UNESCO

In support of
COVID-19
Global Education Coalition
Launched by UNESCO

COVID-19 response – organizing for the response

Supporting the response to COVID-19 with effective organization
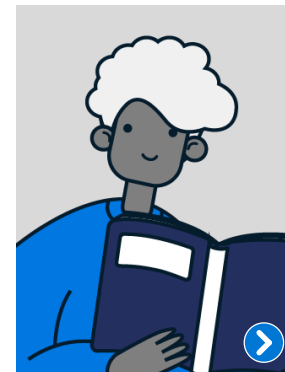
Version 2 as of July 2020

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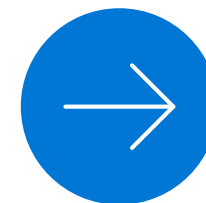
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01

Introduction

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→   The focus of this chapter is on organizing for the response

→   How can this chapter be used?

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MAIN MENU

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# Context, objectives, structure of this document

Context

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
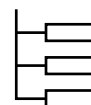
Structure

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

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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

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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

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5

Remediation

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

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6

Hybrid learning

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

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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

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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 plan against the checklist to understand which actions can be taken to address the gaps and how to organize for the response
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

In a rush? Check out these selected pages for a quick look
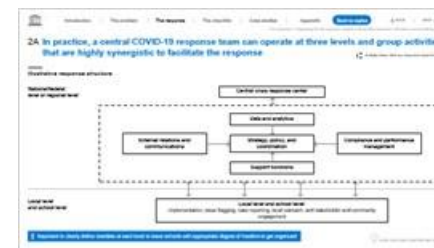
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Executive summary (1/2)

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

READ MORE

02

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
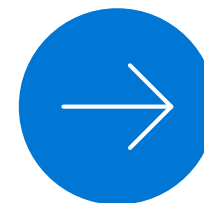
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Definition of **organizing for the response**

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

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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

Teachers and other school staff 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
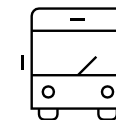
Supporting infrastructure such as transportation or catering services **may lack readiness or resources to follow the additional safeguards mandated**

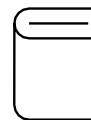# … that will presumably require schools to deliver in the face of significant challenges

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

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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

03

READ
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The response

Framework and practices

→ Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach

   → Mandate and role

   → Structure and operating model

   → Functions and capabilities

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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

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Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach

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1A **The response may require a series of potential activities and decisions (1/2)**

(E) (H) Activity requires coordination with departments of health or economics

NOT EXHAUSTIVE

Activities

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

(E) 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

(H) 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

(E) (H) Decide which segments of students should be readmitted in person

(H) Issue guidance to schools on safe reopening (including health protocols, identifying potential COVID-19 cases, physical distancing measures)

Communicate with families, students, and schools on a regular basis

Monitor situation closely through local authorities and schools

(E) Ensure supply chain readiness for materials needed (e.g., masks, learning materials, posters)

Re-enrolment

(E) 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

(E) Prepare for rollout by understanding key requirements for operationalization (e.g., 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)

Provide 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

(E) 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?

(H) When should schools be reopened and under what conditions?

(H) Who should schools reopen for (e.g., student segments)?

(H) 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-enroled?

Which gaps should one remediate or deprioritize?

When and how should these gaps be filled?

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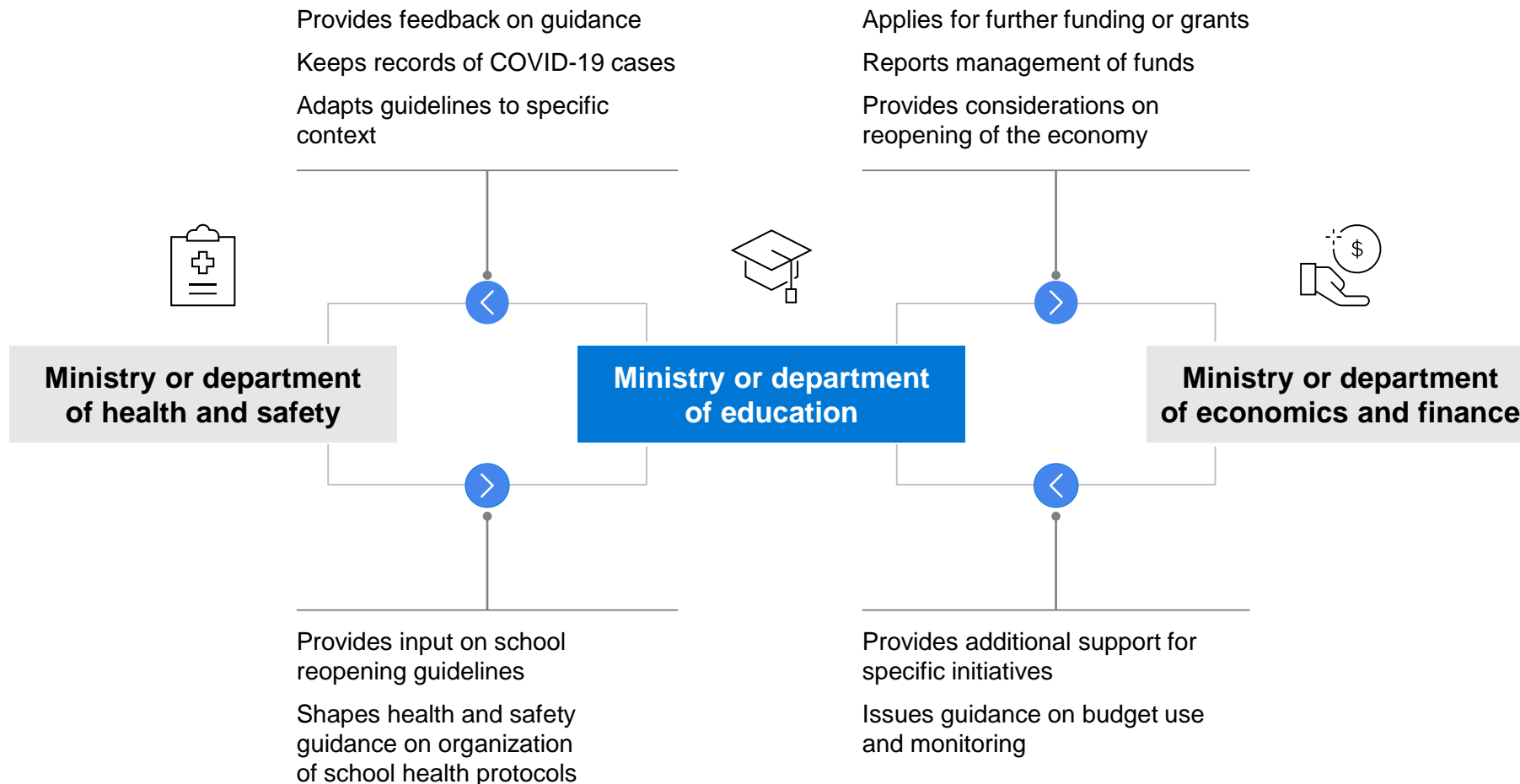# 1A **The response may require a series of potential activities and decisions (2/2)**

