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All Children Reading–Asia (ACR–Asia)

COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE MAPPING STUDY IN ASIA

Executive Summary

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TOCOR: Mitch Kirby

Submitted by: **RTI International**
3040 East Cornwallis Road
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-0155
Tel: (919) 541-6000

Authored by: **Yung Nietschke, Dr. Anna Dabrowski, Maya Conway, and Chaula Yoga Pradhika (PT Australian Council for Educational Research Indonesia)**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACR-Asia	All Children Reading-ASIA
ACTRC	Assessment, Curriculum, and Technology Research Centre
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DepEd	Department of Education
Lao PDR	Lao People’s Democratic Republic
ICT-CST	Information and Communications Technologies Competency Standards for Teachers
IRL	Indochina Research Laos
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

1 OVERVIEW

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis has caused unprecedented levels of disruption to education systems worldwide. Across the Asia region, it is estimated that around 760 million children were impacted by school closures at the height of the pandemic. As education systems recover from the pandemic, there is a need to develop a greater capacity to safeguard learning and address persistent barriers to learning equality by harnessing the opportunities for systemic change. However, school-based practices and responses that have been effective in supporting the continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic have yet to be well examined, particularly in Asia. While systems and school structures are components of educational quality, understanding what happens in a school setting can offer meaningful insights into overcoming barriers to educational quality as education systems rebuild and prepare for future crises.

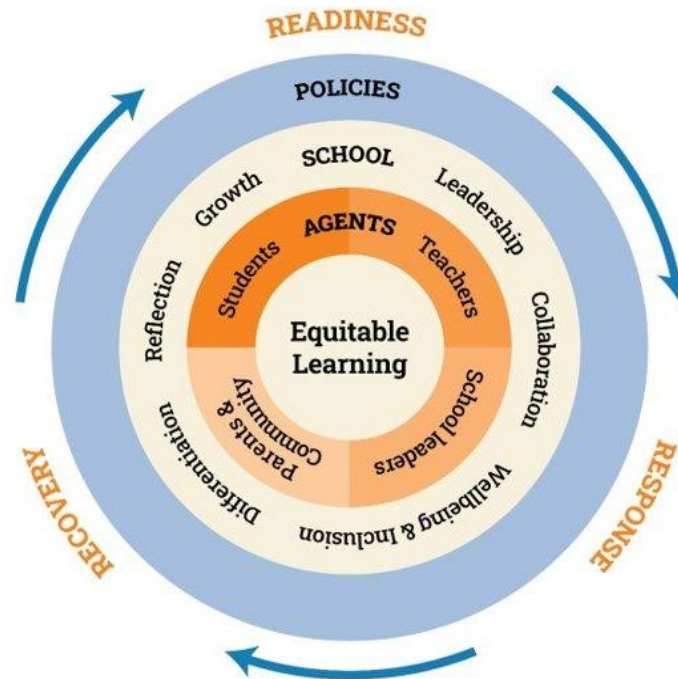
This document provides a summary of research exploring the systems, policies, and school-level practices that have supported learning continuity in Asia during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on a review of policy documents on COVID-19 responses in Asia and a deep dive analysis of system and school-level responses in the Philippines and the Kyrgyz Republic, the findings from this study provide policymakers and education stakeholders with evidence of promising practices that could be leveraged to support learning recovery and education system resilience. In addition, a policy review was conducted on the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), which focused on the practices of policymakers that have the potential to support teaching and learning. The study's intent is not to compare and contrast countries' responses but to highlight innovations in the system and school practices and make recommendations based on insights from system leaders and educators.

The study was guided by four sets of research questions:

1. How are countries' planned responses aligned with available evidence and frameworks on how to safeguard children's learning progress and social and emotional development, as well as address learning inequalities during the COVID-19 emergency and its aftermath? Do planned responses consider the needs of learners in the early grades?
2. What was the evolution of each country's basic education response to COVID-19, from the initial crisis response to measures they took as the situation stabilized into the "new normal" to their long-term plan for recovery and transformation following the pandemic?
 - a. To what extent was the country prepared to respond? What structures and processes were in place that promoted responsiveness and resilience to the pandemic?
 - b. What was the country's initial planned response in 2020? Was this a temporary measure or part of a plan for longer-term system strengthening moving forward?
 - c. Where is the country currently in its response? Is this an extension of temporary measures or part of a plan for longer-term system strengthening moving forward?
 - d. What plans are in place to strengthen the responsiveness and resilience of the system moving forward?
3. At response time points (b) and (c), how successful have select countries been in implementing the proposed solutions?
4. What are the gaps, challenges, and risks for reaching the most disadvantaged schools and learners through technology-based remote learning solutions in response to COVID-19? How could opportunities be leveraged to allow these interventions to be successful in the future, including policy-enabling factors and promising classroom-based practices?

An analytical framework was developed to guide the investigation of the research questions and consider the intersections between policy, school, and school-level actors that contribute to a resilient education system (**Figure 1**). The framework is informed by the extensive literature on effective teaching and learning and draws from the emerging evidence base on COVID-19's impacts on education systems worldwide.

Figure 1. Analytical Framework



In the context of COVID-19, the three phases—Readiness, Response, and Recovery—provide the operational context that influences how education systems plan for and manage their strategies for improvement and resilience. A particular focus of this study is on school-level practices that safeguard children’s learning and social-emotional well-being during and after the pandemic. Based on the established body of research on the importance of school-level practices, the analytical framework identifies six quality inputs that can influence student outcomes positively and should be considered preconditions for a resilient education system.

2 READINESS: SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING

To improve the quality of education that students receive, many countries in Asia have implemented major reforms within the education system over the past decade, including policies focused on improving access to schooling, enhancing teacher quality, and promoting inclusive education. Recognizing where education systems were at the onset of the pandemic provides an important context for understanding a country’s readiness to respond to the needs of students, teachers, parents, communities, and schools.

Significant education reform efforts in the Philippines over the past decade have seen an expansion of the education system and quality improvements in educational practice, such as the introduction of national competency-based teaching standards, the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) curriculum, national assessments, and school-based management. These reform processes are supported by policies to improve equity and access to education. For example,

inclusive education policies have been implemented since 1997 through the prioritization of learning opportunities to support vulnerable students, including out-of-school youth and those from small and remote school districts. In addition, the introduction of the mother tongue language of instruction into law has mandated that children learn in their mother tongue in early primary school and gradually transition to English and Filipino as they move to higher grades. Other features in the Philippine education system that point to existing levels of preparedness include incorporating the Disaster Risk Management Plan within the national basic education framework. This framework attempts to provide a foundation for supporting the safe continuity of learning during periods of crisis via the system and school-level coordination and recovery efforts. At the start of the pandemic, a School Safety Assessment Tool for schools to use in assessing their readiness to return to face-to-face learning was also developed.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, a series of education reform processes were already underway before the pandemic to address the country's persistent, poor education outcomes. These initiatives included a greater regulatory function for the education sector, expanding access to preschool and basic education services, and ensuring relevant skills to meet the labor market's demands. The government's education reform agenda also saw an increase in the education budget and the decentralization of education services to the provincial offices. Other policy initiatives that were implemented to strengthen the quality of the education system included regulations to improve teacher quality and inclusive policies supporting out-of-school children, ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities. In addition, the Kyrgyz Government's long-term goal to establish an open, digital society through the expansion of Internet access to all public schools facilitated the implementation of online learning at the onset of the pandemic. Through the implementation of these reform processes, the Kyrgyz government has demonstrated a commitment and readiness to respond quickly and collaboratively to protect learning during the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, Lao PDR was already facing a learning crisis, with low-level attainment, low transition, and high drop-out rates. However, over the last two decades, Lao PDR has embarked on an education reform agenda focused on expanding access to schools, enhancing teacher quality, and promoting of inclusive education. This reform process provided the enabling environment to help the Lao government prepare for crisis response during the COVID-19 school disruptions. Features of government readiness included having national plans and strategies in place (the Education and Sports Sector Development Plan and the national disaster risk management plan), existing monitoring systems to track student learning pre- and post-pandemic (national and regional assessments), and a focus on support for vulnerable populations (through the government's commitment to prioritize the 40 most disadvantaged districts).

3 RESPONSE: EVIDENCE OF SYSTEM AND SCHOOL RESPONSES

Findings from surveys with school leaders, teachers, and parents, as well as interviews with key policymakers in the Philippines and Kyrgyz Republic, were analyzed with consideration for the six key factors outlined in the analytical framework.

Leadership

Education leadership can occur at various levels to support student learning, teacher professional learning, and collaboration with and engagement of the school community. Political leadership at the national level, through commitment and adoption of national plans and strategies for education reform, can have an impact on school-level practices. Support for school leaders remains a critical part of the learning process, even when students are not in the classroom. In the context of COVID-19, there were opportunities for the role of school

leadership to become more distributed across school leaders, teachers, and parents/caregivers, particularly in the delivery of remote learning.

Throughout the Asia region, there is strong evidence of strong leadership and coordination between ministry officials, school leaders, and teachers to implement remote learning. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) ensured that remote learning policies were clearly communicated to schools and that schools were supported to implement them. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the government introduced remote learning through a coordinated effort between ministry officials, teachers, and lecturers from teacher institutes to develop video lessons and digital content. Guidelines were also sent from the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to district departments of education, which provided instruction to schools and parents. Similarly, in Lao PDR, high-level leadership and collaboration across different line ministries were observed through streamlined communication and rapid mobilization of resources to the district levels. Education guidelines included policies to support remote learning and the establishment of a centralized online learning platform (Kang Panya Lao) with resources to help teachers plan and deliver lessons. The responsiveness and motivation of government leaders helped to ensure continuity of learning in the early and ongoing phases of the pandemic.

At the school level, there was evidence of increased autonomy for school leaders and teachers to identify and respond to needs relevant to their school context. In the Philippines, this included increased funding for schools to hire support aides to help teachers. Many school representatives in the Kyrgyz Republic indicated that their school largely led its own response to the challenges of the pandemic by adapting lessons and summative assessment tasks, as well as trying new ways to monitor student engagement and growth.

Collaboration

The pandemic provides an important opportunity to reflect on education policies and practices that enhance collaborative practices between schools and families and build trust with local communities. Reflection on resilient systems highlights the ways in which collaboration improves education quality; when educational stakeholders work together, be it at the national, school, or community level, individual perspectives and insights can be strengthened, particularly when school and student improvement is kept as a focus.

This study found evidence of collaboration at various levels of the education sector. For example, a collaboration by the central and district education authorities in the Philippines was found to be key to the development of policies and guidelines supporting adaptation to the provision of education services across the country at community and school levels. This includes collaboration between DepEd, universities, and external partners to support the development of online/broadcast curriculum content and the training of teachers in remote learning pedagogy. In the Kyrgyz Republic, collaboration occurred between the MoES central and district offices with universities and teacher training colleges to develop materials and training for teachers. There were also examples of strong collaboration with development partners. For example, in Lao PDR, support from bilateral partners and multilateral agencies allowed the government to continue and scale up the delivery of remote learning, including online content development, teacher training on digital pedagogy, and the distribution of learning packs and digital devices.

Collaboration between teachers and parents also increased during the pandemic, with eighty percent of teachers surveyed in the Philippines reporting communicating with parents at least once a week. School leaders and teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic also reported increased collaboration with parents and seeing parents become more engaged with their children's learning and monitoring progress. However, Kyrgyz parents struggled with the extent of support they could provide due to work commitments, low-level literacy, and limited knowledge of curriculum content areas. These challenges were magnified for early learners due to parents' lack of capacity to support foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Partnerships

with parents and the community were also reported to support children's learning through different modalities. In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), community groups were formed to provide community education for students while parents were at work.

Well-Being and Inclusion

Appropriate structures, processes, and programs at the system and school levels can enhance student well-being, engagement, and learning outcomes. Ideally, schools that promote student well-being and inclusion prioritize the resourcing of infrastructures such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, gender-separated latrines, and universal design standards to support students with disabilities. Health and well-being support programs (for example, cash transfers, deworming programs, school nutrition, and psychosocial support) should also be appropriately resourced to provide safe spaces and opportunities for young people to interact and learn, particularly to ensure equality of access to education for the most vulnerable students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become clear that many existing policies and practices have not been sufficient to support students' psychosocial health and well-being.

Many governments in the Asia region reported a growing mental health crisis due to the pandemic and a lack of qualified support staff. Mental health and well-being were seen as key concerns for many system leaders in the Philippines; however, supporting vulnerable students (particularly those with low literacy levels or additional learning needs) was especially challenging, with schools reporting various levels of success. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the burden of existing mental health concerns across the system. There were also mental health and well-being challenges around the transition to online learning and the lack of protective factors that a school environment provides. It was found that many home environments were not physically safe for children, and increased reports of family violence, sexual abuse, and teenage pregnancies were received. Teachers and school leaders reported visiting the homes of disadvantaged children to provide additional learning materials, food, and mental health support. The findings also highlight evidence of positive adaptation of existing school practices in the Kyrgyz Republic, such as yearly health checks for students, which provided government authorities and school leaders with access to health and well-being data for many students. This assisted in identifying those at increased risk of health complications and social vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. While there were no data on the psychosocial and well-being impact of COVID-19 in Lao PDR, the Lao Women's Union and Lao Youth Union established hotlines to provide professional counseling to children and young people, as well as case management support for girls who experience violence.

The mental health of educators was also impacted during the pandemic, with most school leaders in the Philippines required to provide additional resources and training for teachers. Despite support from school leadership, many teachers indicated that they had experienced more stress in their work than before the pandemic. Teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic reported increased mental health and well-being concerns, including poorer mental health due to the extra workload, managing student engagement online, and difficulties meeting the demands of parents to support their children during remote learning and to be available constantly. A majority of teachers with children of their own faced the compounded challenges of being both a teacher and a parent, which added to the burden of mental health and well-being concerns for the teaching workforce.

For children with access to technology, digital learning is identified as key to supporting differing learning needs and aiding an education system's ability to transition to remote learning. In Lao PDR, the government provided tablets with accessibility options for children with disabilities to access online learning through the Kang Panya Lao platform. Videos available on the platform included subtitles as well as sign language interpretation. Similar support through the provision of devices and free Internet data was provided to support the learning needs of at-risk and disadvantaged students in both the Philippines and the Kyrgyz

Republic. However, despite this targeted support, the reliance on technology for the continuity of learning was reported to have exacerbated existing inequalities.

Differentiation

Although differentiation is a key component of effective educational practice, differentiated approaches to teaching and learning are not well explored in research, policy, or practice examples from Asia. Instead, in most policy frameworks or reports, there appears to be more focus on learning continuity through remote learning using a one-size-fits-all approach with little evidence available on the individual pedagogical needs of learners. The learning needs of children with disabilities have been significantly impacted during COVID-19. These students face multiple challenges in accessing digital or remote learning during school lockdowns and are at greater risk of not returning to school. Measures to support students with disabilities include assistive devices, specialized training for their teachers, accessible learning materials using flexible learning approaches, and integrated support services.

In the Philippines, a survey was conducted at the beginning of the pandemic to map the needs of learners and their parents to assess their readiness for remote learning. Data were then used by the school, division, and region to devise relevant continuity learning plans and to support budget decisions at the school, division, and regional levels to develop multiple modalities for learning for different students, including online, paper-based modules, and television and radio broadcast lessons. Similarly, in Lao PDR, different modalities were provided to support student learning. However, due to the lack of Internet and broadcast infrastructure across many parts of the country, standardized take-home packs were the most widely used medium for learning during periods of school closures.

Teachers also reported using different methods to engage students during remote learning by adjusting curriculum delivery and focusing on core content areas and capabilities. Although many teachers in the Philippines were trying to learn how to use the technology as they went, teachers also reported examples of "*contextualization*" and "*differentiated instruction*" being supported with increased flexibility and different modalities. Data from the survey and interviews indicated that educators in the Kyrgyz Republic tried to be responsive to the individual learning needs of their students. Ninety-five percent of teachers indicated that they adapted the curriculum and assessment practices for different students. This included focusing on foundational literacy and numeracy skills, reducing lesson times, incorporating psychosocial well-being and physical activities into lessons, and conducting regular phone checks to monitor student growth. Some private schools are already seeing the benefit of remote learning to support different student needs, particularly for those who perform better using online or blended modalities. However, there is still a lack of evidence in the Kyrgyz Republic on the quality and impact of differentiated techniques used by teachers during the pandemic. Further exploration of classroom-based practices would help identify areas for targeting teacher training and support for differentiation.

Growth

Learning assessments and student monitoring provide performance tracking at the system level and measure what is being learned in the classroom. However, the responsibility for monitoring students and measuring growth remains unclear in many Asian contexts. This was even more so during the pandemic when many countries stopped using assessments altogether while others reduced their use of assessments.

During the pandemic, the system and district education offices in the Philippines introduced measures that supported greater regional autonomy and ownership of practices to promote student engagement and growth. These included implementing the School Safety and Assessment Tool, letting teachers develop their own learning modules, and having these reviewed by Area Supervisors. Similar observations were found in Lao PDR, where provincial education offices were given the autonomy to set their own assessment policies during and

post-pandemic. Only two of the eighteen provinces conducted exams when students returned to school, and those who scored below five were required to retake the exam at the end of the semester.

A focus on student growth was reported in school-level data; most teachers interviewed in the Philippines reported using evidence to reflect on how their students were performing by adapting lessons and using summative assessments to monitor student progress on a weekly basis. In the Kyrgyz Republic, most teachers reported using evidence/data to reflect on how students were performing and to monitor student growth. However, reports from other studies in Lao PDR suggest that most teachers did not use assessments to track student performance during remote learning or when they returned to school. This indicates that teachers in Lao may need additional support in transitioning students back to school and providing remedial support for learning recovery.

Personal and professional growth among educators was also observed by adapting their teaching practice and improving the facilitation of student learning activities. This willingness to participate in new approaches to teaching also marks an opportunity for teachers to diversify their practice and appeal to students of different interests and abilities.

Reflection

A culture of reflection looks for pathways to improvement and growth, uses evidence to evaluate impact, and identifies areas for improvement involving all members of the school community. Reflection on the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic is crucial to broader system recovery and to broader reform and improvement efforts. Yet, many studies investigating recovery from the crisis have yet to consider the insights from teachers who have lived through the pandemic, experienced successes, and challenges, and been in a position to use their experience and training to support students.

Across the literature, survey, and interviews, there was clear evidence that governments in Lao PDR, the Philippines, and the Kyrgyz Republic were responsive and made early decisions to support the continuity of learning, including developing and disseminating learning materials in new modalities such as online and television lessons. In Lao PDR, there is a commitment from the government to learn from the experience of the pandemic and transform the education system to be more resilient to future disruptions. This includes the formalization of the National Digital Economy Development Plan, which provides a road map for the digitalization of education in Lao PDR, which will expand access to ICT infrastructure to support multiple learning modalities, especially in rural areas.

The responsiveness and motivation of school leaders and teachers were also well-documented throughout the findings of this study. In the Kyrgyz Republic, teachers and school leaders have shown a willingness and innovation to support student engagement and growth using new assessment strategies and classroom-based data. In schools in the Philippines, there was a recognition of the need to accelerate learning, make up for lost ground during the pandemic as part of future planning, and reflect on opportunities for improving teaching and learning practice. There was an acknowledgment of the extent to which teachers required support through the provision of learning support aids, the preparation of materials, and coordination with parents.

Parents have also shown a greater understanding of the education process and have become stronger advocates for their children's educational outcomes through more regular communication with teachers and monitoring of their children's learning. Eighty-six percent of parents surveyed in the Kyrgyz Republic responded that they monitored their children's homework at least once a week, while two-thirds of parents indicated that they met with their children's teacher at least once a week to discuss their children's progress during remote learning. The experiences of parents, teachers, and school leaders are critical in informing system-wide recovery and improvement from the pandemic.

4 RECOVERY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND RESILIENCE

While the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have been extensively researched and reported, it is also important to note the identification of enablers that assisted schools in adapting to the changes brought on by COVID-19. This section provides a reflection on lessons learned about what works best to support recovery and educational improvement.

Partnerships

This study found that many schools and education providers across the Philippines and the Kyrgyz Republic were well-positioned to respond to the challenges raised during the pandemic due to strengths in leadership, partnerships, and collaboration among local education stakeholders. At the policy level, political leadership, and well-coordinated response by the central governments in Lao PDR, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Philippines provided the necessary support for the development of remote learning modalities and resources for vulnerable students to support continuity of learning. Examples of collaboration with development partners, across line ministries, with district education authorities, and the community were also identified as strengths in education responses during the pandemic.

Strengthened partnerships between schools and parents were one of the main enablers identified in the Kyrgyz Republic and the Philippines. Effective collaborations between schools and families also led to improved learning opportunities for students during the pandemic. Parents developed a stronger understanding of the educational process, became further invested in their child's educational outcomes, and gained a stronger understanding of how to enhance support for student learning at home. As parents became more invested in their children's learning, this facilitated a stronger link between school and home, where there was a sense of shared responsibility through building trust and mutual accountability for children's learning and well-being. Global research indicates that many children, particularly those from poorer households, are at high risk of not returning to school after the pandemic due to their participation in economic and livelihood activities. However, strong parental engagement reflects strong values placed on education, which increases the likelihood of parents sending their children back to school and supporting them to stay in school.

Teacher Practice

The necessity of adapting to the challenges faced by education systems during the COVID-19 pandemic led to the development of strategies and practices to improve the quality and provision of education for children. Many of these adapted practices and learnings from the difficulties faced during this time have established a strong basis for positive progression across education systems.

However, the rapid transition to remote learning exposed areas of weakness in the teacher training system across many countries in the Asia region. Not all teachers were equipped with the skills or resources for remote learning, and some schools did not have adequate budgets to support targeted teacher training. In the Philippines, some teachers expressed a desire to return to traditional forms of learning rather than to adapt or change their practice, while school leaders highlighted the need for more visible support and ready-made resources to assist teachers in delivering remote learning. Many teachers were faced with the challenge of being available for home visits, downloading and printing off learning materials, and distributing these materials to families. Although this is a challenge, it is also a strength of the education system in the Philippines. Teachers could pivot to invest the time and effort necessary to visit homes and ensure families had the materials and support needed. In Lao PDR, a commitment by the government to transform education post-pandemic has seen the introduction of the first

Information and Communications Technologies Competency Standards for Teachers (ICT-CST) to ensure teachers have the necessary skills to continue to deliver blended approaches to learning as part of a national plan to digitize the education system.

Positive examples of school autonomy are also highlighted in the study, where teachers and school leaders have demonstrated the capacity to lead and innovate the delivery of remote learning to suit the needs of their local contexts. This includes adapting pedagogical approaches, the curriculum, instructional time, and the assessment of students. In the Kyrgyz Republic, teachers demonstrated confidence in adapting their practices to support student learning and well-being. This indicates the readiness of teachers to adopt new practices post-pandemic. School leaders, in particular, highlighted changes to teacher practice as opportunities to leverage the learning of the pandemic. School autonomy is crucial to system recovery and resilience, and teachers need to be supported and have the agency to make decisions about school-level improvements where the learning outcomes and well-being of their students are central.

