UNICEF's education response to COVID-19

Linda Jones, Senior Education Advisor | July 2020

Impact of school closures on children and learning

1. **Learning crisis** *deepening…*

2. Limited access for **the most marginalized**

3. **More than a health crisis:** learning, well-being and safety at risk

UNICEF's global programmatic response key intervention areas

1 Response coordination, efficient delivery and real-time monitoring

2 Safe school operations and risk communication

3 CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

4 Scaling-up psychosocial, health, WASH and nutrition services

5 Opening up better schools

6 Disseminating evidence of what works

Guidance on COVID-19 Prevention & Control in Schools

✓ Basic facts

✓ Key messages and actions

✓ Environmental health focus

✓ Engages caregivers & children

✓ Suggestions for age-specific educational activities

GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN SCHOOLS

March 2020

unicef 🄯   World Health Organization   +CIFRC

Supplemental guidance

Operations
- ✓ Checklist - environmental health for schools
- ○ 2 pager – cleaning and disinfecting schools, with supply list
- ○ 2 pager – contextualizing + implementing guidance for schools
- ○ WASH & IPC materials, including for low-resource contexts

Learning
- ○ 2 pager – accelerated education
- ○ 2 pager – child friendly COVID-19 materials for integration into lessons

Inclusion & protection
- ✓ Checklist – supporting students for parents/caregivers
- ✓ Checklist – caring for self and others for students
- ○ 2 pager – resources for teaching and engaging specific populations
- ○ 2 pagers – MHPSS and CP considerations

Framework for reopening schools

June, 2020

Global school closures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic present an unprecedented risk to children's education, protection and wellbeing. The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recently called on governments and donors to prioritize education for all children, including the most marginalized, and the Global Education Coalition was established to support governments in strengthening distance learning and facilitating the reopening of schools.

While we do not yet have enough evidence to measure the effect of school closures on the risk of disease transmission, the adverse effects of school closures on children's safety, wellbeing and learning are well documented. Interrupting education services also has serious, long-term consequences for economies and societies such as increased inequality, poorer health outcomes, and reduced social cohesion. In many countries, data on virus prevalence is incomplete and decision makers will need to make their best assessments in a context of incomplete information and uncertainty. National governments and partners must simultaneously work to promote and safeguard every child's right to education, health and safety, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The best interest of the child must be paramount.

Across countries leaders are grappling with difficult and uncertain trade-offs as they consider easing lockdowns. This framework serves to inform the decision-making process on when to reopen schools, support national preparations and guide the implementation process, as part of the overall public health and education planning processes. Contextualization and continuous adaptation are necessary in order to respond to local conditions and meet each child's learning, health and safety needs.

The framework serves to **inform the decision-making process** on why, when and how to reopen schools

- ✓ Supports national preparations
- ✓ Guides the implementation process
- ✓ Contributes to overall public health and education planning processes
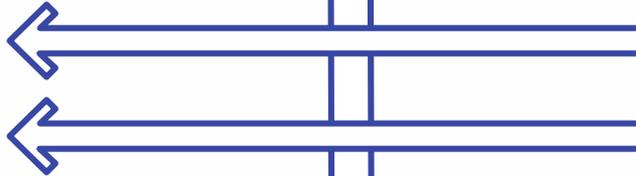
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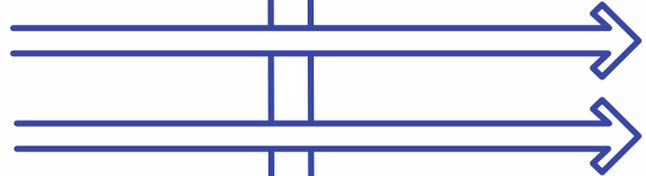
Learning

Including the most marginalized

Wellbeing and protection

Policy

Financing

Reducing volume and proximity

Volume

- Progressive by grade
- Blended learning
- Limited # days per week

Proximity

- Staggered opening/closing
- No large gatherings (assemblies, recess, etc.)
- Eat in classroom

Provide clear national guidance on parameters for decision making on school openings. They may need to be progressive, beginning in areas with the lowest rates of transmission and lowest localized risk.

School openings can also be staged – for example, they could initially be limited to a few days of the week, or only apply to certain grades or levels. National policies should provide clear guidance for sub-national assessment and decision making.

Develop clear and easy-to-understand protocols on physical distancing measures, including prohibiting activities that require large gatherings, staggering the start and close of the school day, staggering feeding times, moving classes to temporary spaces or outdoors, and having school in shifts to reduce class size.

Develop detailed protocols on hygiene measures, including handwashing, respiratory etiquette, use of protective equipment, cleaning procedures for facilities and safe food preparation practices.

Revise personnel and attendance policies with teacher unions to accommodate health-related absences and support remote and blended teaching.

Policies should protect staff, teachers and students who are at high risk due to age or underlying medical conditions, with plans to cover absent teachers and continue remote education to support students unable to attend school, accommodating individual circumstances to the extent possible.

UNICEF is focused on **strengthening schools for the response and beyond**

- Reaching the most marginalized

- All children in school

- Blended and innovative models for learning

- Healthier schools

74% of countries plan to include at least one measure to support the most marginalized….

…. **50%** include actions to support girls

69% are increasing investment in remote learning

77% are implementing measures to support teachers and **75%** are working on mitigation of learning loss

77% countries include at least one measure for children wellbeing and social protection

COVID-19 recovery:
What's next?

Open up better:
Global campaign on school re-opening

- **Reopen better schools** for every child to go (back) to school and learn & to have access to school-based health, hygiene, nutrition and PSS

- **Protect education budget** and secure allocations for most vulnerable

- **Reach out to media** to create momentum and ensure visibility

- **Sensitize public** through outreach and community engagement

Every Child Learns
Education Strategy (2019-2030)

➢ Digital learning
➢ Wellbeing of children
➢ Foundational literacy & numeracy

Resources?

- HAC Ed & CP: **total 2020 requirement of > USD 511 M** (31.5% of the overall appeal of USD 1.6 B)

- UNICEF allocated catalytic funding to **152 countries and territories**

- Flexible funding to manage the education impacts of COVID-19 and to re-open schools with focus on the **humanitarian-development nexus; rapid action at scale**

- Flexible funding is allocated according to **greatest needs**

Key Resources

Guidance on COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools (AR, ENG, FR, SP)

https://www.unicef.org/reports/key-messages-and-actions-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-prevention-and-control-schools

Framework for Reopening Schools (AR, CH, ENG, FR, SP, PO)

https://www.unicef.org/documents/framework-reopening-schools

World Health Organization, Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19 interim guidance: Consideration for Schools

https://www.who.int/publications-detail/considerations-for-school-related-public-health-measures-in-the-context-of-covid-19

Global Education Cluster https://educationcluster.net/COVID19

INEE https://inee.org/collections/coronavirus-covid-19

Thank you

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