E H Activity requires coordination with departments of health or economics

	Resurgence planning	**Hybrid learning**	**Recommitment and reform**	**Cross-cutting**
Activities	**E H** Determine what the response will require in terms of infrastructure, human resources, budget, etc.	Assess student needs for remote and in-person learning	Collect feedback from different levels of the system and key stakeholders to understand what should be changed or kept	**H** Issue key guidance on topics that should be or could be standardized (e.g., health protocols, reopening guidance)
	E Map out potential avenues to plan for surge capacities, including maximizing current capacity, innovating, or collaborating with partners	Assess capabilities and effectiveness of current remote learning solutions	Ensure the availability of a continuous feedback mechanism	**E H** 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)
	E Activate necessary stakeholders and partners to ensure feasibility (e.g., ministry of finance, NGOs)	**E** Understand teacher capacity, availability of physical space, flexibility of support levers (e.g., cleaning)	Share reform input with policy makers	
	Create mechanism of feedback to ensure continuous relevance	**E** Determine which student segments should be prioritized for return to school		Collect data and make it available to lower levels to support decision making
	Closely monitor changes in the response's needs and anticipate challenges	Determine degree of prioritization of vulnerable students		Build monitoring and adjustment mechanism to collect feedback and ensure the response is continuously relevant
	Issue guidance to other layers of the educational system (including schools) to identify local resurgence strategies	Determine the split between remote and in-person learning across grades and subjects		Communicate with parents, families, and students to keep them informed about the development of the situation
		Develop standardized guidance on hybrid learning protocols for schools and teachers (including shift system, teacher allocation model)		
		Put in place feedback mechanism and evaluation of hybrid learning experience to continuously adjust the approach		
Decisions	**E** What needs should one plan for?	How will subjects and activities be split between learning methods (remote vs. in person)?		
	When does the added capacity need to be ready?	How can one re-organize children's time and teachers' allocation accordingly?		

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)

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1B **Some activities and decisions will require continuous coordination across departments**

❯ Input   ☐ Deep dive on the next page

Provides feedback on guidance

Keeps records of COVID-19 cases

Adapts guidelines to specific context

Applies for further funding or grants

Reports management of funds

Provides considerations on reopening of the economy

Ministry or department of health and safety

Ministry or department of education

Ministry or department of economics and finance

Provides input on school reopening guidelines

Shapes health and safety guidance on organization of school health protocols

Provides additional support for specific initiatives

Issues guidance on budget use and monitoring

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)

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1C Other activities and decisions will be spread within the educational system and cascaded through three main layers, which may vary across countries

Responsibilities[1]

Central administration

Includes federal policymakers or ministries of education

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 standards[1]

Middle layer[2]

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

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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

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2A The organization of the response should fulfil four key roles

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
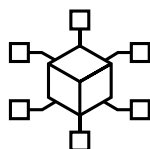
Provide shared services for the educational system

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
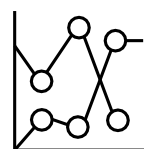
Monitor performance, accountability and steer the response

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

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

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2A How these roles will be structured in the response will depend on guiding principles, applicable regardless of the system type

Consider centralizing what can benefit from a coordinated approach

Centralize activities requiring

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

Consider decentralizing what can benefit from a bottom-up or tailored approach

Implementation

Issue flagging

Case reporting

Local outreach and stakeholder engagement

At a central level, group activities with strong synergies

Strategy, policy, and coordination

Communication and external relations

Support functions (e.g., legal, supply chain)

Data and analytics

Compliance and performance management

Build on what you have

Prioritize the use of existing structures to expedite the response

Leverage capabilities from existing department, units, and talent

Balance organizing an efficient and structured response and safeguarding existing processes

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2A Across countries, a wide range of formats are being implemented from decentralized to centralized

Centralized **Decentralized**

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

Core guidelines deployed centrally, with the flexibility left to the regions or schools to detail and adapt as per local conditions

Region-specific, decentralized reopening plans, health protocols, and vetting processes developed by the relevant authorities (e.g., taskforces, municipalities, nerve centre)

Decision-making based on intensity of situation in specific location (but in close coordination with centre to maintain consistency in direction)

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"

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

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

In Denmark, 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

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

In Viet Nam, local municipal authorities and city education departments decide how long local schools should be closed based on the situation in their 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

In Japan, decisions regarding school closures are entirely decentralized and made at the school district level (Prefectures) based on the situation in these areas

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

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2A Among these, centralized structures or "nerve centres" have potential benefits when navigating novel, complex needs at high velocity
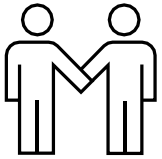
Clear responsibilities via restructured organizations or dedicated teams
- Reorganized to meet new needs – outside of old reporting lines
- Explicit decision-making authority, roles, responsibilities
- Milestones for each function or department (dates, owners, results)

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)