Flexible Learning Modalities

The pandemic marked the introduction of a blended learning modality and long-term plans to continue to use blended learning to meet the needs of learners according to context, learning requirements, and access to resources. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the pandemic presented an opportunity to speed up planned technological reform and improvement, including digitizing school administrative practices, and integrating online learning resources. Teachers reported that gaining new digital skills and greater confidence to teach using technology allowed them to implement innovative approaches to encourage greater student engagement. In the Philippines, teachers were given many different opportunities to try new ways of teaching, and 85 percent of school leaders and teachers reported an intention to continue to use blended pedagogies into the future. However, study participants also highlighted the need for a consistent approach to teacher training across different school types. School leaders also reported a desire for ongoing system support for future blended learning, shaped by guidance and support mechanisms that enhance student engagement and learning. In both education contexts, there is an opportunity to draw on the experience of higher education institutions as early adopters of ICT to expand teacher professional learning using online and blended approaches.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 1. Summary of Readiness, Response, and Recovery Strategies to Support Pathways to Resilience

Phase	Strategies
Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education reform policies supporting education quality improvements, including teacher effectiveness • Cross-government coordination for disaster risk management • Policy supporting digitalization of the education system • Policies supporting marginalized populations
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of emergency declared • School closures and implementation of remote learning • Development of content for online learning and broadcasting • Subsidized Internet and mobile access to facilitate remote learning • District-level resourcing to provide teachers and students with devices for learning • Health and well-being focus (e.g., hotlines) • Training in remote learning for parents and teachers
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted teaching and learning strategies at the school level (e.g., adapted curriculum, instructional time, assessment) • Establishment of teacher peer learning networks for upskilling • Strengthened engagement with parents and the community
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering school-parent-community partnerships • Building teacher confidence in digital literacy and blended pedagogy • Supporting teachers with additional training and a focus on workload and well-being • Incorporating multiple modalities into digital learning to support equity of access • Strengthening regulatory framework to support quality standards in education and technology (including regulating providers) • Leveraging the strong ICT capacity of higher education institutions to develop online and blended learning approaches • Prioritizing student, teacher, and parent mental health and well-being as part of the school and home environment

This study aimed to understand the ways in which education policies and practices have been implemented during the pandemic and explore how different levels of the education system have adjusted to support equitable learning in countries across Asia, with a focus on school-level responses in the Philippines and the Kyrgyz Republic, and a policy review in Lao PDR. The study found that while the pandemic exposed numerous weaknesses in the education system, there are also many opportunities to leverage innovation and motivation at the school level.

Existing education reform agendas have the potential to build system resilience in the long term, enhance the education system's ability to respond to the pandemic, and move forward with previous education initiatives designed to improve education quality. Throughout the pandemic, well-designed policies ensured that schools could implement new programs and practices, with remote learning mechanisms, including paper-based, low-mid tech (radio, TV, phone), and high-tech (online, digital), particularly important at this time. Although access to devices and data remains a challenge for many students, teachers reported trying new modes and modalities to deliver lessons and conduct assessments and monitoring of student learning, with some teachers reporting optimism around the potential for these mechanisms to foster inclusive learning. Awareness of the importance of mental health and well-being as part of inclusive and sustainable practice was apparent in the responses of many teachers. Examples of differentiation and reflection on practice and learning throughout the pandemic, both at systems and school levels, were also apparent in the Philippine education system. Evidence of differentiation and reflection was emergent in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The study also highlighted positive examples of the school and home partnership, where children's learning success became a shared responsibility between the school and parents. Strengthened partnerships between school, home, and community build trust and shared accountability for children's learning outcomes. This also increases the perceived value of education and creates greater confidence in the education system. This partnership should be reinforced and fostered post-pandemic through continued, regular communication with parents about teaching and learning strategies to support monitoring, growth, and student well-being.

In terms of ongoing system improvement, the data collected as part of this study indicate that high-quality practices remain inconsistent. Schools with adequate resourcing were more likely to be able to support remote and blended learning approaches than schools impacted by funding challenges. Experience from the pandemic has reinforced the widening digital divide. To build a more resilient education system that addresses equity of access, governments must consider the availability of multiple learning modalities that cater to the needs of different learners rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Future research should continue to seek the insights of those in the most marginalized settings to improve our understanding of what works and for whom, regardless of resourcing.

The findings of this study support several key recommendations for policymakers, educators, parents, and communities (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Recommendations for Policymakers, Educators, Parents, and Families

Policymakers	Educators	Parents/Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equitable provision of resources to schools • Prioritize parental engagement • Enhance the digital literacy of teachers, parents, and students • Improve digital infrastructure to last-mile schools and regulatory standards for blended learning delivery during and post crises • Explore options for effectively sustaining blended learning pedagogy • Promote knowledge and resource sharing among teachers from diverse settings • Integrate a focus on mental health as part of school improvement agendas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice self-care and collaborate with colleagues to adapt resources that can be delivered remotely • Adapt and contextualize remote learning practices to support different learner needs (including adapting resources based on access, ability, and location) • Enhance your capacities to deliver teaching and learning practices remotely • Participate in training on assessment and monitoring • Encourage parental engagement through formal communication channels and feedback loops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions about your children's learning and ask what you can do to reinforce learning at home • Learn how to use different tools and technologies if you have them in the home and where to find paper-based resources if you do not • Communicate with your child's teacher and ask for feedback • Learn more about how your child likes to learn • Encourage your child to ask for help for their learning and to talk about their feelings and friendships in the home

APPENDIX A. COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE MAPPING STUDY—BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: READINESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

All Children Reading–Asia (ACR–Asia)

COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE MAPPING STUDY

*Building Resilience in the Kyrgyz Republic:
Readiness, Response, and Recovery*

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TOCOR: Mitch Kirby

Submitted by: **RTI International**
3040 East Cornwallis Road
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-0155
Tel: (919) 541-6000

Authored by: **Yung Nietschke, Dr. Anna Dabrowski, Maya Conway, and Chaula Yoga Pradhika (PT Australian Council for Educational Research Indonesia)**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CLASS	Classroom Assessment Scoring System
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DRCU	Disaster Response Coordination Unit
EDI	Early Development Instrument
EDS	Education Development Strategy
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IITT	In-Service Institute for Teacher Training
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IT	Information Technology
K	Kindergarten
MOES	Ministry of Education and Science
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoH	Ministry of Health
NDS	National Development Strategy
NES	National Education Strategy
NGO	NonGovernmental Organization
NSBA	National Sample-Based Assessment
NSC	National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic
NST	National Scholarship Test
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PIAAC	The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
READ	Russian Education AID for Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

1 OVERVIEW

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis has caused unprecedented levels of disruption to education systems worldwide. Across the Asia region, it is estimated that around 760 million children were impacted by school closures at the height of the pandemic. Government response strategies have varied across the region, with some countries imposing prolonged school lockdowns while others have had short, repeated closure periods. As countries begin to reopen schools and continue to prepare for subsequent waves of COVID-19 infection, there is a need to develop the greater capability of education systems to safeguard learning and address persistent barriers to learning equality by harnessing the opportunities for systemic change. However, school-based practices and responses that have been effective in supporting the continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic have yet to be well examined, particularly in Asia. While the system and school structures are a crucial component of educational quality, understanding what happens in a school setting can offer meaningful insights into overcoming barriers to educational quality as education systems recover and rebuild from the pandemic.

This report presents the findings of research undertaken in the Kyrgyz Republic, Central Asia. It forms part of a broader study that aims to explore the system and school-level practices that have supported learning continuity in Asia during the pandemic. The study will focus on the practices of policymakers that have supported teaching and learning and consider ways in which school leaders, teachers, and parents have worked to support children during periods of disruption. Rather than comparing the responses of countries in Asia, this study will highlight innovations in the system and school policies and programs in the Kyrgyz Republic and make recommendations based on insights from the Kyrgyz Republic's education system. The study will focus on the system and school participants that support students in the Kyrgyz Republic but will not include students themselves.

2 METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the ways in which the education sector of the Kyrgyz Republic has responded to COVID-19, evidence has been drawn from research, policy, and current examples of practice. The scope covers policies and practices focused on supporting teaching and learning, with emphasis on the conditions that support students in the early years.

2.1 Research Questions

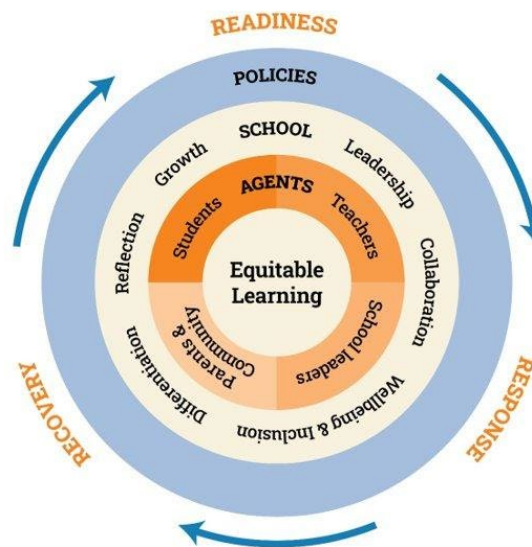
The study was guided by four sets of research questions:

1. How are countries' planned responses aligned with available evidence and frameworks on how to safeguard children's learning progress and social and emotional development, as well as address learning inequalities during the COVID-19 emergency and its aftermath? Do planned responses consider the needs of learners in the early grades?
2. What was the evolution of each country's basic education response to COVID-19, from the initial crisis response to measures they took as the situation stabilized into the "new normal, to their long-term plan for recovery and transformation following the pandemic?
 - a. To what extent was the country prepared to respond? What structures and processes were in place that promoted responsiveness and resilience to the pandemic?
 - b. What was the country's initial planned response in 2020? Was this a temporary measure or part of a plan for longer-term system strengthening moving forward?

- c. Where is the country currently in its response? Is this an extension of temporary measures or part of a plan for longer-term system strengthening moving forward?
- d. What plans are in place to strengthen the responsiveness and resilience of the system moving forward?
3. At response timepoints (b) and (c), how successful have select countries been in implementing the proposed solutions?
4. What are the gaps, challenges, and risks for reaching the most disadvantaged schools and learners through technology-based remote learning solutions in response to COVID-19? How could opportunities be leveraged to allow these interventions to be successful into the future, including policy-enabling factors and promising classroom-based practices?

An analytical framework (**Figure 1**) was developed to guide the investigation of the research questions and consider the intersections between policy, school, and stakeholder-level indicators that contribute to a resilient education system. The framework is informed by the extensive literature on effective teaching and learning and draws from the emerging evidence based on COVID-19 impacts on education systems worldwide.

Figure 2. Analytical Framework



In the context of COVID-19, the three phases—Readiness, Response, and Recovery—provide the operational context that influences how education systems plan for and manage their strategies for improvement and resilience.¹ As such, each phase is aligned with the research questions to examine: (1) the education system’s preparedness in anticipation of risks to learning, (2) the continual process of response and adaptation to mitigate those risks during the crisis, and (3) the focus on effective early recovery and long-term education transformation that protects the needs of all learners. The three phases are represented in a

¹ This framework draws on USAID’s Reigniting Learning: Strategies for Accelerating Learning Post-Crisis evidence review and Return to Learning during Crises toolkit and the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on promising policy responses to support greater education system resilience and responsiveness. Each phase is underpinned by the central notion of resilience, in which change is embraced by educators during periods of disruption, and moving forward, rather than returning to what has always been done, is recognized, and rewarded. Both share similar elements in defining a path forward that prioritizes the policies and practices to promote: (1) equity and inclusion, (2) flexibility in learning interventions and assessments, and (3) building the capacity of educators. However, this framework also seeks to broaden the ways in which we recognize system readiness and quality by focusing on the interplay between policy, practice, and equitable learning.

cycle to reflect an iterative process where data-driven monitoring and improvement facilitate greater systems strengthening and resilience.

A particular focus of this study is on school-level practices that safeguard children's learning and social-emotional well-being during and after the pandemic. Based on the established body of research on the importance of school-level practices, the analytical framework identifies six quality inputs that have the potential to influence student outcomes positively and which should be considered preconditions for a resilient education system. A full description of the analytical framework can be found in **Annex A**.

Leadership

Leadership focuses on improving student learning, supporting ongoing teacher professional learning and collaboration, engaging all members of the school community, and promoting the well-being and growth of the school community. Leadership can occur at various levels, including at policy, school, or classroom levels.

Collaboration

Quality collaboration can occur between systems and schools, schools and families, and school staff. Collaboration supports learning and well-being, engagement, motivation, and student outcomes.

Well-Being and Inclusion

Well-being is a valued outcome of school structures, processes, and programs that support the inclusion of all members of the school community (students, teachers, school leaders, and families). A sense of well-being can support staff and student engagement and participation.

Differentiation

Differentiation relates to multiple pathways for learning, flexible options for engaging in learning, responsiveness to individual needs, the use of evidence to inform decision-making and planning, teacher autonomy to adjust and respond to the needs of their students, and the context for teaching and learning, and support for teachers to enable a differentiated approach (training, resources, mentoring).

Reflection

A culture of reflection looks for pathways to improvement and growth, uses evidence to evaluate impact, and chances to identify areas for improvement, involving all members of the school community in the process of reflection. Feedback is also an integral part of the reflective process.

Growth

Growth is an emphasis on making progress, change, and improvement, and other structures and processes that support teachers, students, and families to contribute to improvement within their school community.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Drawing upon the above analytical framework, the study employs multiple methods to offer a descriptive account of the ways in which policymakers, teachers, school leaders, and parents have responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. With a focus on gathering qualitative insights that have not yet been gathered in previous research, the study featured three key data collection and analysis activities, which are explained in more detail below:

- **Desktop Reviews** of relevant documents on COVID-19 education response in the Kyrgyz Republic. This rapid review was undertaken to collate evidence from various education systems about their COVID-19 responses and re-opening strategies. See **Annex B** for the full desk review.
- **Key Informant Interviews** with Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) officials, education leaders, teachers, and principals ($n=20$) to understand the decision-making process and implementation of the planned response and the strategic focus of the planned response at different points in time, as well as the focus, moving forward. Interview data were collected face-to-face by in-country researchers. Where live interviews were not possible, phone or online communication was used. See **Annex C** for the complete interview protocols and list of informants.
- **Survey:** A non-representative survey with purposefully selected school leaders ($n=41$), teachers ($n=228$), and parents ($n=150$) examining COVID-19 specific policies and practices within school communities was conducted. Online and paper-based surveys were distributed in both Kyrgyz and Russian languages to ensure a diversity of insights. Open-ended data about challenges and opportunities were also collected as part of the survey. See **Annex C** for the full survey instruments.

2.2.1 Participants' Demographics

The geographic representation in this sample is consistent with the population, with the majority of respondents located in rural areas. Given that 80 percent of schools in the Kyrgyz Republic are located in rural areas, two-thirds (66 percent) of the sample were from rural/remote areas, followed by 25 percent from regional/provincial centers and 9 percent from cities. There was equal gender representation in the sample of school leaders and children (as reported by their parents in the survey). However, there were more women teachers who responded to the survey than men teachers. Most teachers (approximately 80 percent) had more than 11 years of teaching experience. Almost 70 percent of households surveyed spoke a language other than Kyrgyz or Russian at home. Participants' demographics are illustrated in **Figures 2 to 6**.

Figure 3. Location of Participants

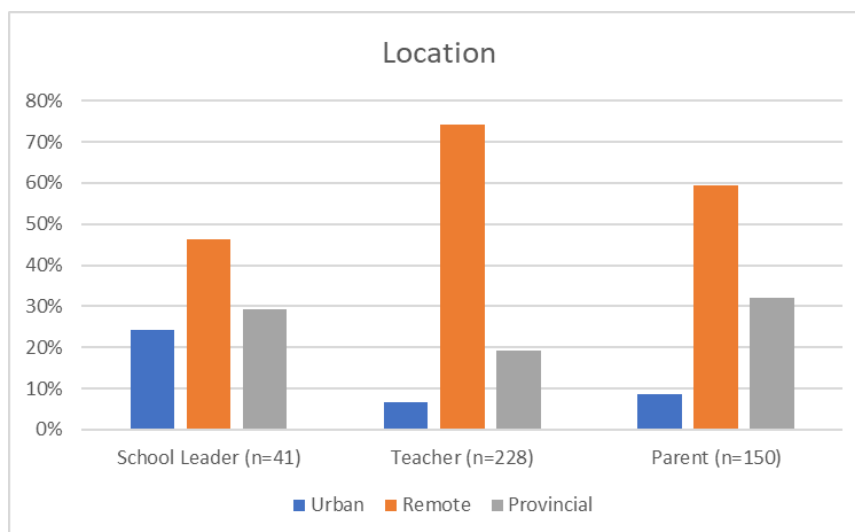


Figure 4. Gender Breakdown of Participants

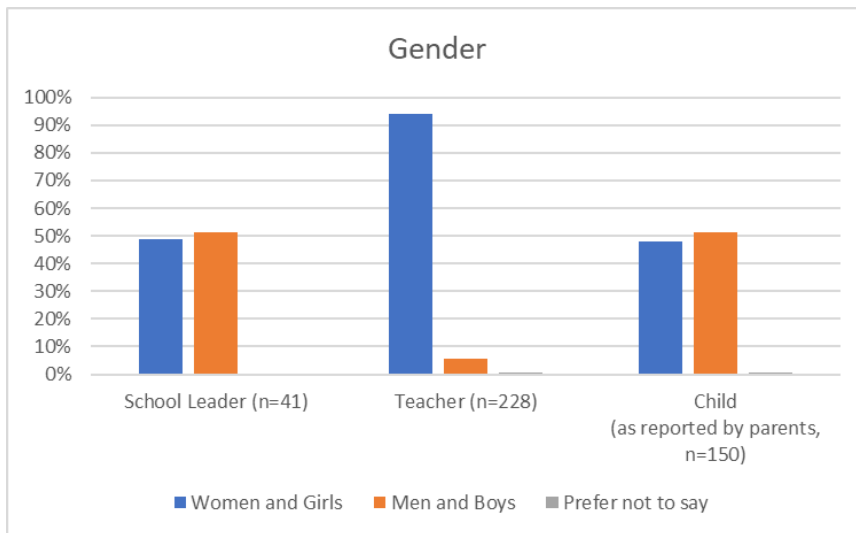


Figure 5. Years in the Profession

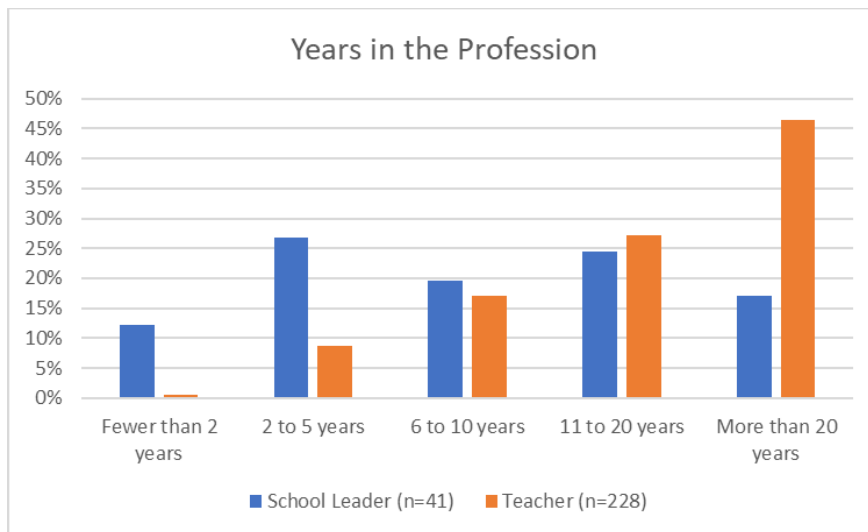


Figure 6. Languages Spoken in the Home

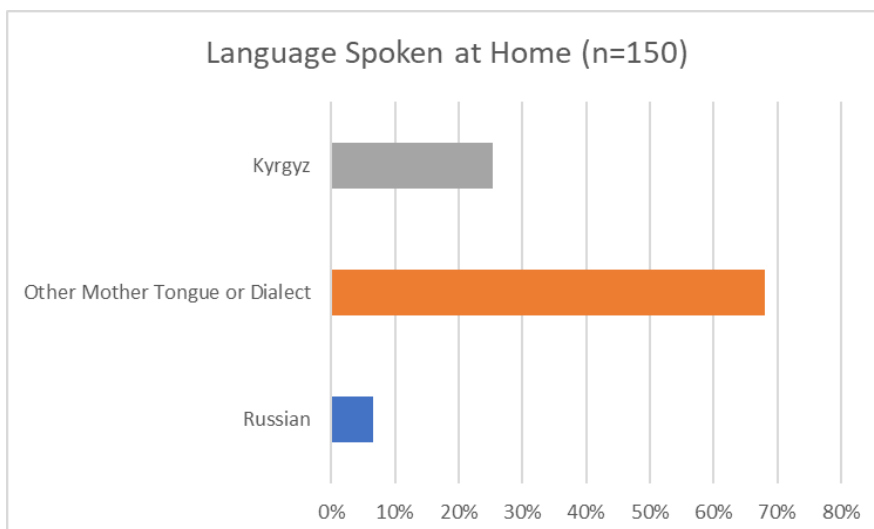
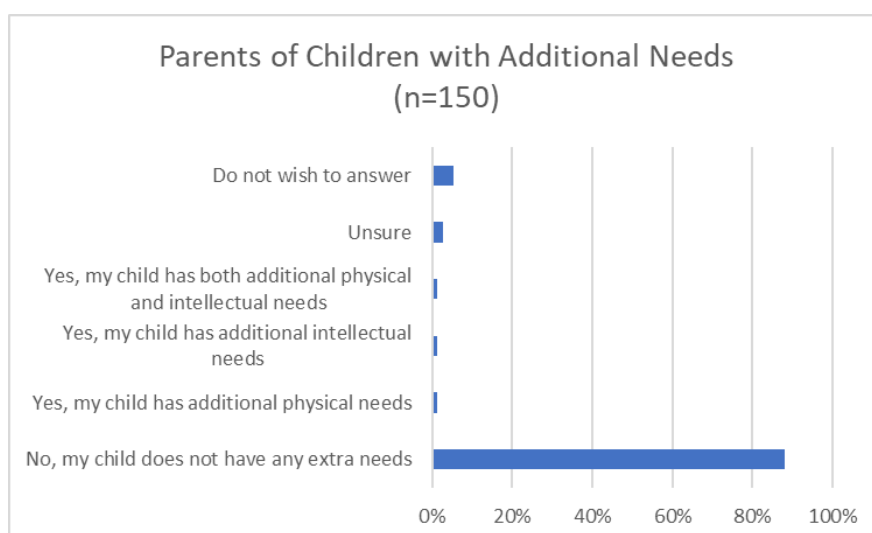


Figure 7. Children with Additional Learning Needs



2.3 Analysis

1. **Documents** collected as part of the desk review were analyzed against the analytical framework in order to understand levels of readiness to respond to COVID-19 in the Kyrgyz Republic. Documents were collected and analyzed in English, Russian, and Kyrgyz languages, with the support of in-country research teams.
2. **Interview Data** were subject to inductive thematic analysis using the Dedoose platform against the analytical framework developed for the study. Saturation in themes was reached during the process of analysis. The findings of the interviews confirmed those key challenges and opportunities facing Kyrgyz as raised in the desktop review and identified additional opportunities to those highlighted in the survey.
3. **Survey Data** were subject to descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS, with additional open-ended responses subject to thematic analysis in the survey platform Alchemer. The survey data provided insights into the experiences of school-level participants and were triangulated with the key informant interview data and document analysis to consider perceptions of given and received support in the Kyrgyz education system.

