



Checklist of key considerations to promote effective and equitable learning recovery



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The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and widened deep inequalities, and it's clear that the most vulnerable have been disproportionately affected by school closures. Girls, those from poor backgrounds, those living in rural areas, children with disabilities, children from ethnic minorities, adolescents and the youngest learners were left behind. The profound levels of learning loss have disproportionately affected the most marginalised children. Countries with longer school closures are mostly countries with lower learning outcomes before COVID-19. A global priority due to the COVID-19 pandemic is to ensure that every girl and boy is sufficiently supported so that they can all return to school. As such, we must do more to support school re-opening and learning recovery with urgent, at-scale action to effectively bring those children who have been left behind back to learning.


The below checklist of key considerations is aligned with the three pillars of the **Framework for Reopening Schools** necessary to support this process:



Checklist of key considerations

 Identifying and reaching the most vulnerable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Know who has been left behind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the Back-to-School process for all children from preschool and upwards, particularly those who do not return in order to understand why and proactively reach out to them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and support children and influential youth networks and young influencers to support their peers to identify/reach those left behind (Scouts Bhutan, Scouts in Mexico, School-based youth champion clubs in Pakistan engaging with OOSC, children participating in the development of COVID response plans in Nepal). • Argentina and Brazil have nationwide programmes which actively searches for out of school children and youth to bring them back to school. Early warning systems to identify students at risk of dropping out, like the one developed in Chile, can help improve student retention.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Understand and address the barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement measures that will be necessary to support and sustain girls’ and other vulnerable groups’ return to quality learning. <p>School-level barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional teaching assistance/tutors as in Botswana and South Africa. • Capacitate teachers with high quality regular professional development on remote learning and digital skills like in Lao PDR and Maldives. • Deliver adequate water, sanitation and hygiene, including menstrual hygiene management, to keep girls in school like in South Sudan and Sri Lanka in the countries’ most marginalised schools. • Distribute learning materials and structured pedagogical guidelines. • Croatia, Germany, Norway, and Denmark include additional provisions for students with disabilities in their reopening guidelines.
		<p>Household-level barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide scholarships or cash transfers as offered in Turkey to refugee learners and ensure amounts factor in the costs of returning to education (in collaboration with social policy actors). • Burkina Faso provided school kits, and meals for the most vulnerable. • Ghana sparked adolescent girls’ participation and interest in STEM, specifically considered the needs of girls, including pregnant and adolescent mothers with flexible, skills development opportunities..
 Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Focus on learning recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every education system must adopt a learning recovery programme, comprised of a mix of evidence-based, contextually appropriate strategies.

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		<p>Diagnose individual learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catching children where they are will effectively enable children to return to school and address their learning recovery journey. • This includes curriculum consolidation. In South Africa, the Government is implementing a three-year curriculum recovery plan with emphasis on the fundamentals, to make up for lost instruction time during the pandemic. • Two guiding principles should be to meet students where they are – so that at any time, they are studying material adjusted to their level – and to cover what they need to know to successfully enter the next grade, as in Sri Lanka. • Assess level of learning when they return and on an ongoing basis providing differentiated support for learners as needed. In Uzbekistan, instruction tailored to students needs is breaking with the “one size fits all tradition.” <p>Offer catch-up learning at scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor catch-up learning programmes (structured pedagogy, small group tutoring and targeted instruction etc.) to bring children back on track. • Expand the time spent on instruction for a determined period of time. The three main ways to expand instructional time includes modifying the school calendar by adjusting start/end days or shortening holidays, offering summer school, and extending the school day or week to cover more hours. • Offer accelerated, bridge and remedial school readiness support for primary school entrants who missed out on preprimary education during COVID closures. • The “Teaching at the Right Level” approach evolved by NGO Pratham has been rigorously studied at scale in Nigeria among other places. Madagascar’s catch-up programme identifies children who have dropped out, after an exam, to evaluate which grade they will reintegrate into; they are supported to learn essential competencies for that grade. • Tutoring schemes are operating at scale in both the United Kingdom and Chile to help students who have fallen behind catch up. In India, Google Read Along is proving useful. • In Ethiopia, the Accelerated School Readiness programme implemented in areas affected by humanitarian crisis has been adopted as a catch-up programme following school closures due to COVID-19. • Provide complimentary teaching materials – for example, the Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation. <p>Use alternative learning pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable alternative learning pathways so that all children can follow a learning pathway that is appropriate for their context/goals • Bangladesh adapted the country’s Ability-based Accelerated Learning model, which was designed originally to bring out-of-school children into formal education as a remediation package. ABAL is based on the national curriculum and textbooks, but it is more flexible, allowing children to learn at their own pace.
 <p>Wellbeing and protection</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Strengthen tailored and comprehensive support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tailored services needed to meet their learning, health, nutrition, psychosocial wellbeing, and other needs through cross-sectoral collaboration across Ministries. • Train teachers on how to provide on psychosocial support to students and/or referrals upon reopening of schools. • Sri Lanka provides a great example of an integrated approach across line ministries to school reopening involving education, health, water and sanitation, nutrition, child protection, communication, advocacy and community engagement.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Ensure protection, safety and referral systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marginalised children are returning to school systems that need to be able to provide for their increased protection needs. • Jordan and Namibia have strengthened referral systems for the provision of mental health and psychological support for teachers and students. • Niger established a close link with local protection committees to follow up on students who have not returned to school. • Develop early warning systems to better monitor students at risk of dropout with corresponding clearly defined actions and referral systems, such as in Kazakhstan.

Enablers to return to learning



Leadership ensures a focus on reaching marginalised children at all levels. Examples include wide and frequent consultation and encouraging the participation and voices of children and youth in the decision-making process.



Funding (sufficient, effective, and equitable) with learning losses/remediation given priority. Additional education funding can effectively be targeted to schools and communities hit hardest.



Accountability system(s) for ensuring all children return and learn) would include supporting/incentivizing all “duty-bearers”. This includes empowering children to demand opportunities for effective learning.



Engage parents, young people and communities to address concerns, surface innovations, and ensure a safe, widely accepted reopening. Critical communications and outreach can be diversified by making them available in relevant languages and accessible formats.



Support teachers to address learning losses among their students and to incorporate digital technology into their teaching. This includes targeted skills training in structured pedagogy and how to cope with lower levels of learning



Innovation can be beneficial as schools reopen by providing new resources and pedagogies for teachers, different modalities to reach the most marginalised and reimaging education for children and adolescents.