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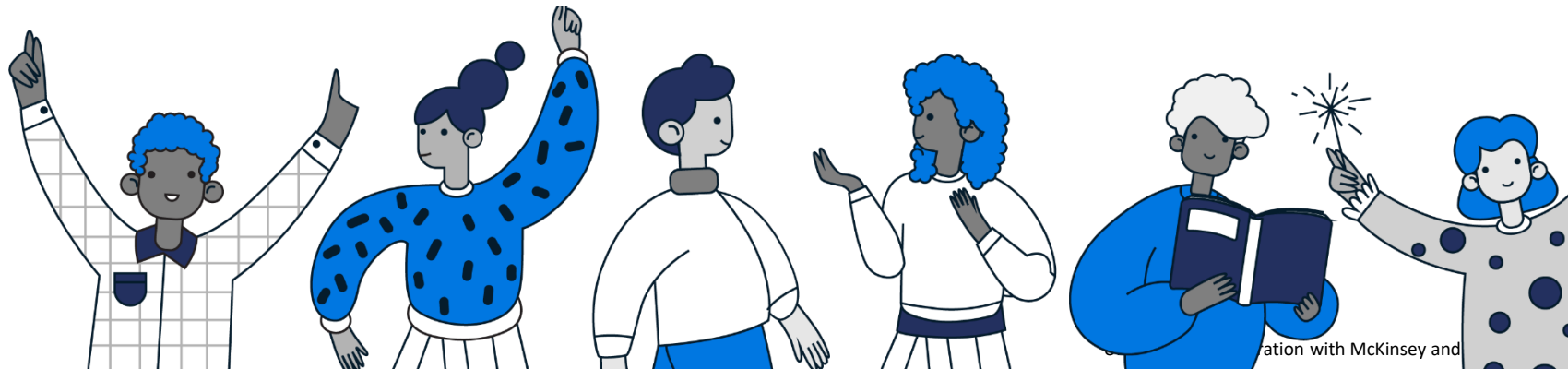
2A Lessons from the past also show reopening is more effective when dedicated teams enable structured, well-integrated, and focused efforts

Case examples

Responsibilities

Benefits seen

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

Three working groups formed[1], 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)

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**

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

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

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

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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

⬚ Activity deep dive by response topic follows

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
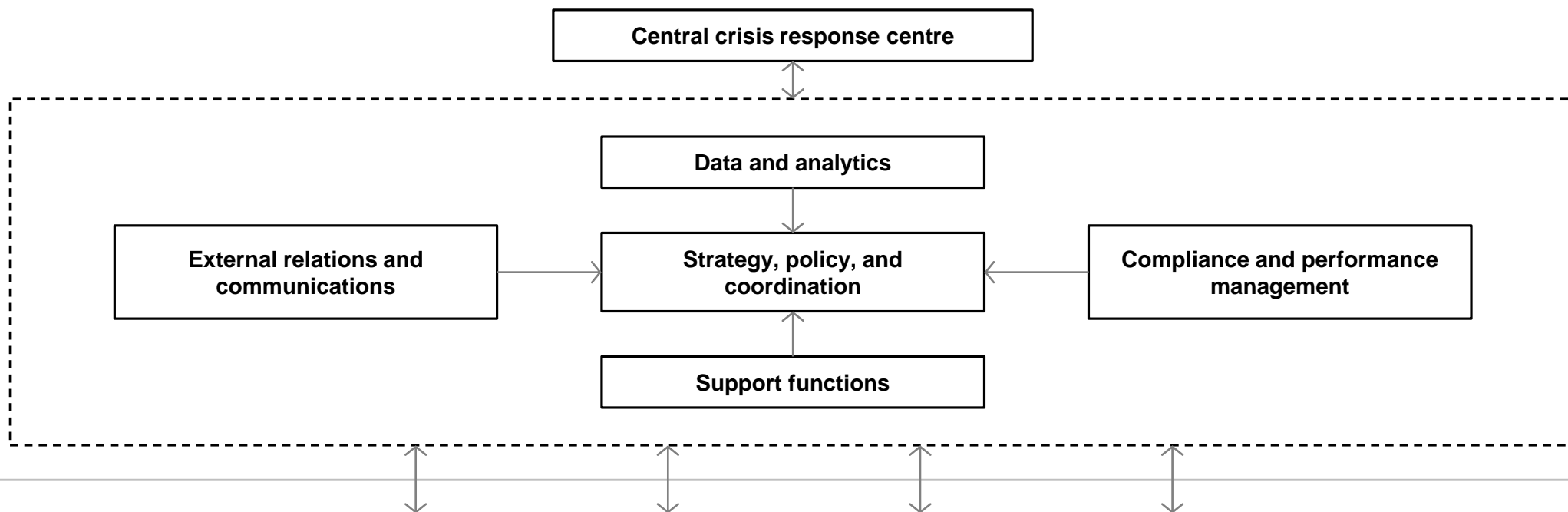
Local level and school level

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 appropriate degree of freedom to get organized

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2A Each unit will have specific response activities which can be mapped across chapters (1/2)

NOT EXHAUSTIVE

Topics/chapters	Strategy, policy, and coordination	Data and analytics	External relations and communication	Compliance and performance management	Support functions
Remote learning	• Design a strategy for remote teaching, practice, and feedback across ages and subjects	• Determine current state of digital infrastructure, budget, capabilities • Provide data on potential solutions • Analyze the privacy risks associated with remote learning solutions	• Communicate guidance to teachers, families, and students	• Ensure feedback loop, monitoring, and improvement through KPIs • Provide guidance on risks related to data privacy regarding certain solutions	• Develop a mix of remote learning solutions across the learning value chain • Develop a training for teachers • Make remote learning solutions accessible to students
Remote learning platforms	• Determine which needs and criteria a remote learning platform should fulfill • Identify a shortlist of platforms able to suit this purpose • Decide on remote learning platform(s)	• Analyze the privacy risks associated with remote learning solutions • Collect data on student performance	• Engage experts on platforms, communicate to families, etc.	• Ensure monitoring and improvement processes are in place • Provide guidance on risks related to data privacy regarding certain solutions	• Align on timeline and method of rollout
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 • Agree on a series of criteria and constraints to ensure that schools reopen safely • Decide on which segments of students should be readmitted in person	• Collect data on health KPIs, satisfaction, learning, financing, etc.	• Liaise closely with health and safety departments to surveil epidemiological conditions • Issue guidance to schools on safe reopening (including health protocols, identifying potential COVID-19 cases, physical distancing measures), learning, wellbeing etc. • Communicate with families, students, and schools on a regular basis	• Monitor the situation closely through local authorities and schools • Ensure that vulnerable students are included and have access to education	• 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 • Evaluate which strategies are most appropriate based on complexity and relevance • Choose re-enrolment interventions	• Track the progress of the program and adjust accordingly	• Communicate with relevant stakeholders (including families, religious leaders, community leaders) • Provide guidance to headmasters, schools, and teachers on protocols to address risk of dropout	• Set up a feedback mechanism to ensure continuous relevance	• Prepare for rollout by understanding key requirements for operationalization (e.g., budget, human resources) • Activate response system to roll out interventions (e.g., presidential awareness campaign)

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2A Each unit will have specific response activities which can be mapped across chapters (2/2)

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Topics/chapters	Strategy, policy, and coordination	Data and analytics	External relations and communication	Compliance and performance management	Support functions
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

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2B 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.)