2.4 Limitations

This study aims to investigate the ways in which schools and education systems in the Kyrgyz Republic adapted to changes and challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of the study is on basic education and the early grades, with sampling targeted at primary school teachers, school leaders, and parents of young children. Where possible, data relating to the impact on kindergarten (K) to Grade 3 students are highlighted. However, many of the schools in the Kyrgyz Republic are K to Grade 12, and some responses can be expected to reflect the experiences of both primary and secondary school students.

In an effort to fill the current gap in school-based insights around practices, the study is largely based on qualitative data. Thus, the data included in this study are not representative. However, there are many insights raised in the data that reflect the findings of previous research (see United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2021a, for example). These data also highlighted gaps in evidence at the school level and provided an opportunity to identify areas for further support and improvement in the Kyrgyz education system.

3 READINESS: PREPAREDNESS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

3.1 Education Reform Policies

Prior to the pandemic, the Kyrgyz Republic was already experiencing a learning crisis. The latest Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Monitoring report found that more than 265 million children did not go to school. Of these children, 22 percent were primary school age (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic [NSC] & UNICEF, 2020). Of those that attended school, fewer than 60 percent of 7- to 14-year-olds were able to finish tasks on basic reading and numeracy. These poor results point to a low-quality system, typically characterized by a poor curriculum, lack of quality learning materials, low teacher quality, and ineffective teaching practice and teacher management (Hou, 2011).

The Kyrgyz government had already undertaken a series of education reform initiatives to address persistent, poor education outcomes in the country. Under the National Education Strategy (NES) 2021–2040 (NES 2040) and the Education Action Plan 2021–2023, these initiatives included a greater regulatory function of the education sector, expanding access to preschool and basic education services and ensuring relevant skills to meet the demands of the labor market. The government’s education reform agenda also saw an increase in the education budget and decentralization of education services to the provincial offices. These processes demonstrated a strong political commitment and leadership from the Kyrgyz government to improve access and quality of education for all students.

When COVID-19 reached the Kyrgyz Republic, a state of emergency was declared on March 22, 2020, and the government enacted existing emergency response policies and mechanisms to respond to the pandemic. This included coordination across government through the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Secretariat of National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Disaster Response Coordination Unit. The Unit was established in 2008 to improve communication and cooperation between the government, United Nations agencies, international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the donor community to provide a humanitarian response to emergencies. This was coupled with the development of a manual for emergency situations as part of a broader initiative to support disaster risk reduction in vulnerable communities and educational settings.

In compliance with quarantine and lockdown requirements, the MOES closed schools across the country. Remote learning strategies were quickly initiated by MOES in April 2020, and schools were offered directives to support students and families. Some schools with boarding facilities, residential institutions, or schools located in select remote areas were able to remain open, but most schools experienced intermittent periods of closures during the 2020–2021 school year due to localized COVID-19 outbreaks. Given the decentralization of education services to the provincial levels, there was greater autonomy for local education authorities to respond to the needs of their communities.

3.2 Digitalization of Education

MOES was also responsible for the coordination of live lessons, which were broadcast on three national television channels and two mobile network applications (UNICEF, 2020a). Universities and television companies also collaborated with the MOES to provide studio space for television lessons to be recorded (MOES, 2020). Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 1,500 video lessons were created and distributed to support students at all levels of schooling (MOES, 2020). An educational portal with teaching and learning resources and online classes using Internet-based platforms such as YouTube was also implemented (MOES, 2020).

While the shift to remote and digital learning was necessary to support the continuity of learning as part of the education system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it also fast-tracked the government's long-term goal to establish the Kyrgyz Republic as an open digital society. Under the NES 2040, the government plans to advance the integration of information technology (IT) in the education sector by expanding Internet connections to all schools to ensure equitable access to learning. According to the recent School Connectivity Map project, 67 percent of all public schools in the Kyrgyz Republic are connected to the Internet, with plans to expand the connection to the remaining 691 schools (UNICEF, 2019). However, 35 of those are deemed too difficult to connect through the Internet fiber network due to their geographical locations and will need alternative solutions so that they are not left out of the digital transformation process.

By having a clear strategy in place for the digitalization of the education sector, the government of the Kyrgyz Republic has shown a commitment and readiness to implement remote learning for all students. However, more needs to be understood about how digital education policies are being translated into practices in the classroom to address challenges relating to equity, quality, and data management to support student learning. The next section on Response explores the efficacy of remote learning modalities used during the pandemic, including challenges and opportunities for achieving the goals set out in the NES 2040.

3.3 Improving Teacher Quality

Individual schools and teachers played a central role in supporting the transition to remote learning. They were responsible for designing online learning content, assigning homework or other activities based on the MOES-issued television lessons, and supporting students to engage with learning materials (Kasymova, 2020). To support teachers, the MOES's National In-Service Teacher Training Institute and the Republican Institute of Advanced Teaching and Training prepared guidelines for the use of online learning platforms and recommendations for how to coordinate remote learning, including the use of online platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Moodle, Google Classroom, Google Hangout, and Google Meet (MOES, 2020). MOES also reported that a consultation and technical support hub was established to provide IT technical support to teachers via the IT Academy (MOES, 2020).

Support for teachers during the pandemic was underpinned by the Kyrgyz government's existing teacher reform agenda under the NES 2040. Prior to the pandemic, the Kyrgyz government had introduced a series of initiatives to improve teacher quality, including the development of teaching methods and improved teacher training. Recently, there have been efforts to elaborate teacher professional standards as a basis for in-service training and revising performance incentives. This includes regulations that stipulate 72 hours of in-service training every five years for teachers at the In-service Teacher Training Institute. However, only 20 percent of eligible teachers are annually covered by the government budget due to a reluctance from local authorities to pay for training expenses. While there was evidence of support for teachers during the pandemic with additional training and resourcing provided by the government, the data from this study suggest that this was not enough, and many teachers had to rely on their own resources and peer networks to learn the skills required to deliver remote learning.

3.4 Mental Health and Well-Being

The Kyrgyz Republic has a mental health policy, plan, and legislation, and, in 2008, 4 percent of the health care budget was allocated to mental health (World Health Organization [WHO] & Ministry of Health [MoH], 2008). However, mental health services in the Kyrgyz Republic lack sufficient financing, equipment, and qualified specialists, resulting in low-quality mental health care (Pinchuk et al., 2021). Before the pandemic, adolescents had been facing major stress at home due to unstable family dynamics. Students in the Kyrgyz Republic consistently reported major stress both at home and in school, associated with high levels of discrimination

and violence (UNICEF, 2021). Adolescent suicide and attempted suicide reached 1,080 cases from 2008 to 2018, which became a critical issue for youth and adolescents. Several regulations have been put in place, including Law No. 185, “On measures to prevent harm to children’s health, their physical, intellectual, mental, spiritual and moral development in the Kyrgyz Republic.”

However, the restrictions imposed during the pandemic, coupled with the transition to remote learning, have increased rates of vulnerability and placed many students at increased risk of harm and disengagement from school (Zhanybek, 2021). At the start of the pandemic, the number of reported domestic violence cases rose by 65 percent (Asian Development Bank [ADB] & United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2020). In 2021, UNICEF identified 250,000 children and caregivers requiring access to mental health and psychosocial support in the Kyrgyz Republic (UNICEF, 2021b). In response, MOES established a hotline to provide psychological support to students in each Regional Education Department. Teams of teachers and specialists were also assigned to monitor and support children and parents from vulnerable families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (MOES, 2020). However, school-specific safety policies are not consistent across the country, and a culture of violence remains pervasive in many schools and communities.

The development of policies and programs that support students and families is encouraging and reflects a growing recognition of the role that education ministries and departments can play in supporting the health and well-being of school communities as a key part of educational practice. However, as discussed, the Kyrgyz Republic faces many challenges in supporting students; many of which existed before the pandemic. Many of these challenges are experienced by students but also by staff and system leaders. Yet there is still less information available on the practices that can support students at the school level, particularly during times of crisis. The pandemic has highlighted the increased vulnerability of children, parents, and teachers to violence during periods of a school lockdown. It is clear that legislation has yet to translate into guaranteed safety measures, and more needs to be done to understand how education policies and practices can support the mental health and well-being of children and teachers as the education system recovers.

3.5 Policies Supporting Inclusion and Equity

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2010 and the Law on Education in 2003 guarantee citizens’ rights to education. In 2012, the government developed an education curriculum for children who were out of school or dropped out before secondary education and wanted to return. It was also revealed that street children and child laborers are the most vulnerable to exclusion from school, and the government of the Kyrgyz Republic is making advancements in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor (U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of International Labor Affairs, n.d.).

Children from ethnic minority groups have also been prioritized by the government, with the establishment of the Department of Ethnic, Religious Policy, and Interaction with Civil Society, responsible for implementing policies on interethnic relations. The government also supports multilingual education for children from ethnic minority groups through the introduction of the mother tongue in preschool. However, reports have shown a gradual decline in the use of Uzbek as the language of instruction since 2010, which has further put Uzbek children at a disadvantage in the classroom (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], 2019). With nearly 70 percent of parents surveyed reported speaking a mother tongue or dialect at home, policies on multilingual education will need to be considered to ensure equity of learning for all children.

The state has guaranteed the right to education for children with disabilities, and the supporting policies have been included in the Code of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Children” in 2012 and the NES 2040 (UNICEF, 2021). While the “Concept and Program of Inclusive Education 2019–2023” supports the right to education for children with disabilities, special

education is still considered separate from mainstream education. The current regulation does not include a definition of inclusive education and how to provide alternative modes, nor does it require the use of alternative modes by teachers.

4 RESPONSE: SYSTEM AND SCHOOL RESPONSES IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

This chapter presents the findings of surveys with school leaders, teachers, and parents, as well as interviews with key policymakers across the Kyrgyz Republic. The data are presented with consideration given to the six key factors outlined in the analytical framework.

4.1 Leadership

4.1.1 Government Policies

At a policy level, participants reported that the Kyrgyz government was quick to act in implementing lockdowns and health policies (e.g., sanitizing surfaces and hand washing) to reduce the impact of COVID-19 and protect the population. These efforts were perceived as effective preventive measures to slow the spread of the virus in the community, protecting the health and well-being of those in school environments.

“...there were many events planned at the government level. These are measures to provide all kinds of medical or other means to ensure sanitary and hygienic requirements in schools.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

“All measures, decrees, orders, and so on, that were from the side of the state, that is, from the side of the government of our country, we all accepted for implementation, all the measures that were required from educational institutions. Therefore, it was a very good preventive measure to create conditions so that the pandemic does not cover a large number of children and adults.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

In an effort to support the continuity of learning during school lockdowns, the government introduced remote learning through online lessons and television broadcasts for those without Internet access from April 8, 2020. This involved a coordinated effort between ministry officials, teachers, and lecturers from teacher institutes to develop video lessons and digital content. Guidelines were sent from the MOES to district departments of education, which provided instruction to schools and parents. To facilitate learning in rural communities, the government provided schools with phones and TVs. This was based on an assessment of need conducted by the school and submitted for approval to the district-level Department of Education. The government also negotiated partnerships with a private telecommunication company to provide subsidized Internet access and mobile sim cards for students and teachers during remote learning.

However, interview data suggests that this was not accessible to many households across the country that did not have Internet access and largely relied on mobile or broadcast media for learning during school closures.

“The [MOES] of the Kyrgyz Republic developed a curriculum for working in a remote format, prepared video lessons in all subjects, developed a broadcasting network, and every week they prepared a schedule of video lessons and then sent it to the Raiono (district Department of Education), from there the district sent it to schools. In addition, the lesson schedule was printed out in various publications and Internet resources and also distributed. Also posted on social networks to convey information to all parents.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

Despite efforts by the government to improve education continuity for the most disadvantaged communities, there were still gaps in the provision of education services for many children. Survey data suggest that up to 10 percent of students did not access remote learning in any format during school closures. Schools also reported advocating for resources on behalf of their communities and supporting teachers to adapt government-developed teaching and learning content, such as TV broadcast lessons, to meet the individual needs of students. This was strengthened by the collaborative relationships that schools built with parents during the pandemic. Schools acted as frontline providers of assistance and resources for many communities during the pandemic, and this was particularly evident in regional, remote, or low socio-economic areas.

“As for local authorities and self-government, we did not see any special, tangible support. Of course, they distributed humanitarian aid to children with food and the most necessary goods, but they did not solve the issue of ensuring the continuity of education for low-income families. We analyzed the needs of our families, submitted an application, and wrote many letters to help low-income families purchase or provide televisions and smartphones. But nothing was acquired; neither the district nor the local authorities solved this problem. We ourselves distributed all our school TV sets to these families, they watched, and after the pandemic, their parents returned them to school.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

Interviews with key informants also highlighted MOES policies aimed at tackling the increasing instances of domestic and sexual violence, one of many social and health challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiatives such as the “Practical Guide for Juvenile Affairs Inspectors” and “Guidelines for Holding Meetings with School Children and Their Parents” were developed as part of the multisectoral *Approach to the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Women and Girls Project*. With support from development partners, the MOES developed online resources for parents and teachers and information broadcast on television on the prevention of sexual violence against minors. Recognizing the disproportionate level of violence against girls, the ministry also developed information campaigns and intervention programs targeted at women and girls.

“It is also important to note what had to be done to combat violence against children in the fight against COVID; educational organizations should have provided assistance to persons exposed to violence as part of their plans to combat the COVID pandemic, paying special attention to children and families from risk groups, to carry out preventive work, informing children about violence, legislative guarantees, assistance services for families at risk.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

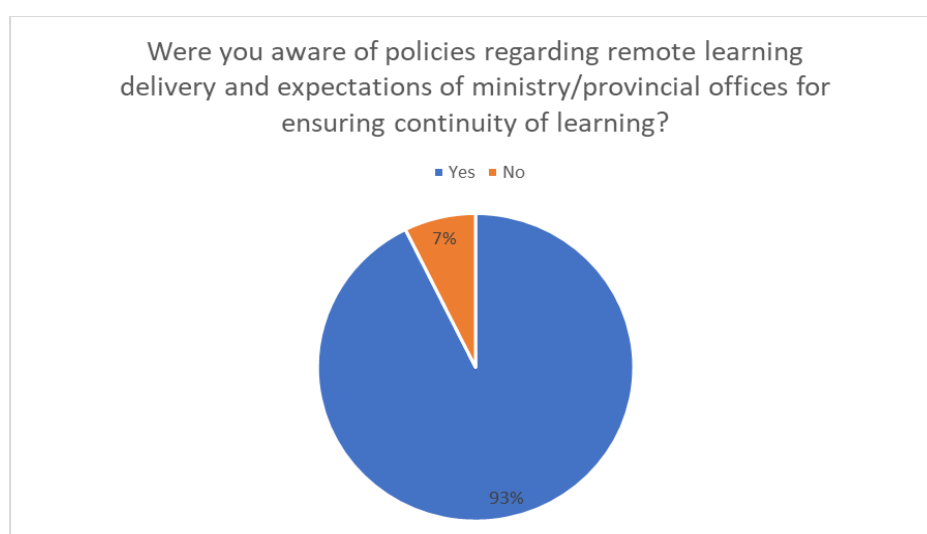
4.1.2 School-Level Practices

At the school level, leadership practices were evident across regions. School leaders overwhelmingly reported that policies and procedures were well communicated from the central MOES. Ninety-three percent indicated that they were aware of policies regarding remote learning delivery and expectations from the ministry/provincial offices for ensuring continuity of learning. Although most school leaders reported awareness of policies regarding

learning continuity (**Figure 7**), many school representatives indicated that their school largely led its own response to the challenges of the pandemic. School-based responses appeared most effective in well-resourced schools, especially private schools and those in metro areas.

While national-level guidelines relating to school closures and remote learning are important to help school leaders and teachers plan and deliver lessons during the lockdown period, schools must be able to make decisions that are reflective of the needs of their local context. This includes having the mandate to make decisions about curricula adaptation, assessment practice, school closures, data collection, teacher training, and well-being and inclusion practices that promote student engagement and support. The three most common practices implemented by school leaders on a weekly basis were: meeting with teachers to discuss support for student learning, providing additional training to teachers on remote learning, and meeting with teachers to discuss their needs. There was also evidence of teacher autonomy in the implementation of remote learning through adapting lessons and summative assessment tasks (particularly for differentiated learning) and trying new ways to monitor student engagement and growth.

Figure 8: School Leader Awareness of Policies That Promote Continuity of Learning



School leaders reported that they felt well supported across the various organizations highlighted in the questionnaire, particularly the Ministry of Education/Department of Education, teacher training associations, and local education authorities. Conversely, they indicated that they felt the least supported by aid organizations and private donors.

“I want to say that our school, ours and private schools, we mastered this faster than all these seminars were organized...But nevertheless, we later participated in those seminars conducted by the city Department of Education. And at the level of the ministry, online meetings were held with teachers, with the administration....”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

“Many teachers didn’t have smartphones. But I remember one of the first is the dedication of teachers. They themselves somehow saved money, bought phones for themselves.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

School leaders also indicated that they met with teachers frequently to discuss ways to support student learning and to understand the changing needs of teachers and the challenges they

were facing. Sixty-three percent said they also provided additional weekly training on remote learning mechanisms. Overall, approximately 75 percent of teachers were satisfied with the level of support provided by their school. However, despite a desire to discuss student needs and learning more frequently, only approximately 50 percent of teachers reported meeting with their school leaders regularly.

4.2 Collaboration

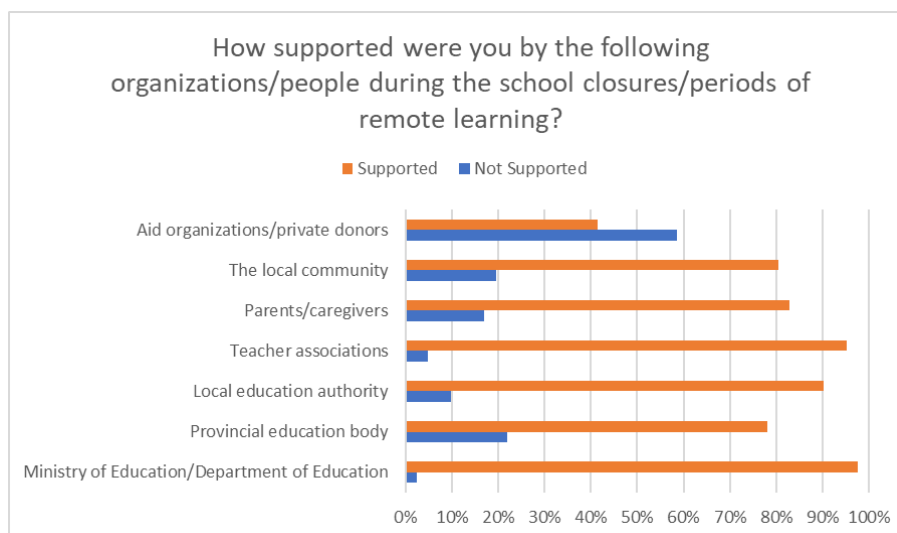
Collaboration between the central and district education authorities was found to be key to the development of policies and guidelines supporting adaptation to the provision of education services across the country at community and school levels. This included the suspension of standardized tests; extension of the duration of the school year; the provision of additional learning resources; curriculum adaptation to focus on core competencies during remote learning; guidelines for teaching practice during remote learning (e.g., working hours); and mental health and psychosocial support for teachers, parents, and students through a centralized hotline.

“In our district, in the district education department, a hotline was set up, and every school also had a hotline. The students also had a hard time. And so that they receive psychological assistance so that he does not feel somehow isolated, maybe they get into some stressful situations, even if they were at home, maybe there were some unresolved problems... The ministry told us to organize such lines.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

Collaboration with others was important; however, there were differences observed at the school level in perceptions of support and collaboration with different organizations (Figure 8).

Figure 9. School Leader Perceptions of Support



4.2.1 Collaboration Among Teachers and School Leaders

As a result of the transition to remote learning, participants indicated that while MOES provided access to various technological platforms, there was a need to collaborate with other teachers and teacher training institutes to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to develop and deliver learning materials using online teaching and learning platforms and methodologies. In many cases, schools developed their own training or sought assistance from external stakeholders to upskill teachers in how to teach via remote learning, including instruction in the use of various technologies. This transition was a complex and ongoing

process for teachers, and a key finding from this study highlighted that older teachers had greater difficulty transitioning to online modalities and were regularly required to support and build knowledge of their younger colleagues.

“When we started online teaching, then it was decided to form a working group for this; they taught at our university and then began to train teachers in schools.”

—(TEACHER EDUCATOR)

“They learned how to teach online...we all talked to each other, with those who knew how to enter online lessons, quickly began to distribute, taught each other how to do it. And we were even surprised that the teachers were so active, but it was still difficult.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

4.2.2 Collaboration with Parents

School leaders and teachers reported that collaboration with parents had increased as a result of remote learning, with parents becoming more engaged with their children’s learning and monitoring progress. Prior to the pandemic, one education expert estimated that only 20 to 30 percent of parents would communicate with teachers. However, during remote learning, 70 percent of teachers reported that they communicated with parents on ways to support student learning on a weekly basis.

“Of course, we talked [to parents] almost 24 hours a day. There was constant feedback; we studied ourselves and taught our children; we had to work with parents first so that later they could help their children.”

—(TEACHER)

“Parents had a good opportunity to monitor the learning process directly. Everyone controlled their children to be present at lessons. I saw how parents came to the lessons together and took part.”

—(EDUCATION EXPERT)

“Parents began to participate more actively in the school life of the child, to communicate with them more. At this time, teachers called and asked questions about working with parents. Thanks to these teachers who were able to organize and conduct work with parents. And thanks to the parents who supported the children in a timely manner and were sympathetic to the teachers, which helped with the participation of children in online learning.”

—(EDUCATION EXPERT)

Teachers also noted that *“children liked to work together with parents,”* suggesting an increased desire for parental interest and support from children. It was evident that parents appreciated these collaborative efforts, as survey results revealed that 84 percent of parents agreed they were satisfied with the level of support provided by their child’s school.

Parents reported that during school closures and periods of remote learning, their child continued to learn remotely through school but also noted that students were unprepared for independent learning. Parents consistently responded that they very frequently (at least 3-4 times a week) checked that their child had completed all their homework, helped with remote learning, and helped their child with learning assessments.

