage capabilities for delivery

LIAISE WELL WITH PARTNERS

**Government**
Create formal links with all involved government sectors and entities, including federal response teams, municipalities, health departments, and clinical services to ensure consistency in policy

**Education partners**
Coordinate with private- and public-school systems as well as with service providers, e.g., transporters and caterers to better understand their needs and to resolve specific challenges

**Third party**
Strengthen alliances with private players such as NGOs, donor organizations, and relevant local agency teams for UNICEF, WHO, etc., to ensure a coordinated effort across society at large

**Media**
Ensure all media outlets disseminate consistent information from official sources only and collaborate with them to alleviate concerns and reduce confusion

**Society**
Ensure input and opinions from a diverse mix of public stakeholders is considered, e.g., by consulting with parent and teacher associations
3D Additional capabilities needed can be provided by supporting functions to enable schools to deliver on COVID-19-specific challenges

Support needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations (including transportation, food services, procurement, distribution)</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Potential role of the nerve centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety equipment (e.g., face masks, handwashing gear) would need to be sourced in large volumes to be made available to teachers and students</td>
<td>Set up a budget line and prioritize initiatives in coordination with Strategy</td>
<td>Help schools navigate through a suite of available remote learning applications to select those that fit needs and constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools' operations including transport and infrastructure, e.g., cafeterias may need to be adapted for COVID-19-specific measures (e.g., physical distancing between students)</td>
<td>Assess the financial impact of the COVID-19 response in detail for schools in district/region</td>
<td>Ensure availability and stability of appropriate VC systems and platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication to stakeholders, tracking, coordination, and monitoring of efforts will require upgrades to IT tools and platforms</td>
<td>Secure and manage fund allocation between schools and geographies dynamically based on pre-defined criteria (e.g., size of school by no. of students)</td>
<td>Set up online portals to facilitate communication between various stakeholders and the platform for data collection and reporting dashboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT stability and cybersecurity will need to be ensured during partial reopening to enable hybrid learning programs where applicable</td>
<td>School budgets will likely be tighter</td>
<td>Set up COVID-19-specific sourcing protocols for alternative procurement options, where supply is threatened at the region/district level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School budgets will likely be tighter</td>
<td>Conversely, COVID-19 response may require human and material resources which were not budgeted</td>
<td>Manage allocation between schools and geographies based on predefined criteria (e.g., size of school by no. of students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional financial needs may differ from one school to another</td>
<td>New health measures and guidelines may not be straightforward for schools to apply or easily adopted</td>
<td>Help schools navigate through a suite of available remote learning applications to select those that fit needs and constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New capabilities might be required, e.g., mental health training for teachers or on remote learning tools for parents</td>
<td>Provide tools and resources to schools for ease in implementation (especially guidance regarding social distancing guidelines)</td>
<td>Ensure availability and stability of appropriate VC systems and platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Set up online portals to facilitate communication between various stakeholders and the platform for data collection and reporting dashboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and budgeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3D Examples of actions taken in various countries to support school operations during reopening

**Support area**
- Procurement, stockpiling, and distribution of PPEs
- Infrastructure readiness and support in operations
- Technology support and training
- Financing and funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support area</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Examples of actions to provide support to schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procurement, stockpiling, and distribution of PPEs</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Nigeria’s government partners with FMN Group to procure 331,000 PPE kits, 35,000 lab testing kits, among others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Infrastructure readiness and support in operations | Singapore | A taskforce comprised of Enterprise Singapore (ESG), and transport and school-bus associations announced support packages for operators and bus drivers, including: 
- A relief fund amounting to ~S$ 23 million in the form of road tax, licensing, and parking fee waivers 
- Training and reskilling courses for drivers and admin staff to activate new measures |
| Technology support and training | China | School systems provided with free access to digitized textbooks, teaching guides, and other digital resources through cloud-based platforms for remote and hybrid learning 
In more developed provinces like Zhejiang, the ministry of education approved 37 qualified tech companies to provide online teaching services 
Reopening taskforces worked with key telecom providers and government to ensure stable internet connectivity in remote areas with little internet coverage and to provide trainings where necessary for increased adoption |
| Financing and funding | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Department of Education, UK in coordination with local authorities, to provide additional funding to primary and secondary schools for 
- Increased premises-related costs (to enforce physical distancing) 
- Additional cleaning and hygiene services deployed 
- Additional teaching support to manage physically distanced classes 
- Support for free school meals (FSM) for eligible children who cannot attend school |

Source: MDPI.com, gov.uk, lta.gov.sg, businessday.ng

Note: References to specific products, companies, or organizations are solely for information purposes and do not constitute any endorsement or recommendation.
**Communicate Often**

**Who should be reached out to?**
Customize targeted communications for all key stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, parents, students, private sector players (e.g., NGOs).
Ensure guidelines are specifically tailored to each level’s needs, e.g., daycare, primary, secondary.
Prioritize vulnerable segments, especially those with low access to technology.