Functional experts (communication, stakeholder engagement, 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

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
- 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

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2C Both the nerve centre and the response as a whole can apply seven principles, which lead the path to an agile way of working

🔵 Applicable for the entire response system   🔵 Applicable for the leading nerve centre

1 Focus on users: students, teachers, and families
The whole response works for and with the user (e.g., teachers, students, families) throughout the process

2 Continuous improvement through feedback
The team continuously revises ways of working based on feedback from users

3 Entire response lifecycle focus
The response covers all activities from project management to expertise and analytics

4 Cross-functional teams
The team includes all skills needed to reach the common goal with rare expertise that can be sourced externally in other teams

5 Connected teams
All members are connected, collaborating closely, communicating openly, fostering transparency

6 Work in short blocks of time
Work is broken down into chunks of small "sprints" to focus teams on delivering specific outcomes

7 Stable and continuous team
Team members dedicate 100% of their time, working towards a common purpose/goal, with the same team members from start to finish

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

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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

CLICK EACH TOPIC TO VIEW CONTENT

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3 Six key capabilities should be set up for a successful organization of the response

DETAILS FOLLOW

3A Decide systemically

Predefined protocols and decision-making processes to ensure consistency and efficiency

LEARN MORE +

3B Be data-driven

Effective data and monitoring systems to track implementation of health measures and overall sentiment

LEARN MORE +

3C Liaise well with partners

Strong relationships to coordinate and share capabilities at policy and operational levels

LEARN MORE +

3D Support to deliver

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

LEARN MORE +

3E Communicate often

Clear, consistent communication with important stakeholder groups

LEARN MORE +

3F Monitor performance and compliance

Monitoring performance and compliance with established protocols can help in resolving issues

LEARN MORE +

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3 The dedicated team supporting leadership at each level – such as the 'nerve centre' – should have clear functions and roles

NOT EXHAUSTIVE

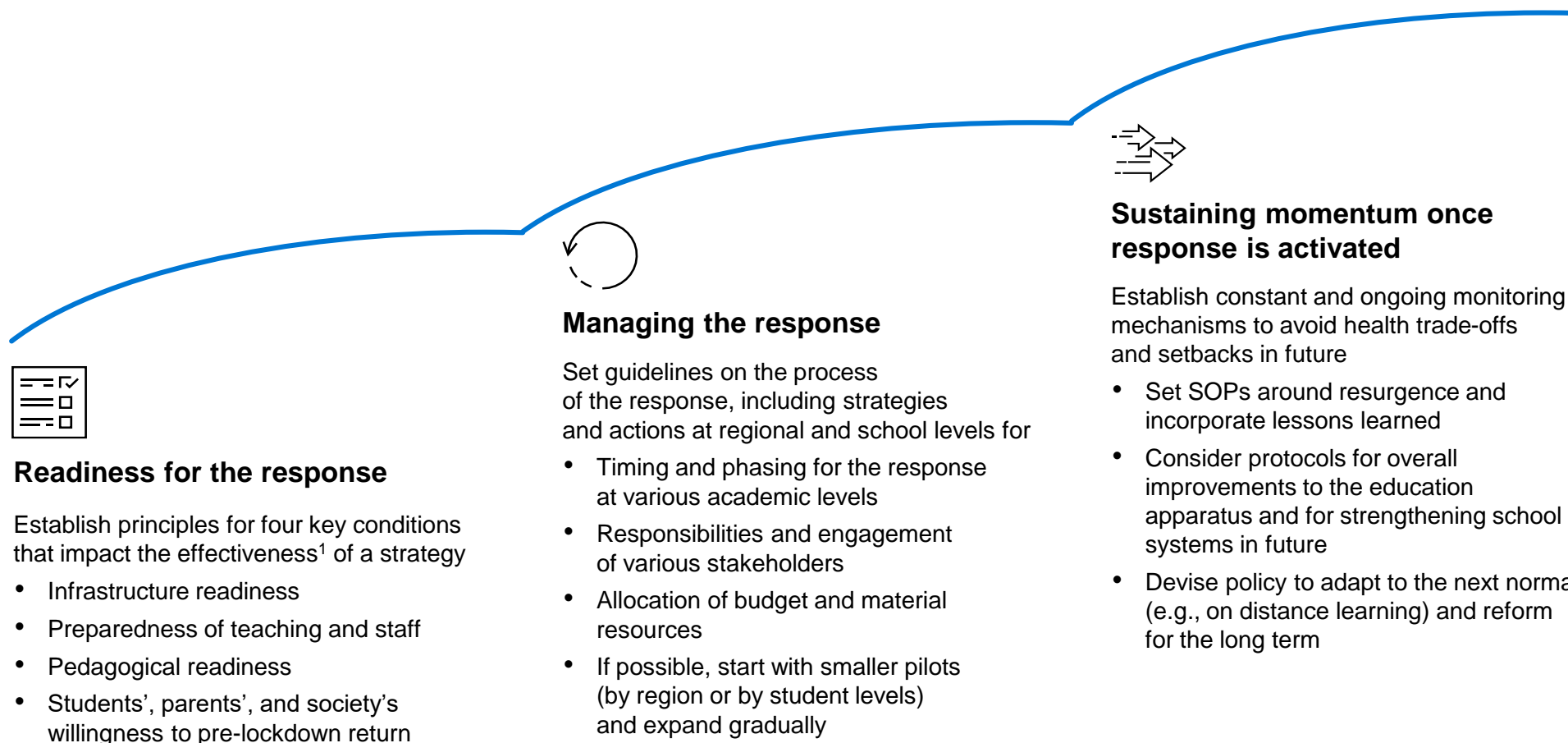| Functionality required	Role and responsibilities of the regional/district nerve centre
Establish clear protocols and decision-making processes	Conduct scenario planning at district/regional level and establish activation protocols based on specific scenarios and associated metrics Set up guidelines on assessments, school hours, hybrid vs. in-school learning, training, procurement, etc.
Gather data and monitor measures	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
Liaise between the center, schools, and other entities	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
Support for operational and infrastructure readiness	Allocate resources for infrastructure readiness, e.g., make-shift gymnasiums or event halls for classes 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
Engage stakeholders consistently with clear communication	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
Monitor compliance and performance	Monitor schools reopening process, day-to-day operations, and regulate implementation of protocols Ensure that schools comply with national guidelines and meet target KPIs and report lack of compliance Help specific schools or areas to resolve issues being faced specific to their situations

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3A Protocols for systemic decision-making can be devised against three horizons around response