However, the extent to which parents could support children’s engagement in remote learning was a key concern held by policymakers, school leaders, and teachers. Most educators identified limited parental capacity to support their child with schoolwork (81 percent), limited home resources (78 percent, e.g., Internet, data, devices, quiet space, desk, books), and

limited parental engagement (77 percent) as the most significant challenges they faced in supporting students during the pandemic.

Interviews with key informants corroborated these findings and attributed parents' own work schedules, low literacy levels, limited knowledge of curriculum content areas, or difficulties ensuring students complied with learning requirements to difficulties in supporting their children in remote learning.

“Many parents did not make their children attend classes; instead of studying, they focused on fieldwork or earning money.”

—(TEACHER)

“I used Zoom and classroom platforms. However, students' and parents' lack of understanding impacted student participation.”

—(TEACHER)

“Of course, there were difficulties in what way many parents were not ready to cooperate online with teachers; for this, they had to separately conduct some teaching moments, namely in an online format.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

These challenges seemed to be magnified in the early grades, with teachers and school leaders reporting a gap in student learning outcomes when they returned to school due to a lack of parental capacity to support foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers also noted that young children especially struggled with self-regulation during remote learning and required more intensive support from parents. As one school leader noted:

“But children, especially those who were in the first grade, who completed assignments with their parents and then came to school, we saw that they never learned to read. Parents do not know this technique; teachers, of course, tried to explain to them how to work with the child, sending them instructions and tasks, someone delivered tasks, but this was not enough via WhatsApp.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

4.3 Well-Being and Inclusion

4.3.1 Student Well-Being

The mental health and psychosocial well-being of students and young people have been a challenging area in the Kyrgyz Republic for some time. The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the burden of mental health concerns in the Kyrgyz Republic, adding pressure to already stretched mental health services. UNICEF identified 250,000 children and caregivers requiring access to mental health and psychosocial support (2021), and the MOES targeted this issue by establishing a hotline for counseling and other psychological support for students. Teams of teachers and specialists were also assigned to counsel children and parents from vulnerable families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (MOES, 2020).

“Children started running away from their families and also by contacting the helpline (hotline)... For eight months of 2020, the Ministry of Labor and Social Development says that there were 96,733 phone calls or 390 calls in just one day...23.4% applied because of misunderstandings between parents and children due to online lessons, children running away from their home, aggressive behavior of the child, etc., and 10% of them applied for social assistance, and 293 people applied for psychological disorders, of which 178, this is 7.2%—there were children.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

Some reports from participants indicated that teachers also visited the homes of disadvantaged children to ensure they had access to learning, including resources, food, and mental health support. Eighty-three percent of school leaders and 86 percent of teachers reported that they worried about the mental health and well-being of their students. Most said they tried new ways to engage all students in learning and often provided mental health resources for their students and families.

“We had teachers going from house to house, especially in the category of those children who were inclusive, or these were children from low-income families... we have families, unfortunately, who didn’t have a TV at home, to watch the lesson...We delivered food to some families, again together with our parents. We submitted lists of such children and families who had problems in local governments, and the mayor’s office of the city, accordingly, also supported such families with food packages.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

The findings of this study also suggest that the adaptation of school practices assisted in establishing safe and productive learning environments for all. For example, it was reported that some schools already conducted yearly health checks for students, which ensured they already had access to health data for many students and could identify those at an increased risk of complications related to COVID-19. These data, together with increased health and safety practices, including improved sanitization and hygiene awareness among staff and students, were said to contribute greatly to the safety of schools throughout the pandemic and beyond.

“Every year before the start of the school year, we conduct a medical examination of all our auxiliary workers and teachers; we have certificates from children, we know which children are registered in a dispensary in one or another children’s clinic, probably, it has helped us to take specific measures to take action on such children who are more prone to infections.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

There were also mental health and well-being challenges around the transition to online learning and the lack of protective factors that a school environment provides. It was found that many home environments were not physically safe for children, and increased reports of family violence, sexual abuse, and teenage pregnancies were received.

“Because in the education system, it is the educational organization that, it turns out, is a safe environment where the child was not subjected to violence, and both parents and teachers understood this.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

“When we moved to an online form, we saw a lot of violence, witnessed how children were subjected to violence, especially children and women, difficulties fell on the shoulders of educational organizations.... Basically, the problem manifested itself in the fact that children were subjected to a domestic violence... violence by their own families, because many parents realized that they could not or did not know how to educate and were already in a situation in which they almost screamed.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

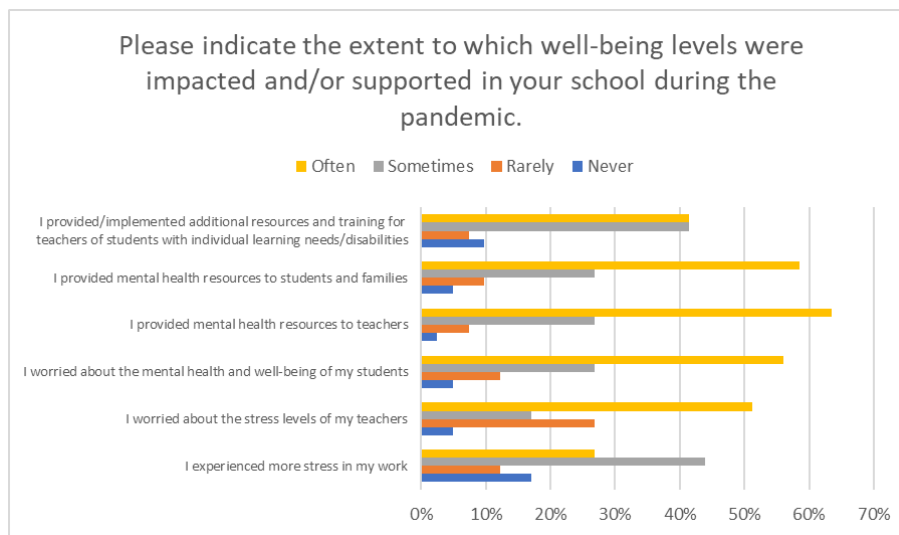
“The number of child suicides compared to 2019 increased by 30%, of which 12 are girls, and 39 are boys. They were probably under a lot of stress, these children killed themselves, and they were school-age children. And for six months of 2020, 159 children were put on the wanted list as missing....”

—(POLICYMAKER)

4.3.2 Educator Well-Being

Teachers reported increased mental health and well-being concerns, including poorer mental health due to the extra workload, managing student engagement online, and difficulties meeting the demands of parents to support their children during remote learning and to be available constantly. School leaders also reported increased levels of well-being and mental health concerns in their schools and adopted additional measures to support their staff and school community, as demonstrated in **Figure 9** below:

Figure 10. School Well-Being Challenges



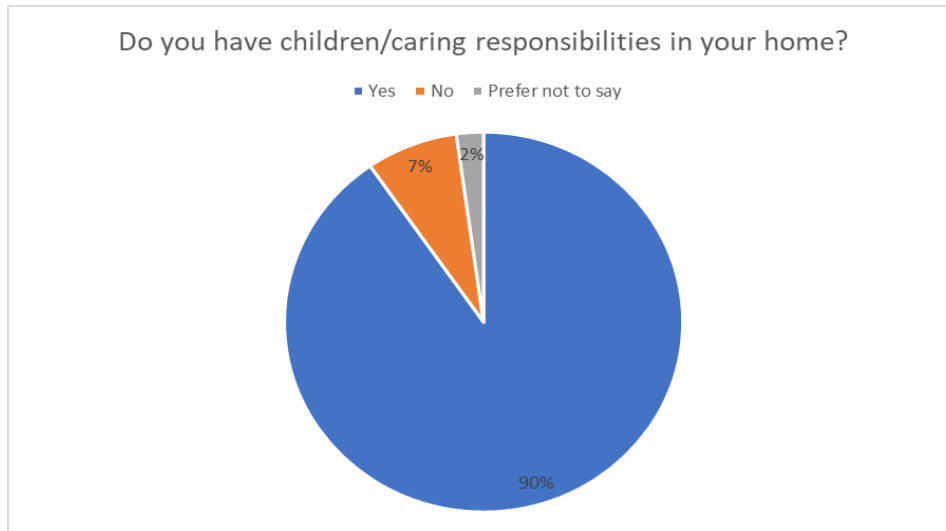
While survey data revealed that most school leaders tried to provide mental health resources ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’ to teachers and students, a lack of qualified staff to support a growing mental health crisis in the Kyrgyz Republic impacted heavily on the availability and accessibility of support.

“Let the teacher only teach the students and not do other work. Let the parents of the students feel the responsibility. Let them conduct activities, seminars, and educational activities in this regard. It is very difficult to work as a teacher.”

—(TEACHER)

A wide majority of teachers with children of their own faced the compounded challenges of being both a teacher and a parent. More than 90 percent of teachers surveyed reported having caring responsibilities (**Figure 10**).

Figure 11. Teacher Caring Responsibility



The dual role of teacher/caregiver presented unique difficulties and added to the burden of mental health and well-being concerns.

“You know, the most negative moment at this time is that I stopped paying attention to my child; he lagged behind, honestly. My child was left without attention, and without help, he began to experience psychological stress. At first, I was torn between family and work, working with the class took a lot of time.”

—(TEACHER)

4.3.3 Students with Additional Learning Needs

Remote and online learning was also seen as a strategy to cater to the needs of different students, such as those with special learning or psychosocial needs, who performed better during remote learning compared to face-to-face learning. Technology was identified as the key to supporting differing learning needs and supporting the Kyrgyz education system’s ability to transition to remote learning. However, data gathered from key informants indicated that technology also acted as a barrier in terms of resourcing, availability, and access. The integration of technology platforms to support curriculum delivery and the adoption of teaching activities to work within an online environment was an effective methodology for schools to continue to deliver learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Multiple modalities were used for distance learning, e.g., television lessons and online platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Google Meet, YouTube, and YaClass.

For students with physical disabilities or accessibility issues who may have previously struggled to access school learning environments, data suggest remote learning fostered equal participation. There was a concerted effort by the MOES and district education authorities to ensure that students with special needs were supported during remote learning. For example, the MOES video lessons included sign language translations.

“...created online lessons, video lessons for children with disabilities, children with special needs...so many interesting video lessons were created, especially for elementary school, for children who were in elementary school by age, to the point that we were shown the requirements, good methodological support was provided, and very interesting lessons came out for children with certain educational needs, who took these lessons at home with the help of their parents.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

At the school level, there was evidence of teachers adapting lessons and using different pedagogical strategies to cater to students with special needs. “Did we work almost the same with all of them, maybe the only thing for these children was more attention in terms of the fact that they did not always succeed with everyone, and then the teachers held separate consultations for these children in extra time if they didn’t make it.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

Although it is likely to have occurred, there was limited evidence of schools without access to online platforms using and distributing paper-based resources to overcome resourcing and access challenges. There are limited data on those students who were unable to access online learning and little evidence of what schools did to support students who did not have resources, except for teachers reporting the distribution of devices. Although parents and caregivers were asked to share insights into the experiences of children with additional learning needs, data retrieved were extremely limited, and analysis was not possible. This may be because physical, intellectual, and social disabilities remain stigmatized in the Kyrgyz Republic. Future research could provide more insight into the experiences of students and their families, and the ways in which inclusion can be promoted as part of remote or blended learning approaches

4.4 Differentiation

At the onset of school closures, the MOES worked with teachers, curriculum writers, and pedagogical advisors to quickly develop video content for television broadcasting and online learning. Each school was expected to use the content to support the continuity of learning in their communities. However, many teachers and school leaders interviewed reported that these resources were too generalized and had to be adapted to their school and student context. This is consistent with the experience of other countries in Asia. In an attempt to rapidly roll out the remote learning curriculum, ministries of education tended to focus on a one-size-fits-all approach with little emphasis on the individual pedagogical needs of learners.

Data from the survey and interviews indicated that educators in the Kyrgyz Republic tried to be responsive to the individual learning needs of their students. Ninety-five percent of teachers indicated that they adapted the curriculum and assessment practices for different students. This included a focus on foundational literacy and numeracy skills, reducing lesson times, incorporating psychosocial well-being and physical activities into lessons, and conducting regular phone checks to monitor student growth.

During the pandemic, teachers also received support from their school leaders and teacher trainers on how to adopt differentiated approaches during remote learning. As one teacher educator noted:

“...the students and I have already included in our classes that if I explain some material, I will use different resources, I will use different videos, where a male voice will sound, a female voice, where different tempos will sound—faster, slower intonations, it is necessary that there is no such thing that the child understands only his teacher.”

—(TEACHER EDUCATOR)

Some private schools are already seeing the benefit of remote learning to support different student needs, particularly for those who perform better using online or blended modalities.

“And we are already thinking about amending the charter and, possibly, organizing online education for certain categories of children. After all, as the practice has shown, when we did the analysis, not all children were negatively affected by online learning in terms of the quality of education. As it turned out, there would be such children who, on the contrary, were more comfortable in this way.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

However, there is still a lack of evidence on the extent and quality of differentiated techniques used by teachers during the pandemic. Further exploration of classroom-based practices would help identify areas for targeting teacher training and support for differentiation.

4.5 Growth

A focus on student growth was reported in school-level data. Most teachers who participated in the study agreed that they were expected to assess student learning and monitor student engagement by their schools. Most teachers also reported using evidence/data to reflect on how students were performing and highlighted their collection of data to monitor student growth. However, just over half of parents agreed that their child’s school assessed their child’s learning and monitored their child’s level of engagement. This disconnect provides an opportunity for further exploration, which could encourage teachers and parents to share responsibility for student participation and achievement.

“I think the best way is for parents, teachers, and students to work together and have feedback.”

—(TEACHER)

While teachers reported that students had developed their learning skills through the transition to online methodologies, changes to teacher practice using remote mechanisms were also apparent. Improvements in learning activities such as creating online resources, research, independence, and time management were reported. Willingness to participate in new approaches to teaching marks an opportunity for teachers to diversify their practice and appeal to students of different interests and abilities. Personal and professional growth among educators also recognizes the opportunities provided by the pandemic.

“When my teachers began to conduct lessons online, it was very difficult for me to teach them. I forced them to film a lesson, which was filmed and sent to the group, then the parents began to complain that there were so many mistakes in the lessons on physics, chemistry, in all subjects which were prepared, that the teachers could not speak. However, time forced my teachers and me to learn how to prepare good lessons, check each other’s mistakes, and correct and helped to each other. That time urged the teachers to show how it is possible to make a lesson properly, briefly, and clearly for their students.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

“At first, I had trouble; later, we used different methods of teaching. In the online lesson, [we used] test questions with pictures, narration, logical instructions, and problems. The students were interested.”

—(TEACHER)

4.6 Reflection

Building an education system that is resilient to future shocks and crises requires a culture of reflection that allows all members of the school community to be involved in pathways for improvement and growth. Evidence from survey and interview data provide valuable insights

from school-level actors, such as parents, teachers, and school leaders, on the challenges and promising practices for supporting student learning during the pandemic.

Parents have shown a greater understanding of the education process and become stronger advocates for their children's educational outcomes through more regular communication with teachers and monitoring of their children's learning. Eighty-six percent responded that they monitored their children's homework at least once a week, while two-thirds of parents indicated that they met with their children's teacher at least once a week to discuss their children's progress during remote learning.

Teachers and school leaders have adopted innovative practices to support student engagement and growth through the use of new assessment strategies and classroom-based data. The experiences of parents, teachers, and school leaders are critical in informing system-wide recovery and improvement from the pandemic. Similarly, successful reform efforts rely on the knowledge and involvement of parents and educators to translate policies into relevant and equitable learning experiences for children. Findings from this study provide opportunities to reflect on the challenges experienced by various groups of students and how to adapt teaching and learning practices to support student growth and well-being as systems recover and rebuild from the pandemic.

5 CHALLENGES TO EDUCATION RESPONSES

This study identified two significant challenges that were prevalent across reports from school and policy leaders in the Kyrgyz Republic in adapting education systems as a result of COVID-19: (1) remote learning and (2) engaging students and families.

5.1 Remote Learning

Despite a clear commitment from the Kyrgyz government to support the digitalization of education in the NES 2040, key informants cited the need for more preparedness for remote learning in existing policy and practice at both school and government levels as an overarching challenge. Resourcing challenges were prevalent, and some participants reported disparities in how initiatives were implemented at the school level due to resourcing issues, limited access to government-supported teacher training, or to meet the unique needs of their communities. While the central MOES was quick to develop digital and broadcast lessons, the one-size-fits-all approach and the lack of teacher training in the use of technology and adaptation of TV lessons caused some initial delay and confusion in the delivery of remote learning. However, teachers showed resilience and confidence in teaching remotely once they mastered the technology and online pedagogy.

Lack of resourcing was also exacerbated by teachers' skill and knowledge deficits in the remote learning space, insufficient and inequitable access to materials and technology for remote learning (especially in remote areas), and the limited ability of many parents to support remote learning at home. Many school leaders reported that teachers were required to travel to family homes to check in on the well-being of children and assist in providing resources such as medical supplies, food, and mobile devices or televisions to those in need. In some regions, reports indicate that most teachers financed the provision of resources such as smartphones or other learning materials themselves. For families who could not afford the technology, school leaders have reported advocating for additional resources, such as mobile phones and televisions, from the district Department of Education and local councils. Where these were not available or where households lacked electricity, teachers have developed paper-based learning packs and visited families regularly to support and monitor learning activities.

“The most important thing is the help of resources from the school (telephone, Internet, study materials).”

—(TEACHER)

“For those who were not covered online, they made separate tasks, printed them out, and delivered them to their homes.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

Interview data revealed that students attending private schools or institutions in metro areas were more likely to have access to devices and secure Internet connections than students attending public schools, and particularly those in rural and remote areas. In these areas, some teachers reported that online lessons had to be delivered at variable times, as it was common that children would need to wait to use their parent’s phone to log into the session, and generally, this device would only be available to them in the evenings. Families with multiple children of different ages also faced challenges sharing a singular device while allowing each child to attend to their required learning activities.

5.1.1 Access to Devices and Infrastructure

Significant issues in access to devices for both teachers and students due to a lack of funding limited the availability of online learning for many. Further issues with access to adequate Internet connections due to inadequate infrastructure contributed to the debilitating nature of this problem. For example, most households surveyed had access to a mobile phone (94 percent), television (93 percent), and an Internet connection (84 percent). However, less than half had access to a computer, laptop, tablet, or radio. About 9 percent of families did not have access to electricity. This is consistent with the responses of school leaders whom that noted limited home resources are a significant challenge.

“The lack of Internet in the countryside does not provide parents with modern phones.”

—(TEACHER)

“But most of the schools, especially in the remote ones, in the border areas, high mountain areas, they remained without access [to Internet connections].”

—(POLICYMAKER)

Discrepancies in resource and infrastructure access were also evident across the education sector. For example, in many cases, private schools, universities, and teacher education institutions appeared to have existing information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure allowing them to be more prepared to implement remote learning initiatives. This capacity will be important to leverage for the future rollout of a blended learning approach across the country.

5.1.2 Data Literacy

School leaders, teachers, students, and parents were generally inexperienced in the use of technological platforms, and training was only sometimes available. The MOES’ National In-Service Teacher Training Institute provided some guidance and training to teachers. However, this research has found that this was not accessible by all, and schools routinely relied on more experienced school leaders or expert teachers to train their colleagues where possible.

“Even though out of 7 people in the administration, only me and my deputy knew the computer. My head teacher knew how to work in Word but did not work in Excel program. The rest did not know the program at all.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

“...up to this point, almost 80% of teachers did not know platforms like Google Classroom, Zoom, maybe Teams and others.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

5.2 Engaging Students and Families

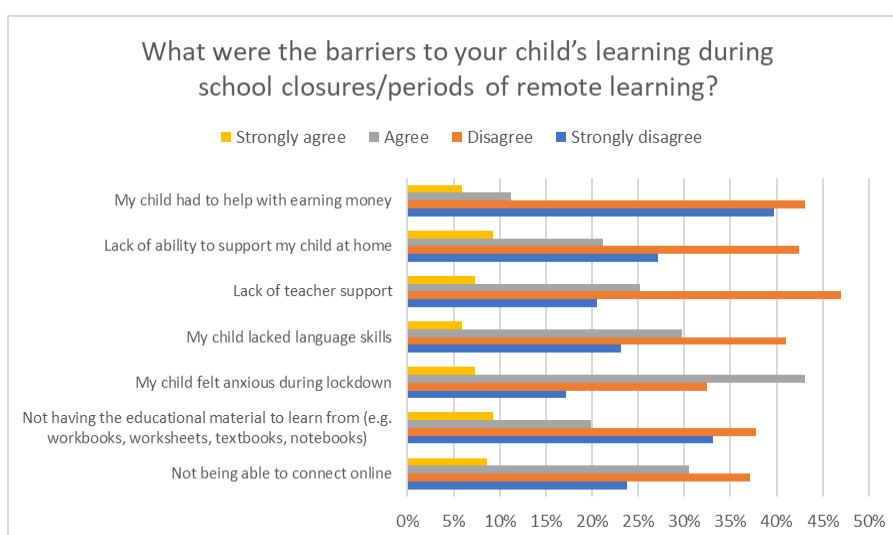
Teachers faced many challenges related to the use of technological methodologies for remote learning. In addition to challenges with the technological elements of remote learning, teachers also reported difficulties engaging students during remote learning. This was particularly due to large class sizes and additional barriers for young learners. Teachers and school leaders also expressed concerns relating to learning loss in children in the early grades.

“But children, especially those who were in the first grade, who completed assignments with their parents and then came to school, we saw that they never learned to read. Parents do not know this technique; teachers, of course, tried to explain to them how to work with the child, sending them instructions and tasks, and someone delivered tasks, but this was not enough via WhatsApp...For elementary school, this was a big lag (they moved slowly), especially this is the second grade, they don’t know a lot in terms of mathematics, then reading, then languages, English was faced with great difficulty.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

Parental interest and engagement were seen as a major challenge to the equitable participation of children in the Kyrgyz Republic, based on the perspectives of both policymakers and educators. Parental stress was also seen as a barrier to engagement and concern in relation to the provision of child safety. These findings contrast with the survey data outlined by parents, who did not report notable barriers to participation (Figure 11).

Figure 12. Barriers to Children’s Remote Learning



5.2.1 Mental Health and Well-Being

Although the findings presented in this report study highlight awareness of the importance of positive mental health, the well-being of students, families, and educators remains a key challenge. Previous research has highlighted the extent to which mental health services in the Kyrgyz Republic lack sufficient financing, equipment, and qualified specialists, resulting in low-quality mental health care (Pinchuk et al., 2021). Concerns around child safety during the pandemic, coupled with increased rates of child and adolescent suicide and attempted suicide,

were also reported by some policymakers who participated in this study. Concerningly, interview data suggests that parental stress, exacerbated by extended periods of remote learning, may have contributed to increased rates of violence in the home. Ensuring the health and well-being of children are supported and monitored when schools are open or closed is, therefore, a critical task for the Kyrgyz Republic.