**How should information be disseminated?**
Make it two-way – listen as well as inform/guide.
Leverage multiple channels – both digital (e.g., WhatsApp, websites) and physical (e.g., posters, billboards) – to ensure outreach to all.
Ensure regular updates to new developments and maintain a clear, single source of truth for all layers (i.e., federal, regional, school levels).
Be proactive, engage early and do not hesitate to overcommunicate!

**What should be covered?**
Cover information on the following topics:
- Interventions and measures to ensure health and safety
- Status updates and reports on cases
- Updates to assessment, curriculums, methods
- Available tools and resources
- Myths and misinformation
Ensure adequate time for preparation between announcement and enforcement.
Provide reassurance to teachers and parents.

**Why is this important?**
Communication and cooperation improves consent and hence effectiveness of interventions.
With a multitude of information being disseminated globally, it is important to help stakeholders identify consistent facts from misinformation.
Regular updates and proactive communication help allay fears, provide reassurance, and build trust, thereby improving readiness of response for all stakeholders.

### 3E Case examples of communication methods being adopted

#### Case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Examples of communication media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singapore</strong></td>
<td>- AskJamie Chatbot to address queries related to COVID-19 for parents and citizens&lt;br&gt;- Detailed guidelines and FAQs for all K12 levels&lt;br&gt;- Official Gov.sg WhatsApp Account provides timely and trusted updates on the COVID-19 situation; available in four languages, and has been optimized to send multi-lingual messages to all subscribers within 30 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denmark</strong></td>
<td>- Standardized mandatory instruction posters deployed at all schools&lt;br&gt;- Handbook of measures and instructions by segment and level&lt;br&gt;- State hotline to answer questions about the virus and health measures, by phone or chat in 25 languages (ensuring immigrants are covered).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil</strong></td>
<td>- Coronazap online chat function of the Brazilian government on WhatsApp to answer questions on contagion, symptoms etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United Arab Emirates</strong></td>
<td>- Information for parents’ support for hybrid and distance learning that includes checklists of key questions to ask schools, recommended supplies to buy for learning at home, and tips for working parents to be better prepared to manage distance learning&lt;br&gt;- Regular circulars and information guides issued to school principals and administrators for various systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** adek.gov.ae; GovTech Singapore; Link: Ministry of Education and Corona Response Websites For Countries; OCDE OPSI Brazil Innovation

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**Note:** References to specific products, companies, or organizations are solely for information purposes and do not constitute any endorsement or recommendation.
3F Throughout planning and implementation, consistent monitoring, compliance, and adjustment can be guided by four principles

**MONITOR PERFORMANCE AND COMPLIANCE**

### Simple and clear protocols
- Clearly defined and simple protocols for schools to follow
- Supporting details that clarify expectations
- No grey areas or room for ambiguity for parents, students, or staff

### Two-way responsibility
- Feedback channels for enquiries from both parents/students and school staff
- Flexibility to adapt measures based on realities on the ground and inputs received
- Support to school administrators on resolving “out-of-the-norm” challenges (vs. only a top-down enforcement)

### Efficient and effective reporting
- Self-assessment from school staff
- Reporting platforms for teachers (e.g., to report attendance) and parents/students to raise flags
- Sample inspections and audits from taskforce teams with prioritization of high-risk areas

### Appropriate consequence management
- Attractive incentives (e.g., funding support or PPE provisions)
- Well-publicized and effective penalty systems
- Follow-up and assessment of response to outages

### An effective enforcement mechanism that
- Ensures compliance
- Reduces cost of monitoring
- Promotes trust and thereby drives quicker recovery to full normal
Based on the framework, countries can tactically implement organization through three action checklists:

- Mandate and role
- Structure and operating model
- Functions and capabilities
Based on the framework, countries can tactically implement organization through three action checklists

01 Mandate and role

02 Structure and operating model

03 Functions and capabilities
### 1 Identify the mandate and role of the structure by defining key decisions and activities that are needed in the response