DECIDE SYSTEMICALLY

Readiness for the response

Establish principles for four key conditions that impact the effectiveness[1] of a strategy

- Infrastructure readiness
- Preparedness of teaching and staff
- Pedagogical readiness
- Students', parents', and society's willingness to pre-lockdown return

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

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

See Chapter 6 Resurgence Planning for additional detail

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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3B **A centralized data collection capability to analyze key indicators can support effective decision-making**

BE DATA DRIVEN

NOT EXHAUSTIVE

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

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3B Metrics that are relevant to the region can be chosen against each segment to track successful implementation

BE DATA DRIVEN

PRELIMINARY

■ Selected school/district ● National average 1 = Needs improvement 2 = Emerging 3 = Established 4 = Exceptional

Size of gap[1] ■ Small gaps (<.5) ■ Medium gap (≥.5, <1.0) ■ Large gaps (≥1.0, <1.5) ■ Very large gaps (≥1.5)

Illustrative dashboard at school level

			Gap[1]	1	2	3	4
Health and safety Compliance to national health guidelines	**Preventive measures**	Protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves, hand sanitizers) daily coverage per school	0.93				
		Daily use of protective equipment	1.04				
		Number of reported cases of insufficient physical distancing (i.e., 6 feet apart)/day	0.86				
		Daily frequency of classroom sanitization	0.86				
	Diagnostic measures	Diagnostic test/thermometer daily coverage per school	0.96				
		Number of reported cases with temperature above set threshold[3]	0.86				
Re-enrolment Minimal attendance rate[2]	**Diagnostic measures**	Pupils' continuous attendance rate[4]	1.11				
		Teachers' continuous attendance rate[4]	1.00				
		Support continuous staff attendance rate[4]	0.89				
Academic performance Student assessments	**Diagnostic measures**	Performance gap per student pre- and post- quarantine	0.70				
		% of students at risk	0.90				
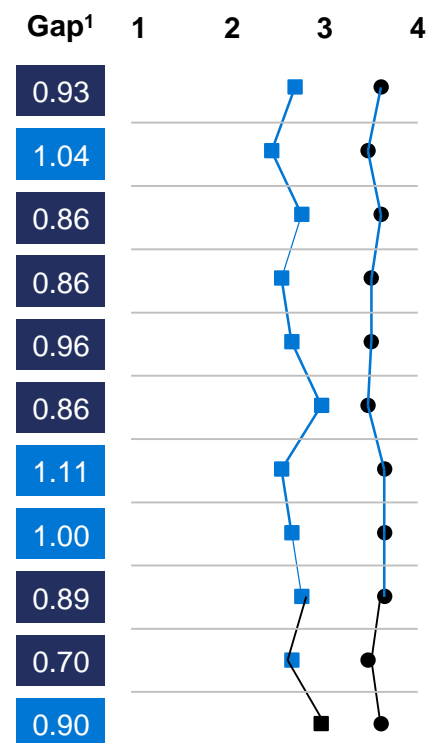
To monitor successful implementation, a **set of indicators needs to be chosen.** These can be both process-oriented (e.g., use of protective equipment) or outcome-oriented (e.g., quantities of protective equipment available)

Monitoring of the chosen indicators can be done relative to previous performance, required performance, or peer benchmarking

Additional segments to analyze can include: remote learning access, wellbeing and protection, financing

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

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3B A suite of digital tools is being used by countries to help collect timely and accurate data for analysis during reopening

BE DATA DRIVEN

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

Denmark, the first country to reopen schools in Europe has leveraged digital solutions to collect data
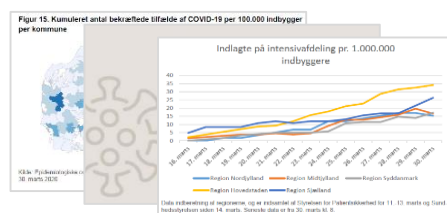
Online weekly digital questionnaire asking citizens about health, e.g., symptoms, recovery time, with a secured login system that was previously used for banking
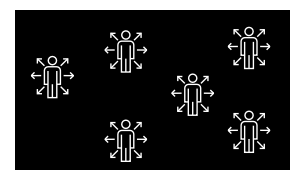
Bluetooth-enabled phone app for decentralized contact tracing to detect 1-2 meters of proximity with others that have also enabled the app's location service

Norway is using a range of data from various sources to develop situational awareness and forecasting models for COVID-19
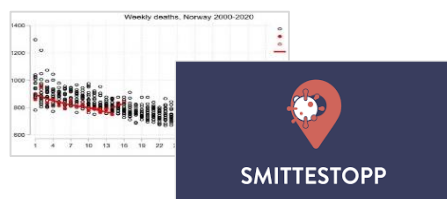
State's coronavirus tracker app "Smittestopp" uses GPS and Bluetooth to dispatch anonymized data about movement patterns to Norwegian Institute of Public Health for effective control measures
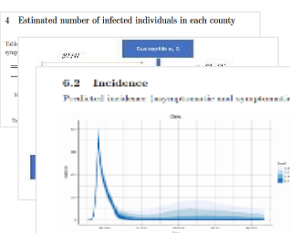
Tracking data and testing results used to develop sophisticated analytics models to predict incidence, susceptibility and recovery by county and region

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.

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

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

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The response > Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach > Functions and capabilities

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

PRELIMINARY

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
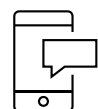
Media

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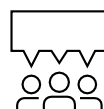
Society

Ensure input and opinions from a diverse mix of public stakeholders is considered, e.g., by consulting with parent and teacher associations

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The response > Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach > Functions and capabilities

3D Additional capabilities needed can be provided by supporting functions to enable schools to deliver on COVID-19-specific challenges

SUPPORT TO DELIVER

Support needed	Challenges	Potential role of the nerve centre
Operations (including transportation, food services, procurement, distribution)	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 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)	On a regular basis, determine what portion of supply can be ensured through normal sourcing channels and at which speed Set up COVID-19-specific sourcing protocols for alternative procurement options, where supply is threatened at the region/district level Manage allocation between schools and geographies based on predefined criteria (e.g., size of school by no. of students)
Information technology	Communication to stakeholders, tracking, coordination, and monitoring of efforts will require upgrades to IT tools and platforms IT stability and cybersecurity will need to be ensured during partial reopening to enable hybrid learning programs where applicable	Help schools navigate through a suite of available remote learning applications to select those that fit needs and constraints Ensure availability and stability of appropriate VC systems and platforms Set up online portals to facilitate communication between various stakeholders and the platform for data collection and reporting dashboards
Finance and budgeting	School budgets will likely be tighter Conversely, COVID-19 response may require human and material resources which were not budgeted Additional financial needs may differ from one school to another	Set a budget line and prioritize initiatives in coordination with Strategy Assess the financial impact of the COVID-19 response in detail for schools in district/region Secure and manage fund allocation between schools and geographies dynamically based on pre-defined criteria (e.g., size of school by no. of students) and engage private sector where necessary
Capability building	New health measures and guidelines may not be straightforward for schools to apply or easily adopted New capabilities might be required, e.g., mental health training for teachers or on remote learning tools for parents	Provide tools and resources to schools for ease in implementation (especially guidance regarding social distancing guidelines) Impart regular trainings to teachers, school staff, and students on correct ways of adherence to new measures Support teachers on technical aspects of digital teaching material creation for hybrid learning

