



Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions were posed to the SDC Education Network ahead of and during the [first](#) and [second](#) COVID-19 & Education webinars. This document complements the [COVID-19 & Education Response Guidelines](#) and [COVID-19 & Education webpage](#) on Shareweb. It provides links to guidance and tools to inform SDC country offices' and partners' COVID-19 education responses. Questions, tools and guidance are organised around the following topics: coordination, infrastructure and resources, distance learning, equity and cross-sectoral interventions (child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, health, WASH, nutrition and cash and voucher assistance, safe schools reopening).

Coordination

*How to ensure the **humanitarian development nexus** while developing a response-recovery-sustainability plan?*

Coordinate with Ministries of Education (MoE) and existing country-level coordination mechanisms, such as Education Cluster, UNHCR, Local Education Groups, or donors group, and align your response with existing national education sector plans and standards, MoE COVID-19 response plan and humanitarian response plans.

- IASC, IFRC, IOM, UNHCR, and WHO, [Interim Guidance on Scaling-up COVID-19 Outbreak Readiness and Response Operations in Humanitarian Situations including Camps and Camp-Like Settings](#)
- Global Education Cluster, [GEC Advocacy Messages - Coordination during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- OCHA, [Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19](#)
- Global Education Cluster, [Folder of examples of national Education Clusters and MoE response plans to COVID-19](#)

Infrastructure and resources

*How can learning continue in **no- or very low-tech environments** where internet connectivity is unreliable or inexistent, or where electricity supply is unreliable, and learners do not have access to computers, smart phones, or tablets? What does the education response in **low-income** contexts look like?*

*How to ensure **distribution of printed materials** in low-/no-tech environments while respecting social distancing?*

*EiE responses have thus far been designed to cope with short localised incidents of school closures, but not designed to face pandemic situations at this scale. How to **scale up** responses?*

Ensure learning can continue in safety during school closures through distance learning using locally available channels:

HIGH TECH
internet
e-mail
mobile
social media

LOW TECH
television
radio
text messages,
telephone trees

NO TECH
book and print
regular mail
family learning circles

A blended approach is recommended even in high tech environments. It is relatively uncommon for countries to rely solely on virtual lessons, and nearly all countries are encouraging parents to engage in home-based learning activities.

TV learning programmes vary widely, countries using this medium typically partner with national media companies and advertise a schedule of planned programming by grade level through social media and other news outlets allowing students to tune in for broadcasts of the lessons relevant for them.

Radio programmes were widely used during the Ebola crisis with positive outcomes; countries partnered with national and local radios to broadcast the learning programme in local languages. Solar powered radios were distributed to local communities to ensure all students, even in remote areas, could listen to the lessons.

- SDC, [Information Communication Technologies \(ICT\) and Education](#)
- UNESCO, [Distance Learning Solutions](#)
- GPE, [School interrupted: 4 options for distance education to continue teaching during COVID-19](#)
- UNICEF, [COVID-19 Response Remote Learning Decision Tree](#)
- UNHCR, [Considerations & Options for Connected Education: COVID-19 Response](#)
- INEE webinar, [Distance learning during COVID-19: continuing education in low resource and low tech environments](#)

Distance Learning

*How to **engage students** during distance learning?*

*How to **prepare and support teachers** for online teaching?*

*How to **involve parents** more and what is their role during distance learning?*

*How could governments **regulate and standardise** the process of online teaching?*

*How to transition from emergency **e-learning to blended learning** when schools open?*

Teachers play a key role in responding to education needs and engaging students in distance learning, through remote follow-up and regular check-in calls with students.

Support the teachers in the development of distance learning content and by providing psychosocial support to them. Set up peer network groups for teachers to share experience, work together on developing distance learning materials and support each other. Include teachers in the development of COVID-19 response plan and in the future consult them for the development of preparedness plans.

While it may be challenging to deliver teacher training in the midst of the response, education stakeholders, in particular teacher training institutions, could start training and supporting teachers in mobile mentoring, using commonly used social messaging apps (WhatsApp etc.). In the long run, they should start thinking about adapting their curriculum to include education in emergencies (EiE) and psychosocial support (PSS) to better prepare teachers when a new crisis occurs and ensure for better preparedness and crisis response.

SDC country offices and partners should collect lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic response to develop preparedness plans to ensure better education in emergency response and programmes.

- INEE webinar, [Supporting Teachers in Crisis Contexts during COVID-19](#)
- INEE webinar, [COVID-19 well-being support for EiE practitioners](#)

- Education Above All, [Home Learning Support for Parents and Guardians](#)
- Education Development Center, [Distance Learning for Teachers Training: Modes, Models and Methods](#)
- UNICEF, [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools - Supplemental Content: Accelerated Education as COVID-19 Response](#)
- Teachers College Columbia University, [Mobile Mentoring](#)
- WhatsApp guide for educators, [How WhatsApp can help you stay connected during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

Equity

*How to ensure the principle of **Leave No One Behind** is implemented in all planning?*

*How to ensure an **inclusive response**, e.g. that **refugees** are included in distance learning arrangements?*

*What about children with **special needs**, e.g. children with down's syndrome or autism?*

*How to support children who **cannot be supported by their parents**?*

*How to avoid the **risk of drop-out**?*

The COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to advocate for the inclusion of refugee and displaced children and young people in national education systems and national education planning processes, starting at the policy level.