“A large number of parents could not manage the education of their children; many children suffered physically and mentally. There was violence against children, in the sense that the child could not master the curriculum and, therefore, the parents pressed, morally, physically....”

—(POLICYMAKER)

6 RECOVERY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

While the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have been extensively researched and reported, the identification of enablers that supported schools to adapt to the changes brought on by COVID-19 is equally important to note. This chapter will provide a reflection on lessons learned about what works best to support recovery and educational improvement in the Kyrgyz Republic.

6.1 Partnerships

This study found that many schools and education providers across the Kyrgyz Republic were well-positioned to respond to the challenges raised due to strengths in leadership, partnerships, and inclusion. Schools frequently sought out partnerships with external stakeholders, including the local government, the private sector, NGOs, and development organizations, to develop training and obtain learning resources (e.g., sim cards, tablets, computers, and televisions). Consequently, collaboration and partnerships between schools, the MOES, and the private sector appeared to be key to ensuring that adequate resources were available throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Aga Khan Foundation provided teachers in the highlands with 3,000 tablets. New computers were delivered to many schools so that teachers could somehow use and conduct work. And, of course, in order for teachers and students to stay online, Megacom provided a big discount on the purchase of SIM cards. Teachers and students then moved more calmly to this platform. And thanks to their phones, and without limited Internet, they conducted classes and studied.”

—(POLICYMAKER)

Similarly, MOES partnered with universities and other teacher training providers to support the development of upskilling programs to include remote learning teaching practices. There was also evidence that teachers formed their own peer learning networks to share teaching and learning strategies during remote learning, such as digital skills, learning materials, and content development.

The strengthened partnership between schools and parents was one of the main enablers identified in this study. While parents were resistant to remote learning at the beginning of the pandemic, this attitude shifted throughout the pandemic, where parent groups worked collaboratively with teachers and school leaders to support student learning and assist in the provision of resources to families in need. Findings also indicated that working through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic led parents to recognize the important role of teachers and the need to collaborate in their children’s learning. As parents became more invested in

their children’s learning, this facilitated a stronger link between school and home, where there was a sense of shared responsibility through building trust and mutual accountability for children’s learning and well-being. Global research indicates that many children, particularly those from poorer households, are at high risk of not returning to school after the pandemic due to their participation in economic and livelihood activities. However, strong parental engagement reflects strong values placed on education, which increases the likelihood of parents sending their children back to school and supporting them to stay in school.

“They [teachers] were in contact with their parents all the time. Parents already knew exactly what questions, what problems to ask, you understand, such a close connection clearly makes it possible to comprehend where the child has gaps, what he needs help with; I always see this with our elementary school teachers.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

“I’d like to find ways to get along with parents and connect with them.”

—(TEACHER)

6.2 Teacher Practice

The necessity to adapt to the challenges faced by education systems during the COVID-19 pandemic led to the development of strategies and practices to improve the quality and provision of education for children across the Kyrgyz Republic. Many of these adapted practices and learnings from the difficulties faced during this time have established a strong basis for a positive progression across education systems. Importantly, interview data showed that teachers were confident in adapting their practices to support student learning and well-being. It indicates a readiness of Kyrgyz teachers to adopt new practices post-pandemic. School leaders, in particular, highlighted changes to teacher practice as opportunities to leverage the learning of the pandemic.

“...almost all of our teachers now have laptops, and they are already using these technologies in the classroom. Their lessons became interesting because, after all, students like it when the teacher not only stands and speaks with chalk on the blackboard but when shows some, well, through these platforms, they show some tasks, some slide presentations. Now, this may be a plus; teachers have mastered these technologies.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

Positive examples of school autonomy are also highlighted in the study, where teachers and school leaders have demonstrated the capacity to lead and innovate the delivery of remote learning to suit the needs of their local contexts. This includes adapting pedagogical approaches, the curriculum, instructional time, and assessment of students. School autonomy is crucial to system recovery and resilience, and teachers need to be supported and have the agency to make decisions about school-level improvements, where the learning outcomes and well-being of their students are central.

While some teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic appeared ready to use blended learning approaches, others highlighted a need for additional support. Teachers expressed a desire for “*more information and methodological materials*” to participate in “*a working environment with the latest technology*” or to engage in a “*seminar on how to conduct online courses (for students, parents, teachers)*.”

Research indicates that remote modalities can enhance opportunities to learn, particularly for students with additional learning needs. However, there was still only emergent evidence of how teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic are using technology or blended approaches to support different types of students. There is, therefore, an opportunity to improve teacher training in the use of ICT and remote modalities and to ensure the new skills developed during the

pandemic continue to be used as part of ongoing teaching practice and promote educational quality for all students.

“I want a lot of new learning techniques and digital development.”

—(TEACHER)

“It would be good if the necessary conditions and support were provided for the teacher.”

—(TEACHER)

6.3 Flexible Learning Modalities

The pandemic was an opportunity to speed up technological reform and improvement, including the digitization of school administrative practices and the integration of online learning resources. This, coupled with the training teachers and school staff received during the pandemic, has improved digital literacy overall and, specifically, teachers’ ability to use computer software and online platforms for administrative and learning tasks (e.g., Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, email, electronic diary, class registers). There is also an opportunity for the Kyrgyz government to draw on the experiences of higher education institutions that were the early adopters of ICT to expand teacher professional learning using online and blended approaches.

Teachers reported that gaining new digital skills and greater confidence to teach using technology allowed them to implement innovative approaches to encourage greater student engagement. As highlighted in the report, findings indicate that older teachers experienced greater difficulty utilizing devices and implementing online modalities. As such, it was frequently reported that the support of younger teachers was enlisted to improve skills in this area. This is an opportunity for improving relationships and mentoring between teachers of different skills, but also for leveraging the experiences of remote learning in order to support more equitable outcomes.

“We are already thinking about amending the charter and, possibly, organizing online education for certain categories of children. After all, as the practice has shown...not all children were negatively affected by online learning in terms of the quality of education. As it turned out, would there be such children who, on the contrary, were more comfortable in this way.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategies for readiness, response, and recovery to support pathways to resilience are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 3. Summary of Readiness, Response, and Recovery Strategies to Support Pathways to Resilience

Phase	Strategies
Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education reform policies supporting education quality improvements, including teacher effectiveness • Cross-government coordination for disaster risk management • Policy supporting digitalization of the education system • Policies supporting marginalized populations
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of emergency declared • School closures and implementation of remote learning • Development of content for online learning and broadcasting • Subsidized Internet and mobile access to facilitate remote learning • District-level resourcing to provide teachers and students with devices for learning • Health and well-being focus (e.g., hotlines)
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted teaching and learning strategies at the school level (e.g., adapted curriculum, instructional time, assessment) • Establishment of teacher peer learning networks for upskilling • Strengthened engagement with parents and the community
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering school-parent-community partnerships • Building teacher confidence in digital literacy and blended pedagogy • Incorporating multiple modalities into digital learning to support equity of access • Strengthening regulatory framework to support quality standards in education and technology (including regulating providers) • Leveraging the strong ICT capacity of higher education institutions to develop online and blended learning approaches • Prioritizing student, teacher, and parent mental health and well-being as part of the school and home environment

The aim of this study is to understand the ways in which education policies and practices that support equitable learning in the Kyrgyz Republic have been implemented during the pandemic. The study found that while the Kyrgyz Republic faces numerous challenges, there are also many opportunities to consider the interpretation of policies and innovative school-level practices that have the potential to enhance the experiences of staff, families, and children in the Kyrgyz educational system.

Effective collaborations between schools and families led to improved learning opportunities for students during the pandemic. Parents developed a stronger understanding of the educational process, became further invested in their child's education outcomes, and gained

a stronger understanding of how to support their child's learning at home. Strengthened partnerships between school, home, and community build trust and shared accountability for children's learning outcomes. This also increases the perceived value of education and creates greater confidence in the education system.

International evidence suggests that parents who place a high value on education are more likely to support their children to attend school and stay in school. This is a particularly important protective factor for children from low socio-economic households, who are at greater risk of abstaining from school after the pandemic due to the pursuit of work or other economic activities. However, children in Kyrgyz families still face disparate risks in terms of psychological and physical safety. Parental investment and engagement must therefore continue to be leveraged, as cultural challenges around the value of education, especially for students who are marginalized because of language, gender, ability, and/or health, remain a barrier to participation and equitable learning in the Kyrgyz Republic. The study has highlighted positive examples of the school and home partnership, where children's learning success became a shared responsibility between the school and parents. This partnership should be reinforced and fostered post-pandemic through continued, regular communication with parents about teaching and learning strategies to support monitoring and growth. Strategies to build parental capacity to support learning at home also provide parents with an opportunity to contribute to their children's learning.

Schools reported implementing new programs and practices, particularly those that utilized remote learning mechanisms, throughout the pandemic. However, the experience of remote learning in the Kyrgyz Republic has demonstrated a gap between policy and practice. While the government negotiated with telecommunication providers for subsidized Internet connections and mobile data, this did not translate into better access for many learners due to challenges relating to the lack of devices in the home. This is consistent with findings across Asia, where the promise of technology-enabled learning seemed to exacerbate the digital divide rather than close it. To build a more resilient education system that addresses equity of access, the Kyrgyz government will need to consider a regulatory framework that ensures quality standards in delivering education technology in the future. There also needs to be a consideration for multiple modalities that cater to the needs of different learners, not a one-size-fits-all approach.

Although access to devices and data remains a challenge across schools in the Kyrgyz Republic, many teachers reported trying new modes and modalities to deliver lessons, with some teachers reporting on the ways in which these tools can foster inclusive learning. Teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic have demonstrated a resilient and adaptive approach to teaching practice during the pandemic. It is, therefore, important that support for teacher development is prioritized to take advantage of teacher confidence in digital pedagogy. Blended approaches to learning should continue to be encouraged and appropriately resourced at both school and system levels so that the digital literacy skills of educators, families, and students can continue to improve.

In terms of ongoing system improvement, data collected as part of this study indicate that high-quality practices remain inconsistent across schools in the Kyrgyz Republic. Schools with adequate resourcing were more likely to be able to support continuity of learning than schools impacted by funding challenges. Although study data emphasize that the government of the Kyrgyz Republic was responsive and made early decisions to support the continuity of learning, including the development and dissemination of learning materials in new modalities, evidence of high-quality teaching practices, particularly differentiation and reflection, was not always apparent in the majority of schools that participated in this study. However, given that most households in the Kyrgyz Republic have access to the Internet or mobile connections, there is existing potential for the expansion of the Internet and mobile technology to support differentiated learning approaches through a combination of high-tech, low-tech, and no-tech solutions.

The responsiveness and motivation of school leaders and teachers were also well-documented throughout the findings. However, there is a paucity of evidence of reflection on lessons learned during the pandemic, and any associated adjustments to programs and practices, at either the school or system level. Similarly, while educators and key informants reported the provision of differentiated learning materials for students who did or did not have access to online learning materials, evidence is still emerging on school-level practices that support differentiation in schools in the Kyrgyz Republic. Consistent processes for monitoring student growth, both formative and summative, also remain emergent. Clear leadership from researchers, pedagogical advisors, and teacher trainers is needed to better prepare educators in the Kyrgyz Republic for future disruptions. A focus on growth and improvement in online learning, assessments, and pedagogical practice is also required.

The findings of this study support several key recommendations, which are outlined in **Table 2** below for policymakers, educators, and families in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Table 4. Recommendations for Policymakers, Educators, Parents, and Families

Policymakers	Educators	Parents/Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize parental engagement • Enhance the digital literacy of teachers, parents, and students • Improve digital infrastructure to last-mile schools and regulatory standards for blended learning delivery during and post crises • Develop innovative and engaging learning solutions that incorporate multiple modalities rather than a one-size-fits-all approach • Strengthen engagement with higher education institutions with experience in education technology • Promote knowledge sharing among teachers through formal/informal mentoring or teacher collaboration • Integrate mental health and well-being as part of learning • Protect children from violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use remote modalities that support learning, incorporating a combination of high-tech, low-tech, and no-tech solutions • Adapt and contextualize remote learning to support different learner needs • Enhance capacities to deliver teaching and learning practices remotely • Support the implementation of policies and procedures that promote child safety • Participate in training on assessment and monitoring • Encourage parental engagement through communication and feedback loops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with your child’s teacher and ask for feedback • Encourage your child’s learning by showing an interest and asking questions • Praise your child • Ask questions about your children’s learning • Understand policies and procedures to promote child safety

This study provides insights for system and school leaders to reflect on what can improve educational experiences for learners in Kyrgyz schools, thus contributing to a process of ongoing improvement and reform in the Kyrgyz Republic. If those school-level practices highlighted by this study can be embedded in purposeful policies and practices in terms of professional learning and self-reflection, there is a greater likelihood of teachers' mindsets shifting and new skills being applied and shared. Further consideration might be given to how the MOES can best position itself as a partner in reform efforts that promote family engagement, high-quality teaching, and leveraging opportunities for equitable learning.

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ANNEX A: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This analytical framework underpins the design and implementation of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) mapping study across six countries in the Asia region. It will be used to guide data collection, analysis, and reporting to meet the objectives of the study: (1) to fill the gap in comparative analyses on countries in developing Asia, and (2) to focus on policies and actions countries have taken to mediate and remediate learning loss and learning inequalities during COVID-19.

The framework is informed by the extensive literature on effective teaching and learning and draws from the emerging evidence base on COVID-19 impacts on education systems worldwide. The figure below depicts the different interacting levels of the education system (policy, school, agents) that impact on equitable student learning. In the context of COVID-19, the three phases—Readiness, Response, and Recovery—provide the operational context that influences how education systems plan for and manage their strategies for improvement and resilience.

This framework draws on USAID’s *Reigniting Learning: Strategies for Accelerating Learning Post-Crisis*² evidence review and *Return to Learning during Crises*³ toolkit and evidence review on strategies to accelerate learning and the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)⁴ on promising policy responses to support greater education system resilience and responsiveness. Both share similar elements in defining a path forward that prioritizes the policies and practices to promote: (1) equity and inclusion, (2) flexibility in learning interventions and assessments, and (3) building the capacity of educators. However, this framework also seeks to broaden the ways in which we recognize system readiness and quality, by focusing on the interplay between policy, practice, and equitable learning.

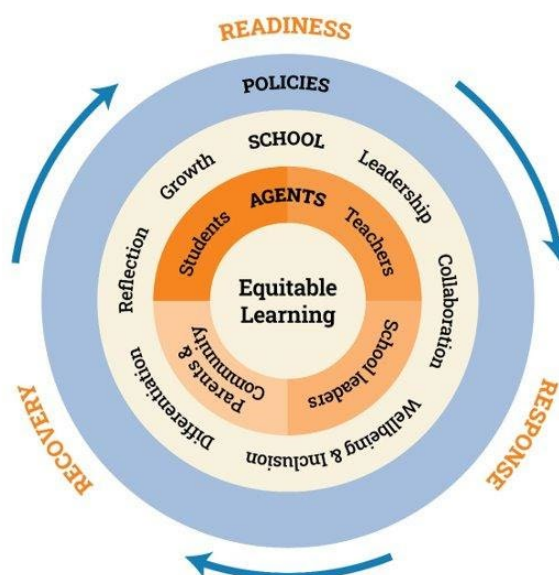
By exploring possibilities and opportunities rather than deficits, this framework will guide the investigation into how the different levels of the education system operate and interact, at each phase of the COVID-19 planning and management cycle. Within each country’s context, evidence will be collected on which systematic levers and school-level practices education systems can mobilize in safeguarding equitable learning among educational agents during and after the pandemic. Examples of innovative, flexible, and responsive systems and school practices, relevant to the context will be explored and presented against the framework, creating meaningful pathways for comparative education systems to learn and adapt into the future. Lessons will be drawn from each country’s response to COVID-19 to highlight the most promising approaches to address persistent quality and equity challenges in the education system.

² Sarr, K.G., Tolani, N., Rodriguez Morales, I., Aghabozorg, R. & Mulcahy-Dunn, A. (2020). *Reigniting Learning: Strategies Accelerating Learning Post Crisis. A Review of Evidence*. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Available online https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/Technical_Report_Accelerating_Learning_Post-Crisis_Full_Report.pdf

³ Boisvert, K., Weisenhorn, N., & Bowen, J. (2021). *Returning to Learning during Crises: Decision-making and Planning Tools for Education Leaders*. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Available online <https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/Returning%20to%20Learning%20During%20Crises.pdf>

⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2020). *Lesson for Education from COVID-19: A Policymaker’s Handbook for More Resilient Systems*. Available online <https://www.oecd.org/education/lessons-for-education-from-covid-19-0a530888-en.htm>.

Analytical Framework



Equitable Learning

Drawing upon the USAID and OECD frameworks, we place equitable learning at the center of the framework, surrounded by those practices that can improve equitable learning opportunities among students, but also parents/caregivers, teachers, and school leaders. Equity is also highlighted as an area of interest in examining indicators of readiness, response, and recovery potential in the context of the pandemic. While research into the impacts of the pandemic on student learning has not yet demonstrated broad evidence of learning loss, there is convincing evidence of learning inequity in many contexts,⁵ including in low- to middle-income countries.⁶

The COVID-19 Context

The COVID-19 crisis has caused unprecedented levels of disruption to education systems worldwide. Across the Asia region, it is estimated that around 760 million children were impacted by school closures at the height of the pandemic. Government response strategies have varied across the region, with some countries imposing prolonged school lockdowns while others have had short, repeated closure periods. As countries begin to reopen schools and continue to prepare for subsequent waves of COVID-19 infection, there is a need to develop the greater capability of education systems to (1) safeguard learning in the early response phase and (2) address persistent barriers to learning equality by harnessing the opportunities for systemic change.

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education⁷ provides a useful framework for understanding how systems can better respond to emergencies and how they can improve preparedness to build a more resilient education system. The Preparedness phase involves having plans and processes that document what should happen during and after an emergency, such as national disaster response plans. The

⁵ Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, H. (2020). *COVID-19 and Student Learning in the United States: The Hurt Could Last a Lifetime*. McKinsey and Co.

⁶ Reimers, F.M. (Ed) (2022). *Primary and Secondary Education During COVID-19: Disruptions to Educational Opportunities During a Pandemic*. Springer. Available online <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-3-030-81500-4.pdf>

⁷ Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). (2012). *Minimum standards for education: Preparedness, response, recovery*. Available online <https://inee.org/resources/inee-minimum-standards>

Response phase refers to policies, plans, and actions to manage priority areas, such as the closing of schools. The Recovery phase focuses on returning students to pre-emergency learning. The three phases are represented in a cycle to reflect an iterative process, where data-driven monitoring and evaluation processes facilitate systems readiness and improvement. In our framework, we have adapted the INEE standards to consider **Readiness, Response, and Recovery** not only in the context of emergencies but in relation to system resilience during and beyond the pandemic.

Policies

This framework assumes that resilient education systems rely on the interaction between policies and institutions with classroom-level practices and the ability of agents to mobilize them. Successful policy implementation requires skilled teachers and effective school leaders to connect classroom practices with the broader education reform agenda.⁸ Well-designed policies, supported by political commitment and strong institutional structures, including capacity and resourcing, have the best chance of success.

The OECD (2020)⁹ proposes three key policy priorities to take education forward beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. It challenges systems to take a transformational view of education that values people and processes over classrooms and devices. This links to the second policy priority, which calls for investments in teachers through carefully designed professional development that builds resilience and responsiveness to the new learning environment and considers new learning approaches that meet the learning needs of all children. The third priority area focuses on equity and inclusion in learning that combine policies that support effective learning interventions with student engagement and well-being.

In the context of COVID-19, education systems must understand the policy levers and school-level inputs that are necessary for safeguarding learning to pre-pandemic trajectories. For example:

- Policies support schools and teachers to develop emergency distance learning materials and activities accessible to all children, particularly the most marginalized.
- Government health authorities decide when schools reopen, and all educational authorities adhere to the Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools.
- Education planners develop and adapt instructional times, curricula, and learning resources and tools, as well as modify examinations and promotion procedures to make them feasible.

School-Level Practices

There is no doubt that quality inputs at the school level have the potential to influence student outcomes positively.¹⁰ The quality of those inputs, and the potential they bring for student learning and well-being, depends on what students, teachers, school leaders, and parents do and how they interpret and enact broader policies that guide classroom practice and student learning. When we consider the school-level practices that have the potential to promote a resilient approach to change and support equitable outcomes for all, it is helpful to conceptualize the school as a community made up of four key stakeholder groups that come together to support learning and well-being. They are the students, the teachers, the school leaders, the parents, and the community. We refer to these different stakeholder groups as “Agents” in recognition of the active role they can play in identifying needs within the school community and responding to those needs, particularly during a time of change or disruption.

⁸ Schleicher, A. (2018). *What makes high-performing school systems different. World Class: How to Build a 21st-Century School System*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

⁹ Organization for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD). (2020), OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2020 Issue 2, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/39a88ab1-en>.

¹⁰ Hattie, J. (2003). *Teachers Make a Difference, What is the research evidence?* University of Auckland.

School-level factors that have the potential to influence student outcomes positively include the following.

- **Leadership:** Leadership that focuses on improving student learning, supporting ongoing teacher professional learning and collaboration, engaging all members of the school community, and promoting the well-being and growth of the school community. In the context of this framework, we acknowledge that leadership can occur at various levels, including at policy, school, or classroom levels. In this current study, we are interested in how leadership at the school level contributes to resilience in the face of challenges and supports equitable outcomes. This leadership may come from school leaders themselves, but also collaborative leadership involving teachers, families, and the local community.
- **Collaboration:** Quality collaboration between school and families to support learning and well-being, the professional collaboration between teachers that is focused on improving learning and the impact on student outcomes,¹¹ and the collaboration between students and teachers (e.g., formative assessment¹²) to improve student engagement, motivation, and learning.¹³
- **Reflection:** A culture of reflection that looks for pathways to improvement and growth, uses evidence to evaluate impact, and identifies areas for improvement, involves all members of the school community in the process of reflection. Feedback is also an integral part of the reflective process¹⁴ allowing agents across various levels of the school to develop a sense of agency.
- **Differentiation:** Multiple pathways for learning, flexible options for engaging in learning, responsiveness to individual needs, using evidence to inform decision-making and planning, teacher autonomy to adjust and respond to the needs of their students and the context for teaching and learning, support for teachers to enable a differentiated approach (training, resources, mentoring).¹⁵
- **Well-Being and Inclusion:** An emphasis on promoting well-being as a valued outcome of school, structures, processes, and programs that support the well-being of all members of the school community (students, teachers, school leaders, and families) can support student engagement and learning.¹⁶ Inclusion should also be considered a key condition for well-being¹⁷
- **Growth:** An emphasis on making progress, change and improvement, and other structures and processes that support teachers, students, and families to contribute to improvement within their school community.¹⁸

¹¹ Donohoo, J. (2018). Collective teacher efficacy research: Productive patterns of behaviour and other positive consequences. *Journal of Educational Change*, 19(3), 323-345.