CONTINUE READING ❯

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The response > Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach > Functions and capabilities

3D Examples of actions taken in various countries to support school operations during reopening

SUPPORT TO DELIVER

AS OF JULY 2020

Support area	Country	Examples of actions to provide support to schools
Procurement, stockpiling, and distribution of PPEs	**Nigeria**	Nigeria's government partners with FMN Group to procure 331,000 PPE kits, 35,000 lab testing kits, among others
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

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

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

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3E Regular communication with key stakeholders is critical to raising awareness, reaching consensus, and building trust around decisions taken

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

CONTINUE READING ›

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The response > Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach > Functions and capabilities

3E **Case examples of communication methods being adopted**   NOT EXHAUSTIVE
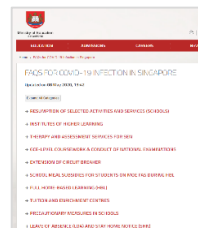
COMMUNICATE OFTEN

Country	Examples of communication media

Singapore

 AskJamie Chatbot to address queries related to COVID-19 for parents and citizens

 Detailed guidelines and FAQs for all K12 levels

 Official Gov.sg WhatsApp Account — Provides citizens with timely and trusted updates on the COVID-19 situation; is available in four languages, and has been optimized to send multi-lingual messages to all subscribers within 30 minutes

Denmark

 Regularly updated guidelines and FAQs with feedback from parents and schools incorporated daily

Standardized mandatory instruction posters deployed at all schools

Handbook of measures and instructions by segment and level
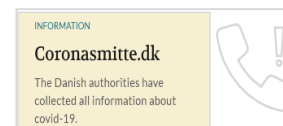
State hotline to answer questions about the virus and health measures, by phone or chat in 25 languages (ensuring immigrants are covered)

Reassurance letters from school principals to parents, right after Prime Minister's address with a clear plan to address concerns on children's health and safety

Brazil

Coronazap online chat function of the Brazilian government on WhatsApp to answer questions on contagion, symptoms etc.

United Arab Emirates
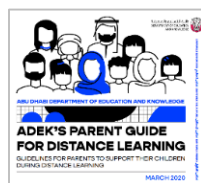
 Information for parents' support for hybrid and distance learning that includes checklists of key questions to ask schools, recommended supplies to buy for learning at home, and tips for working parents to be better prepared to manage distance learning

 Regular circulars and information guides issued to school principals and administrators for various systems

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

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

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The response > Organizing for the response requires a three-step approach > Functions and capabilities

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

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04

READ
MORE →

The checklist

Summary of actions

→ Based on the framework, countries can tactically implement organization through three action checklists

→ Mandate and role

→ Structure and operating model

→ Functions and capabilities

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MAIN MENU ⌂

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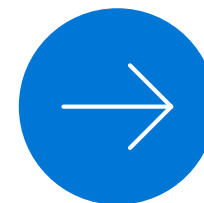
Based on the framework, countries can tactically implement organization through three action checklists

01

Mandate and role

GO TO CHECKLIST

02

Structure and operating model

GO TO CHECKLIST

03

Functions and capabilities

GO TO CHECKLIST

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The checklist > Three action checklists > Mandate and role

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	Responsible	Focal point	Time frame
1A Identify the key decisions and activities needed for a smooth implementation of the response			
☐ Map out and list which topics the educational response is prioritizing (e.g., re-enrollment, remediation, reopening)			
☐ Engage key stakeholders in each of these fields to garner input on which activities and decisions are needed from the structure			
☐ 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			
1B Understand what coordination is required across ministries and partners (horizontally)			
☐ 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)			
1C Identify, within the educational system, how responsibilities will be distributed across levels (horizontally)			
☐ Distribute remaining responsibilities across the layers of the educational system, taking into account the specificities of the country			
☐ Based on the shortlisted activities and decisions that should be taken on by organizing structure, define a role, mandate, and vision for the structure			
☐ Check with relevant stakeholders in the fields and layers of the response that no key decision or activity has been forgotten			

2 **Agree on the structure and operating model of the organization of the response**

To be adapted and populated by the entity concerned

Action	Responsible	Focal point	Time frame
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			
☐ 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)			
☐ Define the roles that the organizational structure needs to fulfill (e.g., support policy-making, monitor, and steer the response)			
☐ 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)			
☐ Discuss series of available options for a structure: from entirely embedded in current system to entirely distinct, from centralized to decentralized			
☐ Align on structure design and split of responsibilities across levels and units			
2B Choose and implement a talent strategy			
☐ Map out which capabilities will be needed in the structure, including projected managers, experts, data analysts			
☐ Define profiles for the roles needed, and source candidates for the structure as relevant			
☐ Outsource capabilities that cannot be found within the organization			
2C Set up agile working model			
☐ Choose principles of agile that would make the nerve centre and the system more efficient			
☐ Communicate principles across the system and the nerve centre			

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The checklist > Three action checklists > Functions and capabilities

3 Prepare and launch key functions and capabilities to enable to response to be operational

To be adapted and populated by the entity concerned

Action	Responsible	Focal point	Time frame
3A-3F **Set up capabilities and operate key functions**			
☐ Discuss and agree on which key functions the structure should fulfill			
☐ Put in place strong decision-making protocols (e.g., criteria for school reopening, standard operating procedures, timing, and phasing)			
☐ 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)			
☐ Set up digital tools to collect timely and accurate data for analysis			
☐ Liaise with partners both at the policy and operational level (including governments, education ministry, third parties, media, civil society)			
☐ 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			
☐ Regularly communicate with stakeholders to raise awareness, reach consensus, and build trust (decide on communication target, channel, content, and timeline)			
☐ Monitor performance and compliance across branches of the response (including feedback on the delivery of the plan, and the impact of the plan)			