Make sure that distance learning content is accessible for all, for instance ensure radio programmes are also broadcast in locations where refugees reside, ensure distance learning content is available in the local languages of refugees and displaced children and can be accessed with devices that learners can use and afford, and consult with representatives of refugee and IDP communities to include their needs in response plans.

Support teachers in identifying situations where parents cannot support their children in their home schooling and in providing extra support to these children. Work with local communities to make sure parents receive the appropriate information about home schooling.

- Humanity & Inclusion, [Inclusive Education sector guiding note on COVID-19](#)
- Humanity & Inclusion, Guidance Notes on [Inclusive Digital Learning](#), [Teachers Resources](#) and [Home Support](#)
- INEE webinar, [Inclusive Education during COVID-19](#)

Cross-sectoral interventions

*What about **child protection** during school closures, how to monitor, refer and respond?*

*It is not only about lack of learning opportunities. Students also need to socialise with their peers and engage in physical activities. How to ensure their **mental and physical health** during these times of isolation?*

How to better include aspects of emotional and mental health, PSS (cross-sectoral with child protection) in e-learning/blended learning?

*How to manage children's **anxiety** and behaviour in online classrooms?*

*How to deal with the **psychological impact** of teachers and families regarding the change in the learning modality?*

*What about **hygiene** at school once classes resume?*

*How to ensure children continue to benefit from **school meals** (avoid increase in malnutrition rates) given limitations on families' mobility to collect food or vouchers?*

Schools closure has a major impact on other sectors interventions which were previously done either at schools (schools meals, vaccination campaign, access to safe water and WASH facilities) and integrated into education (health and hygiene education, prevention messages, etc.). A multi-sectoral response ensures that children, youth, teachers, parents and caregivers' needs are addressed holistically and leads to better outcomes. Areas for collaboration should be identified, considering each sector's strengths and delivery capacity.

Child Protection

Include child protection considerations in the development and roll out of learning tools, with particular attention to the most vulnerable children and youth. Teachers and parents/carers should be made familiar with principles of the prevention of protection issues, child safeguarding, GBV risk mitigation, and safe referral practices.

- Alliance for the Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, [Technical Note: Protection of Children during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- UNICEF, [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools - Supplemental Content: Child Protection](#)
- Child Protection Area of Responsibility, Global Education Cluster, [Child Protection and Education in Emergencies Collaboration - Key Considerations during the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Quality education can play a critical role in mitigating the harmful impact of crises on children's well being. Maintaining routine gives a sense of normalcy and can help reduce levels of stress and anxiety. Educators, parents, caregivers, and communities should receive PSS themselves and be advised how to implement practical, good-quality psychosocial interventions.

- IASC, [Interim Briefing Note Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Aspects of COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- UNICEF, [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools - Supplemental Content: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support](#)
- Save the Children, the MHPSS Collaborative, [Tips for parents and caregivers during COVID-19 School Closures: Supporting children's wellbeing and learning](#)
- Iraq Child Protection Sub-Cluster, [PSS and Learning kits for Disease Outbreak: Psychosocial and learning Activities during precautionary measures](#)
- INEE webinar, [Providing PSS-SEL support to learners during COVID-19](#)
- UNICEF, [How teachers can talk to children about coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Health and WASH

Use age-appropriate educational messages on hand washing, social distancing and how to prevent the spread of 'germs' as well as ready-to-use resources that provide teachers and/or parents/carers to talk about the current crisis and reassure children. Work with health authorities to deliver appropriate information about alternative access to health services.

- IASC, UNICEF, WHO, IFRC, [Interim Guidance on COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools](#)
- UNICEF, [COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response WASH and Infection Prevention and Control Measures in Schools](#)

School Meals and Cash Voucher Assistance

Maintain child nutrition levels where nutrition has previously been delivered through schools by providing alternatives to school feeding programmes: CVA or alternative food distribution to be coordinated with food security or agencies such as WFP

- WFP, FAO, UNICEF, [Mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition of schoolchildren](#)
- Global Education Cluster, [COVID-19 Implications for Programming of Cash and Voucher Assistance for Education in Emergencies](#)

Safe Schools Reopening

The timing of schools reopening should be guided by the best interest of the child and overall public health considerations, with context-specific assessment of the benefits and risks. When planning for reopening schools, a coordinated and integrated approach is critical to addressing children's needs holistically.

- UNICEF, [Framework for Reopening Schools](#)
- Child Protection Area of Responsibility, Global Education Cluster, [Safe Back to School: A Practitioner's Guide](#)
- Global Education Cluster, folder with [guidance to support the reopening of schools after a health emergency](#), including examples from countries affected by the Ebola outbreak

For more technical EiE resources, please read the INEE [Technical Note: Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) or visit the INEE [collection of resources](#).

For additional tools and guidance on coordination, needs assessment, response and preparedness planning, please visit the Global Education Cluster [COVID-19 collection of key resources](#).