¹² William*, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C., & Black, P. (2004). Teachers developing assessment for learning: Impact on student achievement. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 11(1), 49-65.

¹³ Timperley, H., Ell, F., & Le Fevre, D. (2017). Developing adaptive expertise through professional learning communities. In *Teachers Leading Educational Reform* (pp. 175-189). Routledge.

¹⁴ Hattie, J., & Clarke, S. (2019). *Visible learning: Feedback*. Routledge.

¹⁵ Tomlinson, C. A., Murphy, M. (2016). *Leading for differentiation: Growing teachers who grow kids*. Hawker Brownlow Education.

¹⁶ Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68.

¹⁷ Goldan, J., Hoffmann, L., Schwab, S. (2021). A matter of resources? – students' academic self-concept, social inclusion and school well-being in inclusive education. *Resourcing Inclusive Education*, 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-363620210000015008>.

¹⁸ Griffin, P. E. (2017). *Assessment for teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

While the system and school structures are crucial components of educational quality, understanding what happens in a school setting can offer meaningful insights into overcoming barriers to educational quality. Exploring which school-based practices and responses have been effective in supporting the continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has yet to be well examined, particularly in Asia.

In the context of this framework, the above school-level practices are intentionally broad and reflect the established body of research on the importance of in-school practices on student learning. This is a point of difference to many existing frameworks that assess school improvement or education quality, which often base quality on access to resources, infrastructure, school management systems, standards-based curricula, and summative assessment.

ANNEX B: FULL DESK REVIEW

Introduction

The Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) swiftly responded to the Kyrgyz Republic's national quarantine and lockdown measures by closing all schools in the country on March 16, 2020.¹⁹ The schools stopped operating before instructions transitioned into distance learning on April 8, 2020. The entire last quarter of the 2019–2020 academic year (April–May 2020) was completed through remote learning platforms for all grades, aside from in boarding schools and other residential institutions, as well as remote schools in areas where the state of emergency was not declared (MOES, 2020).

A Disaster Response Coordination Unit (DRCU) for the Kyrgyz Republic was activated on March 16, 2020, upon the government's request for assistance in emergency preparedness and response to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and in preparation for early recovery. The unit focuses on six priority sectors, including education, and comprises representatives of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Secretariat of National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations agencies, international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the donor community.

The pandemic has also led to renewed efforts to increase access to education, particularly in times of crisis and disruption. This review examines the Kyrgyz Republic's education policies and practices before and after COVID-19 to understand the readiness of the system to respond to the crisis. It relies on documents available in English and acknowledges that there may be more information available in other languages. Understanding where the education system was at the onset of the pandemic provides essential context for understanding the country's readiness to respond to the needs of students, parents and communities, teachers, and schools, because of COVID-19. It also allows reflection on the policies and practices that can support the readiness, response, and recovery of the education system in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Readiness

The Education System of the Kyrgyz Republic

Politically, the Kyrgyz Republic is a relatively young country. After the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic became independent. Triggered by poverty and corruption, revolutions removed the first two post-Soviet presidents from power in 2005 and 2010. Since the 2010 revolution, the country decided to establish a new Constitution that assumed a parliamentary form of government. In that same year, an ethnic conflict occurred in the southern part of the country (UNICEF, 2011). Within this situation, the country has been making efforts to improve its education system and achieve global development goals.

Current education policies in the Kyrgyz Republic are mainly based on the Education Development Strategy 2012–2020 (EDS 2020) and the National Development Strategy 2018–2040 (NDS 2040). The NDS 2040 came into development after the Kyrgyz Republic adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and assessed its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators in 2018. The NDS 2040 outlines the action plan to achieve the SDGs, including the education goals. The state coverage ensuring access to pre-primary education and the provision of relevant curricula and skills started in EDS 2020, and the plan was laid further in the NDS 2040. The approach centers on human development, including improving education as a mechanism to fulfill each citizen's true potential. The strategy in the education

¹⁹ https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/ENG_Gender%20Rapid%20Assessment%20of%20COVID-19%20impact_June%202020_final.pdf

sector includes taking more regulating functions, expanding support to preschool services, and ensuring education is more relevant to the labor market. This strategy is complemented by other initiatives, such as providing more opportunities to rural and remote students in higher education through the National Scholarship Test (NST).

The NDS 2040 promises an education system that will equip people with relevant skills in the labor market, encourage lifelong learning, and ensure equal education opportunities (UNICEF, 2020a; European Training Foundation [ETF], 2021). The NDS 2040 also introduced the shift of the state's role in the education sector; from the dominant service provider to a more regulating role that produces policies and standards. Access to and full coverage of preschool and school education will be guaranteed by the state (UNICEF, 2020a). To improve graduates' employability, the Kyrgyz Republic would improve vocational training quality in line with market demands, including with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). In September 2020, the country adopted a nine-level national qualifications framework (NQF) and is now developing the national qualification system (NQS). Some qualifications can be awarded through the validation of non-formal and informal learning, in line with the NDS 2040 (ETF, 2021).

The education system is considered a priority in state funding, while the NDS 2040 emphasizes the efficient use of allocated funds. In 2018, the share of all public spending on basic services, such as education, increased from 48 percent in 2014 to 49 percent in 2018, with the education sector as the largest share allocated (21.2 percent of total state budgetary expenditure) (UNICEF, 2020a, p. 26). Efficiency in the education sector is assessed based on regular assessments of student educational achievements carried out by independent national and international entities. Previously managed by the Ministry of Finance, the education budget is now managed by MOES, and the budgetary responsibilities have been decentralized.

Initiatives for Improving Education

The right to education is guaranteed in the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, and aside from establishing that basic general education is mandatory, it also guarantees free primary and secondary general education in public educational institutions. Compulsory education only consists of primary (Grades 1 to 4) and lower secondary education (Grades 5 to 9) (Chlkova & Usenova, 2008, as cited in UNICEF, 2012). Recent educational reforms are documented in the EDS 2020 and the NDS 2040, with the expansion of service coverage to pre-primary education and emphasizing merit-based education that provides relevant skills in the labor market. However, the monitoring of the SDGs in the Kyrgyz Republic (2020) found that more than 265 million children did not go to school, including 22 percent of children of primary school age. Of those who attend school, less than 60 percent of children of 7 to 14 years of age were able to finish tasks on basic reading skills and basic numeracy skills. The 2020 Human Capital Index also calculated a learning gap of 4.2 years; meaning that when children finish their education of 12.6 years, they would have only achieved 8.4 years of education after accounting for education quality (World Bank, 2021).

A national project called "Schools of the Future" was designed to establish model experimental schools in each region. The project aims to formulate standards of new generation schools with new innovative approaches to child development (NDS, 2018). The Mid-term Strategy in 2018–2040 NDS also states that the state will encourage the revision of higher education content to be more relevant to the current market needs and in line with the national development goals. As part of improving higher education quality, the government planned the program "3-200-2040," meaning that by 2040, three leading national universities will be among 200 leading universities in the world, according to global rankings such as the Times Higher Education.

One of the long-term goals of the NDS 2040 is to form an open digital society in the Kyrgyz Republic. It hopes to see digital services incorporated into the social sector, such as education, and as part of promoting inclusiveness for people with disabilities. In order to foster the

inclusion and advancement of information technology (IT) in the education sector, the Kyrgyz government plans to offer free basic IT education for everyone by adding Internet connections for 140 secondary schools annually, estimating that more than 500,000 school children would have Internet access by 2023. This is an important activity, as access to devices and data remains disparate in the Kyrgyz Republic, despite investment from donors during the pandemic. A partnership with the private sector is envisaged to procure the necessary infrastructure. On top of the infrastructure development, the government also planned to include standards on educational technology in the national learning standards.

Assessment Programs and Practices

The NDS 2040 states that independent and international entities' regular assessments of student educational achievements will be used to assess the education sector's efficiency. Assessments are also used to certify students for a state-accredited school diploma by examining students in writing, mathematics, history, and a foreign language. After completing the nine-year compulsory education, students can either continue to upper secondary education or attain a certificate of completion, which does not ensure admission to higher education. On the other hand, the NST is a national test conducted in Kyrgyz and Russian that measures numeracy, reading comprehension, analogies, sentence completion, and practical grammar (Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Materials, 2017, as cited in Shamatov & Barhy, 2020). The assessment, which was introduced in 2004, aimed to provide more access to higher education for secondary education students in rural and remote areas (Egéa, 2020).

The Kyrgyz Republic participates in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2006 and 2009), Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), in piloting the Early Development Instrument (EDI), and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), as well as regular the National Sample-Based Assessment (NSBA) (World Bank, 2019). However, compared to students from other countries participating in international assessments such as PISA, Kyrgyz students scored relatively low. The NSBA 2014 showed that 60 percent of Grade 4 students had difficulty comprehending age-appropriate text. The country ranked last on the 2009 PISA and showed that 82 percent of 15-year-old students were functionally illiterate (World Bank, 2021). It also showed a performance gap—approximately by at least two years of schooling—between the urban and rural students (Shamatov & Barhy, 2020). These results may have been caused by a poor curriculum, lack of quality learning materials, low teacher quality, or ineffective teaching practice and teacher management (Hou, 2011). Another source (Kasymova, 2016) supported the findings by stating that the poor results were due to insufficient teachers, school facilities, and textbooks.

The PISA results drove the need to monitor and support classroom practice actively. Supported by the Russian Education Aid for Development (READ) Trust Fund, the Kyrgyz Government established a new national assessment strategy in which formative, summative, and system-level assessments work together to improve the quality of education. It includes strengthening institutional capacity to measure and analyze learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning and reform high-stake examinations.

Improving Teaching Quality

The NDS 2040 notes the importance of forming social partnerships at all levels of education, including practical training for teachers and academic teaching staff. It also recognizes the importance of creating an enabling environment to support the development of teaching methods, teacher training, and development of educational materials. To date, government efforts include revising performance incentives for teachers and stipulating in-service training. Recently, the government also attempted to elaborate on teacher professional standards to be used as the base of evaluation for performance incentives. The regulations stipulate a 72-hour of in-service training every five years for teachers, although only about up to 20 percent

of eligible teachers are annually covered by the government budget. There was a considerable lack of capacity to train many teachers, and there was some reluctance from local authorities to pay teachers' travel expenses and per diems (World Bank, 2021). The in-service training is usually delivered over a number of days at the In-Service Institute for Teacher Training (IITT) at the national or local level.

The national IITT has begun exploring the design and delivery of blended learning courses (World Bank, 2019). The Okuu Keremet! The initiative, funded by USAID, aims to enhance reading and arithmetic instruction for young elementary school students. Over 17,500 primary-grade teachers and librarians received training over the course of a year. The instruction was built on unique training modules created for the project; 14,742 instructors who successfully finished all five courses in January 2022 were eligible for government certification. The training materials are built using the online and offline usable Moodle learning management system. To enhance the quality of reading instructions, USAID financed the creation of two user-friendly apps.

The new direction of the national assessment system (2009–2019) clarified the mandates of the IITT and teacher training institutions in the learning assessment system. The Kyrgyz Academy of Education developed and conducted training on classroom assessment, and the training materials have now been incorporated into pre-service and in-service teacher training. The new guidelines for teachers are also provided to support teachers to provide monitoring classroom learning (World Bank, n.d.).

Policies for Inclusion and Equity

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2010 and the Law on Education in 2003 guarantee citizens' rights to education. The country also subscribes to the Call for Action (2013) to end the exclusion of children from education (UNICEF, 2015). In 2012, the government developed an education curriculum for children who were out of school or dropped out before secondary education and wanted to return. It was also revealed that street children and child laborers are the most vulnerable to exclusion from school; therefore, the government is making advancements in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor (U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs, n.d.).

Aside from out-of-school children, children living in areas with experiences or risks of conflict and/or disasters are also considered vulnerable groups. Because of the ethnic conflict in the southern part of the country, the Ministry of Health had identified post-traumatic stress disorder in children and that mental health and psychosocial support was required (UNICEF, 2011), and in 2011, the country established the Department of Ethnic, Religious Policy and Interaction with Civil Society, which develops the policy on interethnic relations. However, ethnic minorities were still marginalized, as an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE's) report in 2019 showed.²⁰ It was reported that the school's instruction in the Uzbek language has declined since 2010 as it transitioned into instruction in the Kyrgyz language. Authorities explained that this transition was necessary to ensure the Uzbek community's integration into the country's general life.

The NDS 2040 states that "full and equal participation of women in management at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life is guaranteed" and that programs promoting gender equality will be strengthened. The NDS also declared that the state would end the practices of forced and early marriage and family violence and create fair opportunities to work for women and men. However, there was still a gender gap in employment rates. The employment rate for women was less than 50 percent (41.8 percent), whereas the overall employment rate was 55.9 percent (NTF, 2021). Moreover, girls and women with children at

²⁰ OSCE Commitment Review Meeting on Human Dimension: Session 12 "Tolerance and non-discrimination" – Rights of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan

an early age did not have many opportunities in the socioeconomic sector, especially as young mothers may be less likely to continue their education or stay at school (UNICEF, 2020a).

The state has guaranteed the rights to education for children with disabilities, and the supporting policies have been included in the Code of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Children” in 2012, EDS 2012–2020, and the NDS 2018–2040 (UNICEF, 2021; GEM, 2021). In cooperation with USAID and UNICEF, Kyrgyzstan developed the “Concept for Introduction of Inclusive Education” in 2018,²¹ which later became the “Concept and Program of Inclusive Education 2019–2023” in 2019 (GEM Report, 2021). The current early childhood educational standards on preschool education and child care in 2020 are an example of the extension of government support to the preschool level.

However, in practice, special education is still considered separate from mainstream education (UNICEF, 2021b). The creation of special groups, classes, or rehabilitation centers was stipulated in the country's 2012 Code "On Children" as a guarantee of the right to education of a child with disabilities who is unable to receive education in educational establishments under general conditions, and students with disabilities were subject to quotas in higher education. Until the time of the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF's) report, education for children with disabilities was still considered separate.

A disability registration form determines access to education for children with disabilities. Children wanting to access special education according to their disability type must have a disability registration card, although having one does not guarantee enrollment. Children without the card would have to enroll in mainstream education, which does not guarantee the provision of inclusive education. Despite having the “2019 Concept and Program of Inclusive Education,” the current regulation and policy have not included a definition of inclusive education and how to provide alternative communication modes. They also do not require the promotion of these alternative modes by teachers. Moreover, the recent law has not considered employability, vocational rehabilitation, and active job placements for young persons with disabilities (UNICEF, 2021b).

The NDS 2040 also mentioned the development of multilingual learning and educational environment at all levels, with Kyrgyz, Russian, and English as the main languages. Currently, multilingual education programs are implemented in most areas of the Kyrgyz Republic. The program aims to improve proficiency in a second language through content and language-integrated learning and improve mother tongue-based education at schools using minority languages. Textbooks have been published in Kyrgyz and Russian and translated into Uzbek and Tajik. Schools using Uzbek and Tajik as languages of instruction also use textbooks from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, adapted to the Kyrgyz Republic standards and school programs (GEM Report, 2021).

Students' and Teachers' Mental Health

The country has a mental health policy, plan, and legislation, and, in 2008, it allocated 4 percent of the health care budget to mental health (WHO & MoH, 2008). Citizens with mental health disorders can receive free treatment and care in psychiatric hospitals, as well as access to medicines. Although there were no staff units of psychiatrists in the Ministry of Health (MoH), there were specialists (i.e., psychiatrists, child-psychiatrist, and speech and language therapists) appointed who worked part-time, with coordinators being responsible for each region. Out of 74 outpatient departments in psychiatric aid, only 18 percent were exclusively for children and adolescents (WHO & MoH, 2008).

Mental health services in the Kyrgyz Republic lack sufficient financing, equipment, and qualified specialists, resulting in low-quality mental health care (Pinchuk et al., 2021). Adolescent suicide and attempted suicide reached 1,080 cases from 2008 to 2018, which became a critical issue for youth and adolescents' mental health. Several regulations have

²¹ Improving education opportunities to children with disabilities in the Kyrgyz Republic

been put in place, including Law No. 185, “On measures to prevent harm to children’s health, their physical, intellectual, mental, spiritual and moral development in the Kyrgyz Republic.” The law includes measures to prevent child suicide. In 2018, the country also adopted the Program for the Protection of the Population’s Mental Health for 2018–2030. The program focuses on access to psychosocial services at the local level (UNICEF, 2020d).

Emergency and Crisis Management

Kyrgyzstan is considered vulnerable to climate change, extreme precipitation, landslides, and mudslides across the country (World Bank, 2021). Aside from education quality improvement and expansion of school enrollment, the 2018–2040 NDS also aimed to produce citizens who strive for a healthy lifestyle, which includes environmental education being promoted in the curriculum beginning in pre-primary education. Working with UNESCO, MOES has been trying to mainstream the concept of education for sustainable development into the school curriculum. The topics covered in education for sustainable development include health and well-being, environmental awareness, gender equality, and ICT literacy (UNESCO, 2019). The climate change content will also be included in environmental education in secondary schools, both in student curriculum and teacher training (World Bank, 2019).

A DRCU Team was set up in 2008 to improve communication and cooperation between the government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the United Nations country team, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and other important parties in order to provide an adequate and successful humanitarian response to emergencies. The environment, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) components are mentioned in the NDS 2040, in which the government promises to enable a safe environment. Specific activities that are mentioned include reducing risks of radioactive contamination and land degradation in adjacent areas, rehabilitating tailings sites of the former uranium production facilities, and carrying out active work on attracting international assistance.

In 2011, a manual for emergency situations was developed for teachers and personnel in pre-primary education to teach pre-primary children about safe behavior. The guidebook was developed as part of the “Support to Disaster Risk Reduction Activities in Vulnerable Communities and Educational Institutions in Central Asia,” with the financial support of the European Commission and technical support from UNICEF.²² In 2017, the UNICEF DRR Program also developed a manual in DRR for public school management. The guide is prepared for the school principals and teachers, as well as relevant staff in the MOES, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, and DRR specialists and experts.²³ Both guidebooks and manuals are available in Russian and Kyrgyz.

However, a UNICEF report (2013), funded by USAID, found that many of the Kyrgyz Republic’s preschools (89 percent) and schools (81 percent) were structurally unsafe due to aging buildings and structures and lack of financial support, exacerbated by natural disasters. The Kyrgyz Republic is a country of high seismic activity, and within the span between June 2009 to September 2010 alone, there were 2,398 earthquakes with a magnitude of 6 or more. Aside from the structural measures, other measures were needed to ensure the safety of schools and preschools. The government then drafted the “Repair and Reconstruction of School and Preschool Education Organizations 2014–2020,” which laid out a plan to provide funding for structural improvements. However, in 2022, the state budget was not able to fund even the minimum needs. Out of 2,296 schools, 245 public schools were in major disrepair (i.e., requiring demolition and new constructions), and 457 public schools required a major overhaul of the roof, foundation, walls, water supply, and sewage.²⁴

²² Manual for Teachers: Safety of pre-schoolchildren under the emergency situations

²³ Manual: Disaster Risk Reduction for Public Schools

²⁴ School education in Kyrgyzstan: main problems and solutions (in Russian)

Response

According to a report by UNICEF in 2021, the number of households affected by COVID-19 was approximately 75.6 percent of the total households, and among those households, 28.6 percent had at least one person in the household who contracted COVID-19 or died. There were 21.2 percent of households in which at least one person needed health care and was affected by COVID-19 but did not receive it. Migration also ceased. The flow of remittance from migrants to their families, one of the main contributors to the gross national income, was negatively impacted. Among the households impacted by COVID-19, 50.7 percent experienced a decline in income, and this downturn in the economy also constrained the government budget and tax revenue (World Bank, 2021). Inflation rates increased in relation to the prices of basic consumer goods, especially food (which were almost 9 percent and 16 percent per annum in April 2020), according to the 2021 DRCU annual report. The number of households where children aged 5 to 17 did not attend school due to an outbreak was more than 95 percent (UNICEF, 2021). However, there were high attendance rates in primary and lower secondary schools, as well as one-year pre-primary education during the pandemic (UNICEF, 2021a; World Bank, 2021).

Teaching and Learning During a Pandemic

Within a relatively short period of time, the Kyrgyz Republic managed to ensure access to remote learning for all levels. In March 2020, MOES approved the Anti-Crisis Plan for the Education Sector as the last quarter of the academic year of 2019–2020 went on. From the beginning of the pandemic and the school lockdown in mid-March 2020, the MOES and its agencies carried out preparatory work for the transition of schools to distance learning during the spring break, and remote learning tools were launched on April 8, 2020. Distance education started afterward, and children could freely access remote learning through online platforms, three national TV channels, and two mobile network applications (UNICEF, 2020c).²⁵ Students did not only watch a TV lesson but also received homework on the TV lesson assigned by teachers and were given further explanations from teachers. The lesson lasted 20 minutes, and the content was limited to broadcasting a snippet of the main materials on each topic. Due to time constraints, the pace of explaining a new topic was so rapid that the students on the other side of the screen did not have time to take notes (Kasymova, 2020). Monitoring student engagement in distance learning was still difficult, especially when lectures were broadcast on television. Teachers needed extensive support in the early months of remote learning because they were not entirely prepared to switch from in-class to online instruction (DRCU, 2021).

During the pandemic, more than 82 percent of children were enrolled in distance learning, mainly by using a mobile phone or tablet (98.9 percent) and watching video lessons on national TVs (51.5 percent) (UNICEF, 2021a). However, a significant portion of parents (78 percent) were surveyed and discontented with the online learning process, stating, as the main reason, that their children did not understand the lesson well (95.7 percent of dissatisfied parents). Parents also claimed other reasons, including poor Internet quality (48.5 percent), missing TV lessons (47.3 percent), insufficient equipment (36.8 percent), payment difficulties for mobiles (27.3 percent), and the quality of lessons (25.6 percent). These findings from the 2021 UNICEF survey were supported by the study conducted by Imanbekova (2020), in which 338 teachers and 1324 students reported that the main difficulties that students and teachers faced were no Internet or weak Internet connection, no appropriate devices, and teacher difficulties in getting responses from students (Imanbekova, 2020).

Teachers send feedback to students using the Internet and mobile applications that are free of charge. WhatsApp and Zoom were the most popular applications for learning (Imanbekova, 2020). UNICEF supported the development of remote learning methodology and video lessons for preschool and school-age children. The videos, which are broadcasted on national

²⁵ Unequal access to remote schooling amid COVID-19 threatens to deepen global learning crisis

TV channels and stored on the Ministry's online portal, are in Russian and Kyrgyz languages, supplemented by Uzbek and Tajik subtitles as well as sign language translation (UNICEF, 2020a). In higher education, universities employed their own online learning management system, Moodle platforms, and corporate education portals (e.g., AVN, Google Classroom, Google Meet), while vocational education institutions used the integrated portal (MOES, 2020).

Teachers were supported with guidelines on how to use tools such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Drive, WhatsApp, and Telegram. Recommendations were given on how to arrange remote learning, and teachers were given the opportunity to attend webinars on the use of remote learning resources and how to address learning issues (MOES, 2020).