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05

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Case studies

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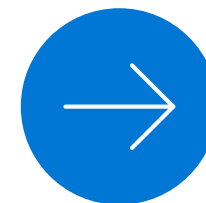
→ Countries have implemented organizational practices during COVID-19 and other crises

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

→ Case studies from other crises: Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Liberia

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MAIN MENU

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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

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

1 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)

AS OF JULY 2020

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

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

1 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)

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■ Deep-dive follows

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
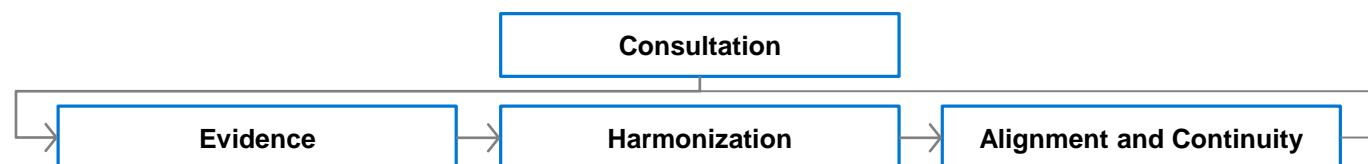
Structure and Operating model

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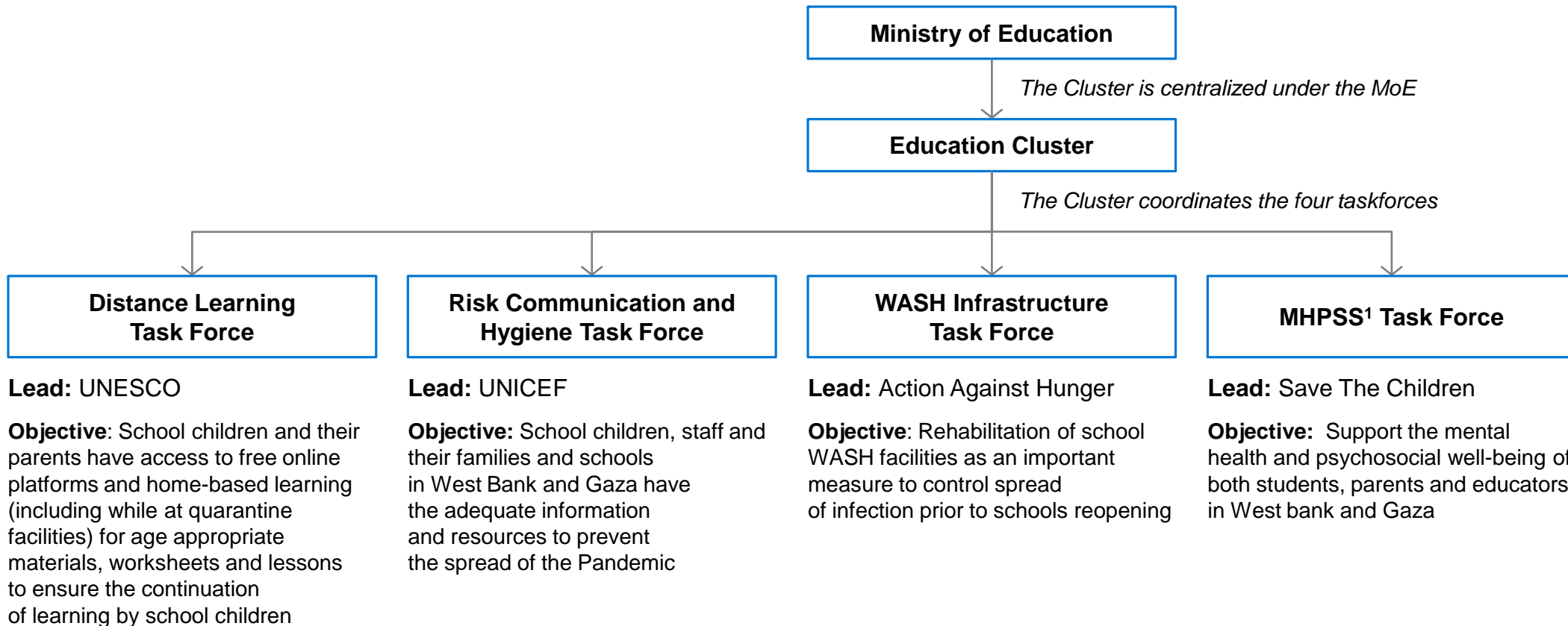
- **Consultation –** The strategy was developed through a consultative process facilitated by the cluster involving all key education stakeholders, including the MoE, Donors, UNRWA, and international and local cluster and sector partners

- **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.

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              ┌──────────────────┐
              │  Consultation    │
              └──────────────────┘
┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Evidence │ → │ Harmonization│ → │ Alignment and Continuity │
└──────────┘   └──────────────┘   └─────────────────────────┘
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Source: Expert Interview, aa.com, ReliefWeb.Int, Ministry of Education National Response Plan for COVID-19, Education Cluster Report 2020, COVID-19 response education cluster presentation

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

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)

AS OF JULY 2020

Ministry of Education

The Cluster is centralized under the MoE

Education Cluster

The Cluster coordinates the four taskforces

Distance Learning Task Force	**Risk Communication and Hygiene Task Force**	**WASH Infrastructure Task Force**	**MHPSS[1] Task Force**
Lead: UNESCO	**Lead:** UNICEF	**Lead:** Action Against Hunger	**Lead:** Save The Children
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	**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	**Objective**: Rehabilitation of school WASH facilities as an important measure to control spread of infection prior to schools reopening	**Objective:** Support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of both students, parents and educators in West bank and Gaza

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

1 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Source: Expert Interview, aa.com, ReliefWeb.Int, , Ministry of Education National Response Plan for COVID-19, Education Cluster Report 2020, COVID-19 response education cluster presentation

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

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

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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)

Source: Expert Interview, OCHA, aa.com, ReliefWeb.Int, , Ministry of Education National Response Plan for COVID-19, Education Cluster Report 2020, COVID-19 response education cluster presentation

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

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

AS OF JULY 2020

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

Source: Expert interview

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

1 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)

AS OF JULY 2020

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

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

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

Deep-dive follows

AS OF JULY 2020

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 Natonal 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.