**To be adapted and populated by the entity concerned**

**Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Focal point</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Identify the key decisions and activities needed for a smooth implementation of the response</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Make a comprehensive list of which activities and decisions need to be taken on by an organizing structure to ensure the smooth operation of the response by topic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage key stakeholders in each of these fields to garner input on which activities and decisions are needed from the structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Map which activities and decisions are in the purview of education vs. other sections (e.g., reopening of schools will depend on health and safety, and updated epidemiological data)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>Understand what coordination is required across ministries and partners (horizontally)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Map which activities and decisions are in the purview of education vs. other sections (e.g., reopening of schools will depend on health and safety, and updated epidemiological data)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>Identify, within the educational system, how responsibilities will be distributed across levels (horizontally)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Map out and list which topics the educational response is prioritizing (e.g., re-enrollment, remediation, reopening)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage key stakeholders in each of these fields to garner input on which activities and decisions are needed from the structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distribute remaining responsibilities across the layers of the educational system, taking into account the specificities of the country</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Based on the shortlisted activities and decisions that should be taken on by organizing structure, define a role, mandate, and vision for the structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Check with relevant stakeholders in the fields and layers of the response that no key decision or activity has been forgotten</td>
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</table>
### Agree on the structure and operating model of the organization of the response

To be adapted and populated by the entity concerned

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2A</strong> Align on key principles and roles of the structure and define the architecture for the ‘nerve centre’ of the response, building on the existing organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree on which principles of design, and role the organizing structure should respect (e.g., solve the needs of the response, standardize all that can be standardized)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Define the roles that the organizational structure needs to fulfill (e.g., support policy-making, monitor, and steer the response)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss constraints and needs of the system that should inform the structure’s architecture (e.g., a highly centralized system might consider a similarly centralized structure)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss series of available options for a structure: from entirely embedded in current system to entirely distinct, from centralized to decentralized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Align on structure design and split of responsibilities across levels and units</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2B</strong> Choose and implement a talent strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map out which capabilities will be needed in the structure, including projected managers, experts, data analysts</td>
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<td>Define profiles for the roles needed, and source candidates for the structure as relevant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outsource capabilities that cannot be found within the organization</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2C</strong> Set up agile working model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose principles of agile that would make the nerve centre and the system more efficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate principles across the system and the nerve centre</td>
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</table>
## 3 Prepare and launch key functions and capabilities to enable to response to be operational

To be adapted and populated by the entity concerned

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<tr>
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<th>Focal point</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set up capabilities and operate key functions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss and agree on which key functions the structure should fulfill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Put in place strong decision-making protocols (e.g., criteria for school reopening, standard operating procedures, timing, and phasing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set up centralized data collection for health and safety, re-enrolment uptake, academic performance and remediation (and others), and decide on a specific role for the structure (e.g., is the role of the structure to collect data, to analyze data)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set up digital tools to collect timely and accurate data for analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaise with partners both at the policy and operational level (including governments, education ministry, third parties, media, civil society)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enable the response by ensuring that support functions are running smoothly, with special focus on operations (procurement, transportation, food services, distribution), information technology, finance and budgeting, capability building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regularly communicate with stakeholders to raise awareness, reach consensus, and build trust (decide on communication target, channel, content, and timeline)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitor performance and compliance across branches of the response (including feedback on the delivery of the plan, and the impact of the plan)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
05

Case studies

Lessons learned

→ Countries have implemented organizational practices during COVID-19 and other crises

→ COVID-19 case studies: Palestine, Nigeria, Kenya, Malaysia, Saskatchewan – Canada, Austria

→ Case studies from other crises: Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Liberia
Countries have implemented organizational practices during COVID-19 and other crises

**A** COVID-19 case studies

- Palestine
- Malaysia
- Nigeria
- Saskatchewan, Canada
- Kenya
- Austria

**B** Case studies from other crises

- Sierra Leone
- Mozambique
- Liberia

CLICK ON EACH FLAG TO VIEW CASE STUDIES
In Palestine, almost 1.5 million learners were affected by COVID-19 with the government having to address a large set of needs from remote learning to psychosocial support (1/5)

COVID-19 school closures affected almost 1.5 million learners ...