Resource Sharing

Aside from video lessons, the MOES online portal "Educational Resources of Kyrgyzstan" (oku.edu.gov.kg) also stores other educational materials such as electronic textbooks, additional literature, tasks, video lessons, and educational games (UNICEF, 2020c). The government also provided access to open foreign educational resources, including Khan Academy. There are free online tests to help students prepare for the national test, as well as to assess Grade 4–11 students' performance with additional diagnostic tests in 13 subjects (MOES, 2020). Currently, almost all teachers would claim that they know and use the materials of digital resources, including oku.edu.gov.kg. However, there are no systemic quantitative data or statistics on how it happens in reality.

Mental Health Support

Before the pandemic, adolescents had been facing major stress at home due to unstable family dynamics. Restrictions imposed during the pandemic and the transition into remote learning exacerbated existing conflicts within households (Zhanybek, 2021). During the pandemic, UNICEF (2020b) recorded that more than 60 percent of adolescents reported having high levels of anxiety. Therefore, UNICEF targeted 250,000 children and caregivers in the Kyrgyz Republic to access mental health and psychosocial support by 2021. The government tried to address the issue during the pandemic. The MOES opened a hotline for counseling and other psychological support for students and assigned teams of teachers and specialists to counsel children and parents from vulnerable families. These teams stayed in contact with the families by phone to provide support. An ICT support hub for teachers was also established (MOES, 2020). The most frequent emotions of students that teachers observed were feelings of anxiety, sadness, indifference, and anger (Imanbekova, 2020).

Recovery

The academic year of 2020–2021 began on September 15, 2020, 2 weeks after the normal calendar year, to ensure teachers and school personnel had received vaccinations before starting the academic year (World Bank, 2021). The first quarter of the academic year was mostly conducted in a remote learning format, except in regions where it was possible to organize offline classes without risks to students and teachers, based on the recommendations from District Sanitarian Epidemiological Surveillance, which is under the MoH. By mid-December 2020, 89 percent of schools had re-opened for students (UNICEF, 2021).

There was usually no mandatory assessment at the beginning of a new academic year. However, teachers started the academic year by conducting a formative assessment of students' knowledge, taking into account the methodological recommendations of the MOES. Many school leaders and teachers talked about the need to adjust the curriculum and teaching and learning methods after the pandemic. However, at the time of writing, there was no evidence found on how adjustments to the curriculum and remediations for students had been made. In 2021, the MOES and the MoH, supported by UNICEF, conducted rapid assessments

of water, sanitation, hygiene and infection, prevention, and control in schools and healthcare facilities. The assessments conducted in 1,862 out of 2,283 schools and preschools found that most schools had at least access to water and handwashing equipment, but 40.8 percent of surveyed schools had no sanitizers (UNICEF, 2021).

Conclusion and Next Steps

As the pandemic hit two years after the recent educational reforms (NDS 2040) were established, the Kyrgyz Republic is not only faced with the challenge of carrying out reforms but also carrying them out during difficult times. There were a few achievements that the government has managed to attain. The government has managed to keep enrollment in pre-primary and basic compulsory education high. The review has also shown that the government's swift response may contribute to the continuation of learning during the pandemic by mobilizing teachers to provide learning materials through video lessons.

However, according to the World Bank's 2020 Human Capital Index, children in the Kyrgyz Republic were estimated only to reach 60 percent of their full potential as an adult even before the pandemic. Children in the Kyrgyz Republic will have even more obstacles to surmount due to the learning gaps over the last year. As examples in other countries, the learning gaps will be challenging to overcome as another estimate from the World Bank indicated that learning would drop by as much as 10 PISA points in schools closed for six months. The share of students performing below functional literacy was estimated to increase up to 97 percent in schools closed for an entire year.

There are also opportunities to explore how the education system in the Kyrgyz Republic can be further strengthened. Vocational education requiring practical training had difficulties conducting this kind of training in business as strict lockdowns were in place, while remote learning materials were more available and perhaps relevant to general education students (ETF, 2021). Assessment results, such as the NST and PISA, have shown performance gaps between the urban and rural areas, location of schools, and medium of instruction. Investment may be needed in improving the skills of teachers, building modern educational institutions, and improving the water supply and electrification of schools in these schools (UNICEF, 2020c). The provision of inclusive education for children with disabilities was already a challenge even before the pandemic (UNICEF, 2021), and there is little evidence found on remote learning practices in existing education institutions for children with disabilities.

Considering that the pandemic is already in its second year, there had been little evidence of practices at the household or school level that support students' learning remotely, particularly those in remote areas and children with disabilities. It might be because offline learning started again in September 2020, only around six months after the mass school closures. Moreover, even if schools were closed on April 2021 until January 2022 due to the pandemic, there were no mass school closures, and offline learning had presumably continued, although with disruptions. It was also unclear if and how teachers were trained to support children with disabilities during the pandemic. Moreover, although there was evidence of mental health support for students and their families in place, the review has not found evidence of the impact of such support and no evidence that there is any mental health support for teachers. Aside from in-service teacher training, there was no literature, at least in English, describing how pre-service teacher education has been carried out after the NDS was established and if there is a policy to support teachers in adapting to crises. Moreover, as the enrollment rate for upper secondary education decreases, the review has not found any information on what caused it and how to retain the current students or reach out to dropouts and help them finish their education.

ANNEX C: INSTRUMENTS

C.1 Survey Protocols

School Leader (Russian Language)

Вопросник для руководителя школы

Реагирование образовательных систем стран Азии на пандемию COVID-19
ОБЩАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ

Вы отобраны для участия в данном исследовании о воздействии COVID-19 на обучение под названием “Реагирование образовательных систем стран Азии на пандемию COVID-19”, которое проводится в различных странах Азии. Исследование проводится Министерством образования и науки Кыргызской Республик в рамках проекта “Чтение для всех детей – Азия (ACR-Asia)”, финансируемого агентством ЮСАИД.

В данном вопроснике запрашивается информация о:

- Вас и Вашей школе
- полученной и необходимой Вам поддержке
- методах преподавания и обучения

Пожалуйста, внимательно прочтите каждый вопрос и ответьте как можно подробнее. Некоторые вопросы потребуют от Вас краткого текстового ответа в отведенном для этого месте.

Не существует «правильных» или «неправильных» ответов.

Все ваши ответы останутся конфиденциальными. Они будут объединены с ответами других руководителей школ для подсчета итоговых и средних показателей, в которых нельзя будет идентифицировать ни одну школу или школьного руководителя.

1) Для продолжения, пожалуйста, подтвердите, что Вы руководитель школы*

- Да
 Нет

РАЗДЕЛ А: О ВАС

2) Название школы*

3) Где расположена Ваша школа? *

- В селе
 В районном центре
 В городе

4) Ваш пол? *

- Женский
 Мужской
 Предпочитаю не отвечать

5) Сколько лет Вы работаете руководителем школы?

(Пожалуйста, не учитывайте какой-либо период продолжительного отпуска, такой как отпуск по беременности и родам/отцовству/ долгосрочный отпуск)*

- Менее 2 лет
 От 2 до 5 лет
 От 6 до 10 лет
 От 11 до 20 лет

Более 20 лет

6) Есть ли у Вас дети/обязанности по уходу за детьми дома? *

Да

Нет

Предпочитаю не отвечать

РАЗДЕЛ В: ПРОБЛЕМЫ

7) С какими проблемами столкнулась Ваша школа, чтобы оказать поддержку учащимся во время пандемии?

(Отметьте все подходящие варианты) *

Пожалуйста,

отметьте

Недостаточная оснащенность школьной инфраструктуры (н-р, ксеро-копировальные устройства для распечатки раздаточных материалов, отсутствие/ограниченность доступа к Интернету)

Несоответствие ресурсов для дистанционного обучения (т. е. отсутствие доступа к Интернету, печатных материалов для учителей)

Несоответствие ресурсов для учащихся с особыми потребностями (например, с физическими недостатками, умственными или эмоциональными/психологическими нарушениями)

Низкий уровень вовлеченности учителей в работу

Низкий уровень самочувствия и/или благосостояния учителей

Уход учителей по собственному желанию

Увольнение учителей

Недостаточность навыков учителей для проведения дистанционного обучения

Низкий уровень доверия учителей к дистанционному обучению

Низкий уровень вовлеченности учащихся в учебу

Плохое самочувствие и/или низкий уровень благосостояния учащихся

Низкий уровень вовлеченности родителей в учебный процесс

Ограниченная возможность родителей поддерживать своего ребенка в учебе (н-р, неграмотность, занятость работой)

Ограниченность домашних ресурсов (н-р, доступа к Интернету, информации, гаджетам, отсутствие спокойного места для занятий, письменного стола, книг)

Ограниченный доступ к общественным ресурсам (библиотеке, Интернету, электричеству в общественных местах и т.д.)

Недостаточность поддержки школы местным сообществом (недостаточное вовлечение родителей, недостаточность общественных ресурсов)

Политическая нестабильность или конфликт в районе, в котором расположена школа

Проблем нет

РАЗДЕЛ С: ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ПОДДЕРЖКИ

8) В какой степени Вы согласны со следующими утверждениями?

В период пандемии ожидалось, что моя школа...*

Полностью не согласен Не согласен Согласен Полностью согласен

Введет дистанционное обучение на время закрытия школы/периодов удаленного обучения

Предоставит учителям ресурсы (Интернет-связь, цифровое оборудование, учебные материалы) для продолжения преподавания

- Предоставит учащимся соответствующие ресурсы (Интернет-связь, цифровое оборудование, учебные материалы) для продолжения обучения () () ()
 ()
- Обсудит с родителями и семьями методы преподавания и обучения () () ()
 ()
- Проведет мониторинг психического здоровья и самочувствия учителей () ()
 () ()
- Проведет мониторинг психического здоровья и самочувствия учащихся () ()
 () ()
- Изменит требования к обучению учащихся (т.е. корректировка оценивания, сосредоточение внимания только на грамотности и т.д.) () () () ()
- Апробирует другие, инновационные пути вовлечения учащихся в процесс обучения ()
 () () ()
- Проведет мониторинг вовлеченности учащихся в обучение () () () ()
- Проведет оценивание учащихся во время обучения () () () ()
- Предоставит дополнительную поддержку уязвимым группам учащихся (девочкам, учащимся из семей с низкими доходами и т.д.) () () () ()
- Предоставит дополнительную поддержку учащимся с различными способностями (высокими или низкими) к обучению или потребностями в обучении () () ()
 ()

9) Оказывали ли Вам поддержку следующие организации/лица в период закрытия школ?
 *

- Не поддерживали Поддерживали
- Министерство образования и науки/Управление образованием () ()
- Областные институты образования, областные учебно-методические центры образования () ()
- Районные/городские отделы образования () ()
- Методическое объединение учителей () ()
- Родители/опекуны () ()
- Местное сообщество () ()
- Благотворительные организации/ частные доноры () ()

10) Были ли Вы информированы о политике министерства/региональных органов управления образованием относительно ожидаемого дистанционного обучения для обеспечения непрерывности обучения? *

- () Да
 () Нет

11) Какие еще виды поддержки Вы требовали/запрашивали от вышеперечисленных организаций/лиц в связи с пандемией? Пожалуйста, поясните свой ответ *

12) Какая еще поддержка Вам потребуется от вышеперечисленных организаций/людей в будущем? Пожалуйста, поясните свой ответ

РАЗДЕЛ D: ЛИДЕРСТВО И СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО

13) Пожалуйста, укажите, как часто Вы участвовали в следующих мероприятиях, которые проводились в школе в период пандемии*

	Никогда	Один/ два раза в год	Раз в четверть	Каждую неделю
Я участвовал (а) в мероприятиях по профессиональному развитию в дистанционном формате	()	()	()	()
Я поддерживал (а) связь с лицами, принимающими решения, или организациями вне школы, обсуждая, как поддержать учащихся во время пандемии.	()	()	()	()
Я проводил (а) обучение для учителей по дистанционному преподаванию с применением дополнительных материалов (ТВ, радио, материалы на бумажных носителях)	()	()	()	()
Я проводил (а) дополнительное обучение для учителей по дистанционному преподаванию с применением информационных технологий (ИТ)	()	()	()	()
Я обсуждал(а) на встречах с учителями их потребности и проблемы	()	()	()	()
Я обсуждал(а) на встречах с учителями пути поддержки обучения учащихся	()	()	()	()
Я обсуждал(а) с родителями способы поддержки учащихся в обучении	()	()	()	()

РАЗДЕЛ Е: РАЗВИТИЕ И ДИФФЕРЕНЦИАЦИЯ

14) Пожалуйста, укажите, как часто Вы проводили следующие мероприятия в школе в период пандемии*

	Никогда	Один/ два раза в год	Раз в четверть	Каждую неделю
Я оказывал (а) поддержку учителям по адаптации их преподавания во время закрытия школы/ дистанционного обучения	()	()	()	()
Я помогал (а) учителям адаптировать методы оценивания учащихся во время закрытия школы/ дистанционного обучения	()	()	()	()
Я использовал(а) данные моей школы при анализе успеваемости учащихся	()	()	()	()
Я обсуждал (а) с учителями применение фактических данных для мониторинга развития учащихся	()	()	()	()
Я планировал (а), как улучшать результаты своей школы и учащихся (долгосрочные цели, стратегическое планирование и т. д.)	()	()	()	()

РАЗДЕЛ F: БЛАГОСОСТОЯНИЕ И ИНКЛЮЗИЯ

15) Пожалуйста, укажите, в какой степени уровень благосостояния участников образовательного процесса обсуждался и/или поддерживался Вами во время пандемии*

	Никогда	Редко	Иногда	Часто
Я испытал (а) больше стресса в своей работе	()	()	()	()
Меня беспокоил уровень стресса у моих учителей	()	()	()	()
Меня беспокоили психическое здоровье и благополучие моих учащихся	()	()	()	()
Я предоставлял (а) учителям информацию по сохранению психического здоровья	()	()	()	()
Я предоставлял (а) учащимся и их семьям информацию по сохранению психического здоровья	()	()	()	()
Я предоставлял (а) дополнительные материалы и обучение учителям, имеющим учащихся с особыми познавательными потребностями/инвалидностью	()	()	()	()

РАЗДЕЛ G: РЕФЛЕКСИЯ

16) Что из нижеследующего Вы планируете сделать для поддержки Ваших сотрудников и учащихся после пандемии? *

Да Нет

- Сотрудничество с учителями по улучшению обучения учащихся
- Сотрудничество с родителями/семьями по улучшению обучения учащихся
- Посещение семей для мониторинга участия учащихся
- Телефонные звонки семьям для мониторинга участия учащихся
- Адаптация уроков к различным группам учащихся
- Адаптация итогового оценивания к различным группам учащихся
- Применение гибридного/дистанционного обучения (меньше часов лицом к лицу, больше учебной деятельности онлайн)
- Внимание к психическому здоровью и благополучию учителей
- Внимание к психическому здоровью и благополучию учащихся
- Мониторинг развития учащихся с применением данных по школе и классам

17) Что больше всего помогало поддерживать учащихся Вашей школы во время пандемии? Пожалуйста, поясните свой ответ *

РАЗДЕЛ H: ОТСЛЕЖИВАНИЕ

18) Какие стратегии и/или меры, использованные во время пандемии, могут помочь улучшить качество образования в Вашей школе в будущем? *

19) Готовы ли Вы участвовать в последующем индивидуальном интервью в рамках данного исследования?*

- Да, я готов (а) принять участие в последующем интервью
- Нет, пожалуйста, не контактируйте со мной больше

20) Если Вы отметили выше “ДА”, пожалуйста, предоставьте Ваши контактные данные (номер телефона и электронный адрес) *

Если вы ответили «Нет», завершите заполнение вопросника и обратитесь к своему администратору, чтобы получить ссылку на вопросник, который имеет отношение к Вам (например, «Учитель» или «Родитель»).

Спасибо за заполнение данного вопросника!

Teacher (Russian Language)

ВОПРОСНИК ДЛЯ УЧИТЕЛЯ

Реагирование образовательных систем стран Азии на пандемию COVID-19

ОБЩАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ

Вы отобраны для участия в данном исследовании о воздействии COVID-19 на обучение под названием “Реагирование образовательных систем стран Азии на пандемию COVID-19”, которое проводится в различных странах Азии. Исследование проводится Министерством образования и науки Кыргызской Республики в рамках проекта “Чтение для всех детей – Азия (ACR-Asia)”, финансируемого агентством ЮСАИД.

В данном вопроснике запрашивается информация о:

- Вас и Вашей школе
- полученной и необходимой Вам поддержке
- методах преподавания и обучения

Пожалуйста, внимательно прочтите каждый вопрос и ответьте как можно подробнее. Некоторые вопросы потребуют от вас краткого текстового ответа в отведенном для этого месте.

Не существует «правильных» или «неправильных» ответов.

Все ваши ответы останутся конфиденциальными. Они будут объединены с ответами других учителей школ для подсчета итоговых и средних показателей, в которых нельзя будет идентифицировать ни одну школу или школьного учителя.

1) Для продолжения, пожалуйста, подтвердите, что Вы учитель в школе*

- Да
 Нет
-

РАЗДЕЛ А: О ВАС

2) Название школы*

3) Где расположена Ваша школа? *

- В селе
 В районном центре
 В городе

4) Ваш пол? *

- Женский
 Мужской
 Предпочитаю не отвечать

5) Сколько лет Вы работаете учителем?

((Пожалуйста, не учитывайте какой-либо период продолжительного отпуска, такой как отпуск по беременности и родам/отцовству/ долгосрочный отпуск) *

- Менее 2 лет
 От 2 до 5 лет
 От 6 до 10 лет
 От 11 до 20 лет
 Более 20 лет

6) Есть ли у Вас дети/обязанности по уходу за детьми дома? *

Да

Нет

Предпочитаю не отвечать

РАЗДЕЛ В: ПРОБЛЕМЫ

7) С какими проблемами Вы столкнулись, чтобы оказать поддержку учащимся во время пандемии? (Отметьте все подходящие варианты) *

Пожалуйста, отметьте

Недостаточная оснащенность школьной инфраструктуры (н-р, ксеро-копировальные устройства для распечатки раздаточных материалов, отсутствие/ограниченность доступа к Интернету).

Несоответствие ресурсов для дистанционного обучения (т. е. отсутствие доступа к Интернету, печатных материалов для учителей)

Несоответствие ресурсов для учащихся с особыми потребностями (например, с физическими недостатками, умственными или эмоциональными/психологическими нарушениями)

Низкий уровень профессионального роста

Низкий уровень личного самочувствия и/или благосостояния

Загруженность и переутомление других учителей

Увольнение других учителей

Недостаточные навыки преподавания в дистанционном формате

Низкий уровень доверия к преподаванию в дистанционном формате

Ограниченная степень вовлеченности учащихся

Низкий уровень самочувствия и/или благосостояния учащихся

Ограниченная степень вовлеченности родителей

Ограниченная способность родителей помогать своему ребенку в учебе

Ограниченный доступ к общественным ресурсам (библиотеке, Интернету, электричеству в общественных местах и т.д.)

Недостаточность поддержки школы местным сообществом

Политическая нестабильность или конфликт в районе, в котором расположена школа

Проблем нет

8) Есть ли другие проблемы, с которыми Вы столкнулись как учитель? Пожалуйста, перечислите их ниже *

РАЗДЕЛ С: ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ПОДДЕРЖКИ

9) В какой степени Вы согласны со следующими утверждениями?

В период пандемии ожидалось, что моя школа...*

Полностью не согласен Не согласен Согласен Полностью согласен

Введет дистанционное обучение на время закрытия школы/периодов удаленного обучения

Предоставит учителям ресурсы (Интернет-связь, цифровое оборудование, учебные материалы) для продолжения преподавания

Предоставит учащимся соответствующие ресурсы (Интернет-связь, цифровое оборудование, учебные материалы) для продолжения обучения

- Обсудит с родителями и семьями методы преподавания и обучения () () ()
 ()
- Проведет мониторинг психического здоровья и самочувствия учителей () ()
 () ()
- Проведет мониторинг психического здоровья и самочувствия учащихся () ()
 () ()
- Изменит требования к обучению учащихся (т.е. проведет корректировку оценивания, сосредоточит внимание только на грамотности и т.д.) () () () ()
- Апробирует другие, инновационные пути вовлечения учащихся в процесс обучения ()
 () () ()
- Проведет мониторинг вовлеченности учащихся в обучение () () () ()
- Проведет оценивание учащихся во время дистанционного обучения () () ()
 ()
- Предоставит дополнительную поддержку уязвимым группам учащихся (девочкам, учащимся из семей с низкими доходами и т.д.) () () () ()
- Предоставит дополнительную поддержку учащимся с различными способностями (высокими или низкими) к обучению или потребностями в обучении () () ()
 ()

10) В целом я удовлетворен (а) уровнем поддержки, оказанной моей школой *

- () Совсем не согласен
 () Не согласен
 () Согласен
 () Полностью согласен

11) Опробовали ли Вы во время пандемии какие-либо новые методы преподавания? Какие именно? Как вы применяли их в рамках Вашего преподавания? *

12) Использовали ли Вы какие-либо новые средства обучения во время пандемии (телевидение, приложения, радио и т. д.) в рамках своего обучения? Какие именно? Содействовали ли они обучению учащихся? *

РАЗДЕЛ D: ЛИДЕРСТВО И СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО

13) Пожалуйста, укажите, как часто Вы участвовали в следующих мероприятиях, которые проводились в Вашей школе в период пандемии *

- | | Никогда | Один/ два раза в год | Раз в четверть | Каждую неделю |
|---|---------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Я участвовал (а) в мероприятиях по профессиональному развитию в дистанционном формате | () | () | () | () |
| Я поддерживал (а) связь с организациями вне школы, обсуждая, как поддержать учащихся во время пандемии. | () | () | () | () |
| Я участвовал (а) в обучении по дистанционному преподаванию с применением дополнительных материалов (ТВ, радио, материалы на бумажных носителях) | () | () | () | () |

Я участвовал (а) в дополнительном обучении по использованию информационных технологий (ИТ) в дистанционном преподавании () () () ()
 Я обсуждал(а) с директором школы при встрече мои потребности и проблемы () ()
 () ()
 Я обсуждал(а) возможности поддержки учащихся на встречах с директором школы ()
 () () ()
 Я обсуждал(а) с родителями способы поддержки учащихся в обучении () () ()
 ()

РАЗДЕЛ Е: РАЗВИТИЕ И ДИФФЕРЕНЦИАЦИЯ

14) Пожалуйста, укажите, как часто следующие мероприятия происходили в Вашей школе в период пандемии *

	Никогда	Один/ два раза в год	Раз в четверть	Каждую неделю
Я адаптировал (а) методы преподавания во время закрытия школ/дистанционного обучения	()	()	()	()
Я адаптировал (а) методы оценивания учащихся во время закрытия школ/дистанционного обучения	()	()	()	()
Я использовал(а) данные моего класса при анализе успеваемости учащихся	()	()	()	()
Я собирал (а) фактические данные для мониторинга развития учащихся	()	()	()	()

РАЗДЕЛ Ф: БЛАГОСОСТОЯНИЕ И ИНКЛЮЗИЯ

15) Пожалуйста, укажите, в какой степени уровень благосостояния участников образовательного процесса обсуждался и/или поддерживался в Вашей школе во время пандемии *

	Никогда	Редко	Иногда	Часто
Я испытывал (а) больше стресса в своей работе	()	()	()	()
Меня беспокоил уровень стресса у моих коллег	()	()	()	()
Меня беспокоили психическое здоровье и благополучие моих учащихся	()	()	()	()
Я получал (а) информацию о сохранении психического здоровья от своего руководителя школы	()	()	()	()
Я предоставлял (а) информацию о сохранении психического здоровья учащимся и их семьям	()	()	()	()
Я включал (а) мероприятия по укреплению психического здоровья и благополучия в свою преподавательскую практику	()	()	()	()
Я апробировал (а) новые методы вовлечения всех учащихся в обучение	()	()	()	()
Я получал (а) дополнительную информацию и обучение для поддержки учащихся с индивидуальными потребностями /инвалидностью	()	()	()	()

РАЗДЕЛ G: РЕФЛЕКСИЯ

16) Что лучше всего помогло поддержать учащихся Вашей школы во время пандемии? Пожалуйста, поясните свой ответ *

17) Что из следующего Вы планируете сделать после пандемии, чтобы поддержать своих коллег и учащихся? *

Да Нет

- Сотрудничество с учителями по улучшению обучения учащихся
- Сотрудничество с родителями/семьями по улучшению обучения учащихся
- Посещение семей для мониторинга участия учащихся
- Телефонные звонки семьям для мониторинга участия учащихся
- Адаптация уроков к различным группам учащихся
- Адаптация итогового оценивания к различным группам учащихся
- Применение гибридного/дистанционного обучения (меньше часов лицом к лицу, больше учебной деятельности онлайн)
- Внимание к личному психическому здоровью и благополучию
- Внимание к психическому здоровью и благополучию учащихся
- Мониторинг развития учащихся с применением данных по школе и классам

18) Что бы Вы еще хотели в будущем, чтобы Ваша школа делала для поддержки Вас и Ваших учеников? * _____

РАЗДЕЛ Н: ОТСЛЕЖИВАНИЕ

19) Готовы ли Вы участвовать в последующем индивидуальном интервью в рамках данного исследования? *

Да, я готов (а) принять участие в последующем интервью

Нет, пожалуйста, не контактируйте со мной больше

20) Если Вы отметили выше “ДА”, пожалуйста, предоставьте Ваши контактные данные (номер телефона и электронный адрес) *

Если вы ответили «Нет», завершите заполнение вопросника и обратитесь к своему администратору, чтобы получить ссылку на вопросник, который имеет отношение к Вам (например, «Учитель» или «Родитель»).