Source: Expert interview

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1 DEEP DIVE: The structure of the response in Malaysia was highly centralized (3/5)

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National level

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

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)

Other ministries

Ministry of Health

Other ministries set up their own COVID-19 taskforces

Response by taskforce in each ministry on SOPs is endorsed by NSC

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

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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1 This structure provided a number of shared services to the response, including communication, outreach, reporting, and monitoring

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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)

Source: Expert interview, https://educationmalaysia.gov.my/coronavirus/, Ministry of education Malaysia

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

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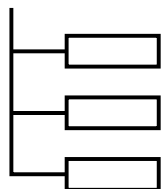
Set up a flexible structure

- 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
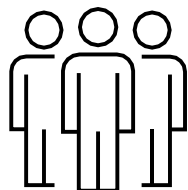
Consult stakeholders throughout the process

Throughout the planning and organization process, the key decisions made were informed by its users through stakeholder consultation
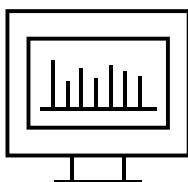
Set up a strong data system

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

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

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

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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
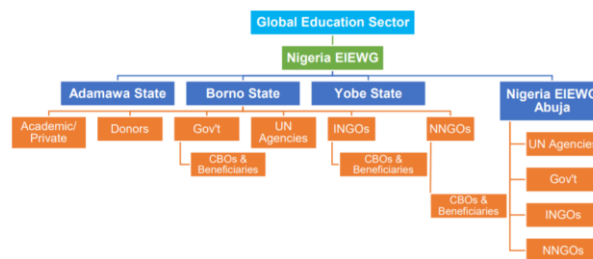- One Information Management Officer from UNICEF

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

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1 The region of Saskatchewan in Canada set up a regional taskforce to effectively produce guide and communicate with parents, students, and teachers

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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

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

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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

3 **Document all COVID-19-related matters,** lessons learnt, and recommendations for future preparedness

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

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Case studies > COVID-19 case studies

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**

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

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Case studies > Case studies from other crises

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$ 7million grants from GPE were approved in June 2020

Source: World Bank; Global Partnership for Education; UNICEF; The BMJ

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Case studies > Case studies from other crises

2 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

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Case studies > Case studies from other crises

2 Liberia and UNICEF organized a Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy Program led by four staff members and involving a core team of partners

Approach

The program was promoted in the **context of the government of Liberia's Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation** 2013-2030

Composition

Coordinated by a **central four-member UNICEF team** (the program manager, M&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)

Mandate

The goal of the program in Liberia was to focused on achieving five key outcomes

1. **Increase inclusion of education into peacebuilding and** conflict reduction policies, analyses, and implementation

2. Increase institutional capacities to **supply conflict-sensitive education**

3. Increase the capacities of children, parents, teachers, and other duty-bearers to **prevent, reduce, and cope with conflict and promote peace**

4. **Increase access to quality and relevant conflict-sensitive education** that contributes to peace

5. **Contribute to the generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming related to education,** conflict, and peacebuilding

06

Appendix

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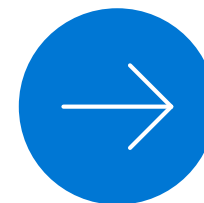
→   Organizing for the response additional external resources

→   Glossary of terms

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MAIN MENU

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Organizing for the response additional external resources

Resource type ❯ Article or report ❯ Compilation of resources ❯ Guide or toolkit ❯ Materials ❯ Data

Title	Description	Country	Date	Source and link
A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020	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	Global	2020	OECD
COVID-19 preparedness rubric	The crisis preparedness rubric is a tool used by schools to assess their preparedness in responding to a crisis	Global/developed countries	2020	Teacher Empowerment for School Transformation
Coordinate, plan, and communicate	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	Global	2020	International Institute for Educational Planning; UNESCO
State leader survey on reopening schools	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	US	05/2020	Excelined
Education in a post-COVID world: nine ideas for public action	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	Global	22/06/2020	UNESCO; Futures of Education
How Should Education Leaders Prepare for Reentry and Beyond?	This report offers recommendations in 4 key areas: time, talent, socio- emotional wellness and skills, academic plan	US	05/2020	Chiefs for Change
How to Reopen Schools: A 10-Point Plan Putting Equity at the Center	Based on insights and resources from practitioners and experts, the authors created this 10-point plan to help educators reimagine and strengthen systems	US	29/04/2020	Getting Smart
Effective leadership in crisis: what it takes for ministries of education	This article describes 6 actions that governments can take to be more effective in a crisis	Global	16/05/2020	UNESCO, IIEP
Framework for reopening schools	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	Global	06/2020	UNESCO, UNICEF, The World Bank, World Food Programme

Glossary of terms
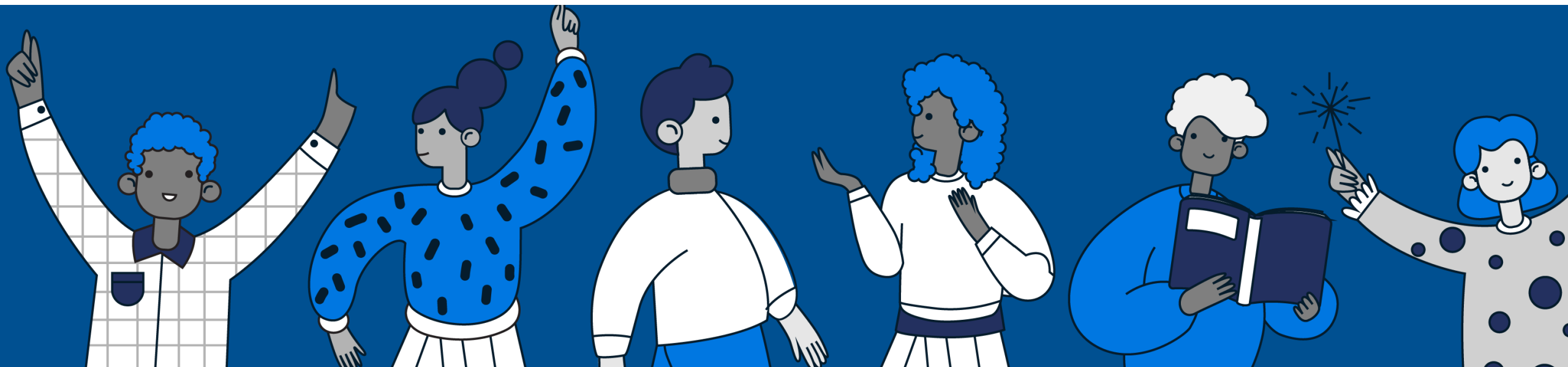
01

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

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