On the 5 of March, the first COVID-19 cases were reported in Bethlehem, Palestine

Following this, containment measures were put in place including the closure of schools since 6 March

Closures included 3,037 schools, of which, 2,300 are in the West Bank and 737 are in Gaza. In addition, 2,017 kindergartens were closed

The closures affected 1.4 million learners, 57% of whom are in the West Bank and 43 per cent in Gaza

... and the government faced a large set of needs to address

360,000 children in need of low-tech home-based learning for families without internet connection in remote areas in the West Bank and Gaza

1.43 million children and their families in need of receiving continuous age appropriate awareness messages around COVID-19, hygiene related preventive measures and continuity of learning at home

5,000 schools and kindergartens in need of cleaning and disinfection in preparation for the reopening of schools

215,000 children and their caregivers, and 3,000 teachers in need of psychosocial support

Latrines in need of urgent rehabilitation in 402 schools and new clean drinking water points needed in 134 schools in Gaza and West Bank

To organize its response, the Ministry of Education in close cooperation with the Education Cluster and partners developed a National Response Plan for COVID-19 based on four principles (2/5)

Mandate & Role
The organization for the response set up by the Ministry of Education in Palestine was based on four objectives

1. School children, staff and their families and schools in the West Bank and Gaza have the adequate information and resources to prevent the spread of the Pandemic

2. School children and their parents have access to free online platforms and home-based learning (including while at quarantine facilities) for age appropriate materials, worksheets and lessons to ensure the continuation of learning by school children

3. Support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of students, parents and educators in West bank and Gaza

4. Rehabilitation of school WASH facilities as an important measure to control spread of infection prior to schools reopening

These objectives were reflected in the National Response Plan which suggested to attribute an objective to each taskforce

Structure and Operating model
The structure of the response was centralized at the national level by the Ministry of Education, the Education Cluster and partners

The National Response plan suggested to establish 4 taskforces to support the Ministry of Education in the implementation of the plan. Each taskforce is led by an organization that has the adequate technical capacity in the thematic area of concern and is the major financial contributor to the response under their taskforce

The Education Cluster under the Ministry of Education was built on the basis of four key principles

- **Consultation** – The strategy was developed through a consultative process facilitated by the cluster involving all key education stakeholders, including the MoE, Donors, UNRWA, and international and local cluster and sector partners

- **Evidence** – The Education Cluster was build based on a secondary data review (SDR) which provided an analysis of the education context and identified information gaps in conflict affected areas in the West Bank including Jerusalem and Gaza. The data collected in this review is the basis for decision making in the Cluster

- **Harmonization** – With multiple organizations responding to the education needs of children in West Bank including Jerusalem and Gaza, the Cluster recognized the importance of a common understanding and alignment in terms of geographic and thematic priority areas

- **Alignment and Continuity** – The Cluster ensured that its own priorities and actions were aligned with the Ministry of Education’s Education Sector Strategic Plan. This is especially critical for Palestine given the protracted crisis in the West Bank including Jerusalem and Gaza.
1 DEEP-DIVE – The structure of the response for education in Palestine was highly centralized at the national level by the Ministry of Education and leverages partners in a coordinated way (3/5)

The Cluster is centralized under the MoE
The Cluster coordinates the four taskforces

Ministry of Education

Education Cluster

Distance Learning Task Force
Lead: UNESCO
Objective: School children and their parents have access to free online platforms and home-based learning (including while at quarantine facilities) for age appropriate materials, worksheets and lessons to ensure the continuation of learning by school children

Risk Communication and Hygiene Task Force
Lead: UNICEF
Objective: School children, staff and their families and schools in West Bank and Gaza have the adequate information and resources to prevent the spread of the Pandemic

WASH Infrastructure Task Force
Lead: Action Against Hunger
Objective: Rehabilitation of school WASH facilities as an important measure to control spread of infection prior to schools reopening

MHPSS¹ Task Force
Lead: Save The Children
Objective: Support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of both students, parents and educators in West Bank and Gaza

AS OF JULY 2020

These taskforces coordinate with the humanitarian country team responsible for the Gaza education sub cluster

¹ Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

This structure provided a number of shared services to the response, including service delivery, advocacy, monitoring and reporting (4/5)

Functions and capabilities

The Education Cluster set up several capabilities, among others:

Supporting service delivery

• Assessing and mapping the education needs of vulnerable areas, and share findings among members in a timely manner
• Ensuring the coordination of emergency education programs and activities amongst partners engaged in the response

Advocacy

• Leading coordinated advocacy efforts and initiatives through the Education Cluster Advocacy Plan, which include advocacy briefs

Reporting and monitoring

• The cluster receives updated information pertaining to:
  – Current needs (partner assessment data, etc.)
  – Types and locations of partner activities
  – Targets and achieved results of partner activities
• To accomplish this, the Cluster developed an online 5Ws Monitoring Tool for partners to use to report this information. Supported by OCHA, the platform collects input from partners and converts it into public dashboards
• Each organization updates its 4Ws data on a quarterly basis. Within two weeks of submission, the cluster team will compile and analyze the data, produce various analysis products and share these products with all relevant stakeholders
• Currently, the reporting mechanism is functional with the support of five field officers appointed in the West Bank and the Assessment Teams in Gaza who are responsible for data verification, initial needs assessment and reporting incidents to the Cluster

Response achievements

Among other achievements, the Ministry of Education in coordination with partners was able to:

• Conduct the general education exam while ensuring safety and health protocols (78,000 students were able to sit for the exam)
• Adopt a method of blended learning for the new scholastic year with a clear school reopening plan
• Disinfect schools, plan for psychosocial support (>100K counselors trained remotely), support WASH facilities and put in place distance learning (including TV pilots and training)

1 Lessons learned – The organization for the response set up by Palestine’s Ministry of Education demonstrates three key lessons (5/5)

Build on partnership to organize

Palestine’s Ministry of Education set up a structure built on partnership. The partners were assigned leading roles based on their own technical capacities and their ability to provide financial backing to their theme of the response.

Let the needs of your response drive its architecture

The architecture of the taskforces of the Education Cluster for the response was derived from the key needs of the response in Palestine. The four objectives that the education response sought to achieve inspired the four taskforces that were leading the response.

Set up a strong monitoring and evaluation system

In partnership with OCHA, Palestine’s Ministry of Education set up a strong reporting and monitoring system that allowed partners to input information on their activities and to see what other partners were doing. This prevented an overlap of activities and allowed transparency in the response given that the platform’s dashboard is public.
In Malaysia, more than 5 million learners were affected by COVID-19 with the government putting in place various methods of remote learning to support education continuity (1/5)

COVID-19 school closures affected more than 5 Million learners

On 25 January, the first COVID-19 case was reported in Malaysia.

Following a rise in cases due to a mass religious gathering, a movement control order was put into place and schools were closed on 18 March 2020.

More than 5 Million learners were affected by school closures.

The government responded by putting in place distance learning through a variety of methods.

The government rapidly set up various modes of remote learning, including non-digital methods given that more than 30% of the Malaysian student population does not have devices and access to internet. These methods included:

- Digital platform for online learning: DELIMa
- EduWebTV, CikgooTube, e-Guru Portal
- Education TV programmes (terrestrial free-to-all TV, available on three channels currently on air for six hours per day)
- Post delivery of materials
- Teachers, in cooperation with district health offices sent materials to students – especially in remote areas and for indigenous communities
- Drive-through pick-up: Parents could drive to the school compound to pick up or send materials

To organize its response, Malaysia set up a highly centralized national level council with an agile and flexible operating model (2/5)

Mandate & Role

The organization for the response in Malaysia was centralized in two ways:

• First, decisions about different sectors of the response (incl. economic, health, security, education) were centralized under the National Security Council (NSC) (for example: implementation of MCO, closing and reopening of sectors)

• Second, the decisions and activities of the response in education were centralized at the national level, under the Ministry of Education with the advice from National Security Council (NSC) and Ministry of Health (MoH)

This ensured a highly coordinated and integrated approach to the response with all key decisions taken under a single umbrella with limited coordination needed

Structure and Operating model

The structure of the response was centralized at the NSC under the Prime Minister’s Office. The council has two distinctive roles – (i) it functions as a technical committee to coordinate response and management of the COVID-19 pandemic and, (ii) it functions as the secretariat for the special cabinet committee where major policy decisions are made.

Any key decisions and activities of the separate ministries flowed through this council which included representatives from the ministries as well as experts, including, among others:

• Statisticians
• Medical doctors
• Security, defense and police experts

The operating model of the council was highly agile, in multiple ways

• The council had daily stand-ups during MCO and Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO)
• The response was organized in two-week phases (or sprints), with the council continuously reassessing the need for specific measures as the number of cases decreased with time
• The structure of the organization was flexible and evolved as the need for a centralized response decreased. The council went from a highly executive, decision making body on all aspects of the response, to taking on an overseeing and coordination role and devolving the key decisions to individual ministries
• The decisions of the ministry were based on continuous stakeholder consultation. For example, for the reopening of schools, the Council and the Ministry of Education consulted with state and district education offices, public private associations, NGOs, parents, students, private providers, politicians. These decisions were translated into guidelines with the approval of MoH and NSC.
1 DEEP DIVE: The structure of the response in Malaysia was highly centralized (3/5)

**National level**

- **Prime Minister's Office:**
  - National Security Council – lead agency in coordinating responses

- **Ministry of Health**
  - The Ministry of Health activated the Crisis Preparedness Response Centre (CPRC) that responds and manages public health pertaining to COVID-19

- **Other ministries**
  - Other ministries set up their own COVID-19 taskforces
  - Response by taskforce in each ministry on SOPs is endorsed by NSC

**Regional and district level**

- **Regional technical committee**
  - Guidance and standard operating procedures flow down to the lower administrative levels to be adapted and operationalized
  - Information and data (e.g., on cases and enrolment) flow upwards to inform key policy decisions

- **District or school technical committee**

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**AS OF JULY 2020**

The Council takes on the role of executive decision-making body as well as a coordinating and overseeing body until the country is declared pandemic-free.

The Council functions as (i) technical coordinating body and, (ii) secretariat for the special cabinet committee which makes major policy decisions.

Council has both ministry representatives and experts (statisticians, medical doctors, security officers etc.)

UNESCO, in collaboration with McKinsey and Company
This structure provided a number of shared services to the response, including communication, outreach, reporting, and monitoring.

### Functions and capabilities

The Council set up several capabilities, among others:

- **Communication**: a specific TV channel was put in place to provide news and daily updates by MOH and NSC to the population on the development of the crisis. This was later reduced to two updates weekly as the situation improved. The Prime Minister addressed the nation whenever there were major policy decisions. Other ministers also provided updates on key topics relevant to their ministries.

- **Outreach**: the Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education reached out to stakeholders (incl. state and district education offices, public and private associations, NGOs, parents, students, private providers) for consultation on decisions and to raise awareness.

- **Reporting**: the Ministry of Education set up daily reporting on COVID-19 cases among students and teachers and continued to track and collect the data at the national level. Hotline centres were set up at NSC and at ministry level. The Ministry of Education tracked and collected data on student and teacher attendance, and issues related to the reopening of schools at the federal, state and district levels. A war room was set up at the Ministry of Education that provides daily reporting.

- **Monitoring and adjusting the response**
  - Although the council did not set KPIs specific to education in the response, the Ministry of Education already had an education blueprint in place with its own KPIs and mid year review planned.
  - The Ministry will use the plan to review how they are performing in the response and plan for new strategies to meet their goals.
  - The KPIs tracked will include enrolment data as well as how many students are connecting to the online education platforms (engagement).

Lessons learned – The organization for the response set up by Malaysia demonstrates three key lessons (5/5)

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**Set up a flexible structure**
- Malaysia set up a flexible structure which allowed it to navigate the different phases of the crisis and adapt its organization to the changing needs of the response
- Malaysia communicated through consistent, accurate and clear messaging supported by guidelines and FAQs to ensure understanding and cooperation to abide the Standard Operating Procedures

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**Consult stakeholders throughout the process**
Throughout the planning and organization process, the key decisions made were informed by its users through stakeholder consultation

---

**Set up a strong data system**
Malaysia shared that the country could benefit from a more robust data system to better support the response in education. This could include having more granular data (e.g., number of bunk beds vs. single beds in boarding schools), more accurate (e.g., verification at each level of the response) and timely data

Source: Expert interview
1 Nigeria set up a centralized response cluster for the North East region coordinated by a lean three-person team

**Approach**

In Nigeria, COVID-19 is predicted to affect close to 46 million children, including highly vulnerable students – > 400,000 internally displaced children are said to be out of school.

In response to the effects of COVID-19 on the Nigerian educational sector in the North East, partners came together in the Education in Emergency Working Group (EiEWG), which constitutes 50 partner organizations.

**Composition**

The working group is based in Maiduguri and consists of a large variety of partners (organized as shown below) that are coordinated by 3 fully dedicated team members:

- Two sector coordinators from Save the Children and UNICEF
- One Information Management Officer from UNICEF

This team has 2 responsibilities:

- Coordinating partners, sharing information, ensuring coherence in an effective response
- Maintaining relationships with stakeholders (including the Ministry of Education, the Global Education Sector, humanitarian teams)

**Mandate**

EiEWG has 3 response objectives

1. **Prevent the spread and transmission of COVID-19** among learners, teachers, parents, and others

2. **Mitigate/minimize the impact of school closures**, due to COVID-19, on the learning and well-being of students, teachers, parents, and others through alternative solutions

3. **Ensure an effective, inclusive, and safe return** to quality learning for learners, teachers, and others

Source: Relief Web

AS OF JULY 2020
The region of Saskatchewan in Canada set up a regional taskforce to effectively produce guide and communicate with parents, students, and teachers.

**Approach**

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Saskatchewan educational system set up a centralized Response Planning Team dedicated to the educational response.

**Composition**

The Response Planning Team is headed by the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation Executive Director and includes representatives from:

- The Saskatchewan School Boards Association
- The Saskatchewan League of Educational Administrators, Directors, and Superintendents
- The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials
- The Ministry of Education

**Mandate**

The Response Planning Team has 3 response objectives:

1. **Coordinate and plan the reopening process**
2. **Issue guidelines and updates** regarding health protocols and reopening (through regular Response Planning Team Updates)
3. **Provide guidance to teachers and schools** on resources available during the crisis (e.g., regarding time management, assessments, communication, distributing learning materials)

Source: Relief Web

AS OF JULY 2020
1. Kenya set up a lean national level centralized response committee to plan reopening, measure the impact of the crisis, and record lessons learned

### Approach
On 15 March, Kenya’s president mandated the closure of all schools and learning institutions. Over 14 million students have been affected.

In response to the crisis, the Ministry of Education has appointed a centralized and national level nine-member committee to “take charge of the process of exploring the best possible strategies of restoring normalcy in the education sector.”

### Composition
- Appointed by the Education Cabinet Secretary, the committee is made up of nine people and headed by the Chairperson of the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development and includes:
  - Heads of school and parent associations
  - Heads of religious learning institutions (e.g., Muslim Education Council)
  - Members of the Ministry of Education
  - Representatives of higher education institutions

### Mandate
The committee has five objectives:

1. **Review and reorganize the school calendar** as part of the COVID-19 post-recovery strategy

2. **Advise on ways of handling boarding students/pupils** when schools reopen


4. **Record the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic** on the demand for education by poor households and suggest mitigation measures

5. **Identify institutions that may have been adversely affected** by COVID-19 and advise on mitigation and recovery measures

Source: UNESCO; Kenya News Agency
1 Austria’s Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research set up an internal crisis management system to plan for the response

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**Approach**

In response to COVID-19, Austria closed schools on 16 March and has reopened them as of 18 May. Over one million students have been affected by school closures. To organize the crisis, Austria’s Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research is issuing guidance and planning the response through a special crisis management system.

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**Mandate**

The crisis management system is responsible:

- Recommendations for schools and teachers regarding hygiene measures
- Planning for reopening and phasing
- Communication to parents and guardians

Source: Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung
2 Sierra Leone’s Ministry of Education, in close cooperation with UNICEF, coordinated an emergency response plan during Ebola

Approach
During the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, schools were closed for eight months, resulting in a lost year of learning.

The government, working with donor partners, initiated a number of interventions to mitigate these losses at the national level, targeting all schools, and the education sector.

Composition
The emergency response plan was coordinated by Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) with support from UNICEF, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), other donor partners.

$1.5 million of grants were reallocated to emergency response efforts and to prepare schools to reopen.

Mandate
The emergency response plan’s mandate was to:

1. Provide an Emergency Radio Education Program (EREP), with an educational radio programming broadcasting daily 1-hour lessons across 41 radio stations nationwide.

2. Support families and students in accessing the EREP by distributing more than 80,000 portable radios across the country.

3. Train teachers to provide psychosocial support to students.

4. Raise awareness on the importance of continuing education through messaging targeting parents and caregivers of school-aged children. In addition, community leaders and 1,187 teachers were mobilized at the community level to support children’s engagement and parental support for the innovative programming EREP.

During COVID-19, The Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) are the coordinating Ministries for education with support from UNICEF, World Bank, the EU, UNESCO and the Teaching Service Commission. US$ 7 million grants from GPE were approved in June 2020.

Source: World Bank; Global Partnership for Education; UNICEF; The BMJ
Mozambique developed the Education Cluster for Cyclone Idai Response, which worked to secure education for children and strengthen the capacity of the system

### Approach

After the Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique, >305,000 children had their education interrupted because of damage.

> 3,400 classrooms were damaged or destroyed in cyclone-affected regions, including 2,713 in the Sofala area alone.

In response, the government coordinated the Mozambique Education Cluster for Cyclone Idai Response.

### Composition

The cluster is comprised of active partners, including national and international NGOs, UN, and government agencies.

The humanitarian response in Mozambique was led and coordinated by the government through the National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC) and related emergency coordination mechanisms, supported by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), which is composed of UN agencies, International NGOs, Red Cross, and donor representatives.

### Mandate

The education cluster worked to ensure access to safe, equitable, and quality education for children affected by the disaster in Mozambique and works to strengthen the capacity of the education system to deliver a timely, coordinated, and evidence-based education response.

In practice this included:

- Procurement of materials for the construction of classrooms and wash facilities.
- Support repairs, rehabilitation, and reconstruction for damaged or destroyed schools and providing furniture and essential materials.
- Support the development of psychosocial support skills among teachers, parents, and communities and ensure cascade of coping skills among children.
- Support development of emergency preparedness and response plans, and facilitate development of school-based disaster risk reduction plans for future crises.
- Conduct back-to-school and awareness-raising campaigns; organize orientations addressing positive discipline, referral, and protection mechanisms.

Source: UNICEF; Relief Web; WHO
2. Liberia and UNICEF organized a Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy Program led by four staff members and involving a core team of partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Mandate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The program was promoted in the context of the government of Liberia’s Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation 2013-2030</td>
<td>Coordinated by a central four-member UNICEF team (the program manager, M&amp;E officer, education program assistant, and a communications consultant) the program brought together a core team consisting of the three key government ministries (MoE, MoYS, MIAPBO), UNICEF, and three international NGOs (ADC, SCI, and RTP)</td>
<td>The goal of the program in Liberia was to focused on achieving five key outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Increase inclusion of education into peacebuilding and conflict reduction policies, analyses, and implementation</td>
<td>Increase institutional capacities to supply conflict-sensitive education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increase institutional capacities to supply conflict-sensitive education</td>
<td>Increase the capacities of children, parents, teachers, and other duty-bearers to prevent, reduce, and cope with conflict and promote peace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increase access to quality and relevant conflict-sensitive education that contributes to peace</td>
<td>Contribute to the generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming related to education, conflict, and peacebuilding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNICEF; Amazon News; Global Partnership for Education
Appendix

→ Organizing for the response additional external resources

→ Glossary of terms
### Organizing for the response additional external resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Resource type</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source and link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020</td>
<td>This report aims at supporting education decision making to develop and implement effective education responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The report explains why the necessary social isolation measures will disrupt school-based education for several months in most countries around the world. Absent an intentional and effective strategy to protect the opportunity to learn during this period, this disruption will cause severe learning losses for students</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>OECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 preparedness rubric</td>
<td>The crisis preparedness rubric is a tool used by schools to assess their preparedness in responding to a crisis</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>Global/developed countries</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Teacher Empowerment for School Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate, plan, and communicate</td>
<td>Education authorities will find guidance on important steps they can take when responding to the crisis. Even if countries already have a contingency plan for the education sector, the reminders here may be helpful</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State leader survey on reopening schools</td>
<td>State education chiefs and governors’ offices in all 50 US states were invited to participate in this anonymous survey. Between April 30 and May 6, Excel in Ed collected responses from 35 state leaders</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>05/2020</td>
<td>Excelined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education in a post-COVID world: nine ideas for public action</td>
<td>The report presents 9 key ideas for navigating through the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath, contending that we cannot forget core principles and known strengths as we face unprecedented disruption to economies, societies and – our particular focus here – education systems</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>22/06/2020</td>
<td>UNESCO, Futures of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Should Education Leaders Prepare for Reentry and Beyond?</td>
<td>This report offers recommendations in 4 key areas: time, talent, socio-emotional wellness and skills, academic plan</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>05/2020</td>
<td>Chiefs for Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Reopen Schools: A 10-Point Plan Putting Equity at the Center</td>
<td>Based on insights and resources from practitioners and experts, the authors created this 10-point plan to help educators reimagine and strengthen systems</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>29/04/2020</td>
<td>Getting Smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective leadership in crisis: what it takes for ministries of education</td>
<td>This article describes 6 actions that governments can take to be more effective in a crisis</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>16/05/2020</td>
<td>UNESCO, IIEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework for reopening schools</td>
<td>This framework provides guidance on key actions to take to reopen schools, including before, during and after reopening. It focuses on six key dimensions to assess readiness to reopen and inform policy: policy, financing, safe operations, learning, reaching the most marginalized and wellbeing/protection</td>
<td>Article or report</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>06/2020</td>
<td>UNESCO, UNICEF, The World Bank, World Food Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary of terms

01 Operating model
The blueprint for how resources are organized and operated to deliver the mandate

02 Agile
Framework for executing (software) projects, including principles and tools to drive continuous delivery, rapid prototyping, and project management

03 Nerve center
Flexible structure that concentrates crucial leadership skills and organizational capabilities to respond to the crisis

04 Working model
The ways in which an organization functions internally to deliver the response

05 Capabilities
Skills, knowledge, and resources needed to organize preparedness and response

06 Functions
The services that the organization should provide to the response to address its needs