Спасибо за заполнение данного вопросника!

Parent (Russian Language)

ВОПРОСНИК ДЛЯ РОДИТЕЛЕЙ

Реагирование образовательных систем стран Азии на пандемию COVID-19 ОБЩАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ

Вы отобраны для участия в данном исследовании о воздействии COVID-19 на обучение под названием “Реагирование образовательных систем стран Азии на пандемию COVID-19”, которое проводится в различных странах Азии. Исследование проводится Министерством образования и науки Кыргызской Республик в рамках проекта “Чтение для всех детей – Азия (ACR-Asia)”, финансируемого агентством ЮСАИД.

В данном вопроснике запрашивается информация о:

- Вашей семье
- Вашем доме
- Вашем ребенке

Если у Вас несколько детей, посещающих школу, пожалуйста, заполните анкету для каждого ребенка.

Вопросы будут о Вашем ребенке. Внимательно прочтите каждый вопрос и ответьте правдиво. Не существует «правильных» или «неправильных» ответов.

Все Ваши ответы останутся конфиденциальными. Они будут объединены с ответами других родителей для подсчета итоговых и средних показателей, в которых нельзя будет идентифицировать ни одну школу, учителя или родителя.

1) Для продолжения, пожалуйста, подтвердите, что Вы родитель. *

- Да
- Нет

РАЗДЕЛ А: О ВАС И ВАШЕЙ СЕМЬЕ

2) Название школы, которую посещает Ваш ребенок

3) Где находится школа, которую посещает Ваш ребенок? *

- В селе
- В районном центре
- В городе

4) Данный вопросник заполнен: *

- Матерью/женщиной-опекуном
- Отцом/мужчиной-опекуном
- Бабушкой/дедушкой
- Другое, пожалуйста, уточните (н-р, сестра/брат, родственник, опекун):

5) Укажите самый высокий уровень формального образования, которое Вы получили? *

- Докторская степень
- Магистерская степень или 5-летний курс в вузе
- Бакалавриат
- Профессиональное и /или техническое образование
- Выпускник средней школы, имеется аттестат о среднем образовании
- Незаконченное среднее образование

6) В период пандемии Вы работали полный рабочий день? *

- Да
- Нет

7) Сколько детей, не достигших 18 лет в Вашей семье? *

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 или более

8) Укажите возраст ребенка, о котором идет речь в данном вопроснике? *

- 3 года
- 4 года
- 5 лет
- 6 лет
- 7 лет
- 8 лет
- 9 лет
- 10 лет или более

9) Укажите пол ребенка, о котором идет речь в данном вопроснике? *

- женский
- мужской
- предпочитаю не отвечать

10) Укажите основной язык, на котором вы разговариваете дома? *

- русский
- кыргызский
- другой родной язык или диалект (Кыргызстан)
- филиппинский
- другой родной язык или диалект (Филиппины)

11) Есть ли у Вашего ребенка какие-либо особые потребности? *

- Нет, мой ребенок не имеет каких-либо особых потребностей
- Да, мой ребенок имеет особые физические потребности (нарушения)
- Да, мой ребенок имеет особые интеллектуальные/ментальные потребности (нарушения)
- Да, мой ребенок имеет особые и физические и интеллектуальные/ментальные потребности (нарушения)
- Не уверен (а)
- Предпочитаю не отвечать

РАЗДЕЛ В: О ВАШЕМ ДОМЕ

12) Какие из следующих предметов есть в Вашем доме?

(Если оборудование сломано сейчас, но может быть отремонтировано в течение 30 последующих дней, отметьте «Да») *

- | Да | Нет | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Компьютер /ноутбук/планшет | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Интернет-связь | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Телевизор | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Радио | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Мобильный телефон | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Стационарный телефон | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Холодильник | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Плита (электроплита и духовка, газовая плита) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Стиральная машина-автомат | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Туалет внутри дома | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Водопровод (вода в доме) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Электричество (сеть, генератор или солнечные батареи) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Автомобиль, мотоцикл или мопед | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Велосипед | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

13) Укажите основной источник освещения в Вашем доме? *

- Освещения после наступления темноты нет
 Свечи
 Керосиновая или масляная лампа
 Газовая лампа
 Электрическое освещение
 Лампа на солнечной энергии

14) Какие из следующих учебных материалов Ваш ребенок имеет дома?

(Если предмет сломан сейчас, но может быть отремонтирован в течение 30 последующих дней, отметьте «Да»)*

Да Нет

- Ручка или карандаш
Линейка
Калькулятор
Школьные учебники
Тетради для учебы в школе
Отдельный стол для занятий
Школьная сумка (рюкзак, портфель, ранец)
Цветные карандаши/ручки
Компьютер /ноутбук/планшет

15) Примерно сколько книг любого содержания имеется в Вашем доме?

(Пожалуйста, НЕ считайте школьные учебники, электронные книги, газеты или журналы)*

- Нет или очень мало (0 – 10)
 Достаточно, чтобы заполнить одну полку (11 – 25)
 Достаточно, чтобы заполнить один книжный шкаф (26 – 100)
 Достаточно, чтобы заполнить два книжных шкафа (101 – 200)
 Достаточно, чтобы заполнить три или более книжных шкафа (более 200)

РАЗДЕЛ С: ОБ ОБУЧЕНИИ ВАШЕГО РЕБЕНКА В ПЕРИОД, КОГДА БЫЛИ ЗАКРЫТЫ /ПЕРИОДЫ ДИСТАНЦИОННОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ

16) В период, когда были закрыты школы, как часто Вы делали следующее, чтобы поддержать обучение своего ребенка? *

Никогда Редко (раз в месяц) Часто (раз в неделю) Очень часто (не менее 3-4 раз в неделю)

Просил (а) кого-то помочь моему ребенку с занятиями (наставник, братья, сестры, др.)

Помогал(а) своему ребенку выполнять задания

Читал(а) книги ребенку

Помогал(а) ребенку с онлайн занятиями

Проверял (а), все ли домашние задания выполнил мой ребенок

17) В период, когда была закрыта школа, продолжал ли ваш ребенок обучаться в школе дистанционно? *

- Да
 Нет

18) В период, когда была закрыта школа, как часто Ваш ребенок участвовал в следующих действиях? *

Никогда Редко (раз в месяц) Часто (раз в неделю) Очень часто (не менее 3-4 раз в неделю)

Встречался с учителями-предметниками (лицом к лицу, онлайн, по телефону и т.д.) ()
() () ()

Встречался с учителями-предметниками вместе с группой/классом (онлайн, по телефону и т.д.) () () () ()

Слушал образовательные программы по радио () () () ()

Смотрел образовательные программы по телевизору () () () ()

Читал образовательный материал онлайн () () () ()

Использовал цифровые приложения () () () ()

Выполнял заданные учителем домашние задания () () () ()

Выполнял задания на оценку, заданные учителями () () () ()

Читал развлекательные книги () () () ()

Читал школьные учебники () () () ()

Читал другие учебные материалы (включая газеты) () () () ()

19) В какой степени следующие утверждения описывают поведение Вашего ребенка во время закрытия школы? *

Нисколько В малой степени В умеренной степени В большой степени
Мой ребенок был мотивирован заниматься с учебными материалами () () () ()
()

Моему ребенку нравилось домашнее обучение (зайти в онлайн-класс/настроиться на уроки по радио или телевидению, выполнять задания в тетрадях) () () () ()
()

Моему ребенку нравилось учебные материалы, которые можно было взять домой. () () () ()

Мой ребенок грустил, когда школу закрыли () () () ()

Мой ребенок был мотивирован выполнять повседневные задания () () () ()
()

Мой ребенок общался с членами семьи в своей обычной манере () () () ()

Мой ребенок беспокоился больше, чем до пандемии () () () ()

20) Что мешало обучению Вашего ребенка во время закрытия школы/дистанционного обучения? *

Полностью не согласен Не согласен Согласен Полностью согласен
Не получалось подключаться онлайн () () () ()

Отсутствие учебных материалов для обучения (например, рабочих тетрадей, рабочих листов, учебников, тетрадей) () () () ()

Мой ребенок чувствовал беспокойство во время самоизоляции () () () ()

Обучению моего ребенка мешали его недостаточные языковые навыки () () () ()
() ()

Отсутствие поддержки учителя () () () ()

Отсутствие возможности содержать ребенка дома () () () ()

Моему ребенку приходилось зарабатывать деньги/ помогать по дому () () () ()
()

РАЗДЕЛ D: ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ПОДДЕРЖКИ

21) В какой степени Вы согласны со следующими утверждениями?

Во время пандемии школа моего ребенка...*

- | | Полностью не согласен | Не согласен | Согласен | Полностью согласен |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Предоставила мне/моему ребенку необходимые ресурсы (например, учебные материалы) для поддержки моего ребенка | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Предоставила моему ребенку необходимые ресурсы (н-р, учебные материалы), чтобы заниматься самостоятельно | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Обсуждала стратегии/методы преподавания и обучения со мной, как с родителем/опекуном | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Сообщала мне о том, как мой ребенок учится | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Поддерживала мое психическое здоровье и благополучие как родителя | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Наблюдала за психическим здоровьем и благополучием моего ребенка | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Изменила свои ожидания в отношении обучения моего ребенка | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Пробовала другие, инновационные способы вовлечения моего ребенка в обучение | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Контролировала участие моего ребенка в обучении | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Оценивала обучение моего ребенка | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

22) Я удовлетворен уровнем поддержки, предоставляемой моей школой *

Полностью не согласен

Не согласен

Согласен

Полностью согласен

23) Готовы ли Вы участвовать в последующем индивидуальном интервью в рамках данного исследования? *

Да, я готов (а) принять участие в последующем интервью

Нет, пожалуйста, не контактируйте со мной больше

24) Если Вы отметили выше "ДА", пожалуйста, предоставьте Ваши контактные данные (номер телефона и электронный адрес) *

Если вы ответили «Нет», завершите заполнение вопросника и обратитесь к своему администратору, чтобы получить ссылку на вопросник, который имеет отношение к Вам (например, «Учитель» или «Родитель»).

Спасибо за заполнение данного вопросника!

C.2 Key Informant Interview Protocol

Format

The interview with key informants will last approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be conducted using videoconferencing software (where possible). If a live interview is not possible due to disruption, the interview questions will be administered over the phone or sent by email if phone interviews are not possible. Where there is a lack of internet connectivity or due to remoteness, interviews may be conducted face-to-face. The interviews will follow a semi-structured protocol, with key questions asked of all informants and scope to explore ideas/examples in more detail as they emerge in individual interviews.

Purpose of Interview

This interview seeks to explore the support provided to educational settings during the pandemic, the barriers and enablers to responding to needs during and beyond the pandemic, and the system-level strategies for improving educational quality and equitable outcomes at different points in time. These interviews aim to capture the perspective of stakeholders at the system level (e.g., policymakers, supervisors, teacher educators), providing a point of comparison for the school-level interviews in the case studies. Asking informants about the key policies that are in place to support responsiveness and improvement provides an opportunity to connect with and compare the results of the desk review. The Key Informant Interview will consist of the following key questions:

1. What policies were designed to support educational settings during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Can you describe examples of the support that was given to educational settings during the pandemic?
3. What do you see as the main needs that schools were attempting to respond to during the pandemic? Student needs? Needs of families? Needs within the community?
4. What do you see as the barriers or challenges that schools face when responding to these needs within their school community? (student needs, needs of families, needs across the community)
5. What were some of the enablers or things that helped schools to respond to needs during the pandemic?
6. What strategies and/or policies are designed to improve educational quality within schools during the pandemic and move beyond the pandemic in the future?

ANNEX D: KEY INFORMANTS

We would like to thank the following informants for their insights and expertise.

Table 3. List of Key Informants

Name	Role
Abdyldaeva Gulshan Kushbekovna	Chief Specialist of the Department of School, Out Of School, and Additional Education, Ministry of Education and Science KR
Umralieva Samarkul Kydyrmaevna	Head, Department of School, Out Of School, and Additional Education, Ministry of Education and Science KR
Dyusheeva Nazira Kubanychbekovna	President of Kyrgyz Academy of Education
Asakeeva Raina Akmataliyeva	Vice-President of International Education Organization, Sapat
Kaldybaev Salidin Kadyrkulovich	Vice-Rector for Research, Ala-Too International University
Olga Vladimirovna Soloshenko	Director, Ecological and Economic Lyceum no.65, Bishkek city
Victoria Aleksandrovna Bulatova	Associate Professor for the International University in Central Asia, Department of General Education, Chief Specialist of the Department of Multilingual Education of the Kyrgyz Academy of Education, and Senior Lecturer at the Republican Institute for Teacher Training and Professional Development
Kenesh Mukhtarovich Tilekeev	Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences (Ph.D.), Professor of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Psych Correction
Elena Aleksandrovna Roslyakova	Vice-President for Educational Issues, Yraiym Charity Foundation, Director of Ak-Bata School
Inna Alexandrovna Nasybulina	Principal, School-Gymnasium #1, named after Leo Tolstoy, Balykchy city, Issyk-Kul region
Venera Nazarbekovna Ibraeva	Leading Specialist, District Education Department of Kochkor district of the Naryn region
Elmira Kambarbekovna Minbaeva	Methodologist in Russian Language and Literature, Issyk-Kul Regional Institute of Education
Beishembieva Elmira Aidarkanovna	Principal, Secondary School No. 3, Tokmok city, Chui region
Dinara Kurbanalieva Erkesarieva	Principal, Secondary School No. 12, Tokmok city, Chui region
Yrysbubu Ibraimovna Nasipbayeva	Specialist, Republican Institute for In-Service Teacher Training and Retraining
Janyl Busurmankulova	Head, Center for Advanced Teacher Training and Retraining
Nurisa Mairambekovna Maraimova	Principal, Secondary School No. 2, Jalal-Abad city

Name	Role
Damira Tokonovna Kasymbekova	Principal, School-Gymnasium No. 1 named after Mikhail Babkin, Jalal-Abad city
Zhazgul Altynbaevna Tashieva	Primary School Teacher, School No. 9, named after Ratbek Sanatbaev, Jalal-Abad city
Irina Sergeevna Goncharova	Principal of the Kaindy School-Gymnasium No. 2, named after Kulsara Sulaimanova, Chui region

APPENDIX B. COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE MAPPING STUDY—BUILDING RESILIENCE IN LAO PDR: READINESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

All Children Reading–Asia (ACR–Asia)

COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE MAPPING STUDY

*Building Resilience in Lao PDR: Readiness,
Response, and Recovery*

Submission Date: November 28, 2022

AID-OAA-TO-16-00017
TOCOR: Mitch Kirby

Submitted by: **RTI International**
3040 East Cornwallis Road
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-0155
Tel: (919) 541-6000

Authored by: **Yung Nietschke, Dr. Anna Dabrowski, Maya Conway, and Chaula Yoga Pradhika (PT Australian Council for Educational Research Indonesia)**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
BEQUAL	Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
ECDI	Early Child Development Index
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ESSDP	Education and Sports Sector Development Plan
ESTV	Education and Sport TV
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICT-CST	Information and Communications Technologies Competency Standards for Teachers
ILO	International Labour Organization
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education and Emergencies
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NSEDP	National Socioeconomic Development Plan
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SEA-PLM	Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics
UIS	UNICEF Institute of Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1 OVERVIEW

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis has caused unprecedented levels of disruption to education systems worldwide. Across the Asia region, it is estimated that around 760 million children were impacted by school closures at the height of the pandemic. Government response strategies have varied across the region, with some countries imposing prolonged school lockdowns while others have had short, repeated closure periods. As countries begin to reopen schools and continue to prepare for subsequent waves of COVID-19 infection, there is a need to develop the greater capability of education systems to safeguard learning and address persistent barriers to learning equality by harnessing the opportunities for systemic change. However, school-based practices and responses that have been effective in supporting the continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic have yet to be well examined, particularly in Asia. While the system and school structures are a crucial component of educational quality, understanding what happens in a school setting can offer meaningful insights into overcoming barriers to educational quality as education systems recover and rebuild from the pandemic.

This report presents the findings of a document review focused on the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). This report forms part of a broader study that aims to explore the system and school-level practices that have supported learning continuity in Asia during the pandemic. The report will focus on the practices of policymakers that have the potential to support teaching and learning. Rather than comparing the responses of countries in Asia, this study will identify areas of opportunity and innovations in the system and school policies and programs in Lao PDR and make recommendations for those working to support Lao PDR's education system.

2 METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the ways in which the education sector of the Lao PDR has responded to COVID-19, evidence has been drawn from research, policy, and examples of practice, wherever possible. The scope covers policies and practices focused on supporting teaching and learning, with emphasis on the conditions that support students in the early years.

2.1 Research Questions

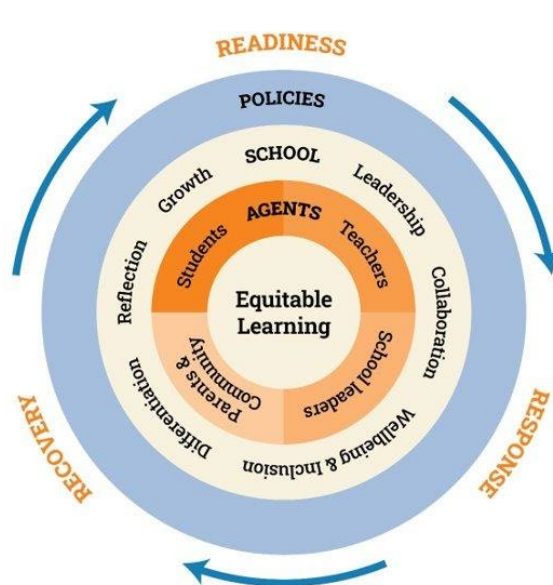
The study was guided by four sets of research questions:

1. How are countries' planned responses aligned with available evidence and frameworks on how to safeguard children's learning progress and social and emotional development, as well as address learning inequalities during the COVID-19 emergency and its aftermath? Do planned responses consider the needs of learners in the early grades?
2. What was the evolution of each country's basic education response to COVID-19, from the initial crisis response to measures they took as the situation stabilized into the "new normal" to their long-term plan for recovery and transformation following the pandemic?
 - a. To what extent was the country prepared to respond? What structures and processes were in place that promoted responsiveness and resilience to the pandemic?
 - b. What was the country's initial planned response in 2020? Was this a temporary measure or part of a plan for longer-term system strengthening moving forward?
 - c. Where is the country currently in its response? Is this an extension of temporary measures or part of a plan for longer-term system strengthening moving forward?

- d. What plans are in place to strengthen the responsiveness and resilience of the system moving forward?
3. At response timepoints (b) and (c), how successful have select countries been in implementing the proposed solutions?
4. What are the gaps, challenges, and risks for reaching the most disadvantaged schools and learners through technology-based remote learning solutions in response to COVID-19? How could opportunities be leveraged to allow these interventions to be successful into the future, including policy-enabling factors and promising classroom-based practices?

The review presented in this report is supported by an analytical framework that considers policy, school, and stakeholder-level indicators that contribute to a resilient education system. The framework is informed by the extensive literature on effective teaching and learning and draws from the emerging evidence base on COVID-19 impacts on education systems worldwide (Figure 1).

Figure 13. Analytical Framework



In the context of COVID-19, the three phases—Readiness, Response, and Recovery—provide the operational context that influences how education systems plan for and manage their strategies for improvement and resilience²⁶.

Readiness: The knowledge and capacity to anticipate areas of need.

Response: The process of identifying needs, responding to those needs, and evaluating the impact of the response.

²⁶ This framework draws on USAID’s Reigniting Learning: Strategies for Accelerating Learning Post-Crisis evidence review and Return to Learning during Crises toolkit and the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on promising policy responses to support greater education system resilience and responsiveness. Each phase is underpinned by the central notion of resilience, in which change is embraced by educators during periods of disruption, and moving forward, rather than returning to what has always been done, is recognized and rewarded. Both share similar elements in defining a path forward that prioritizes the policies and practices to promote: (1) equity and inclusion, (2) flexibility in learning interventions and assessments, and (3) building the capacity of educators. However, this framework also seeks to broaden the ways in which we recognize system readiness and quality, by focusing on the interplay between policy, practice, and equitable learning.

Recovery: An emphasis on moving forward to improve the effectiveness of educational practices and equity of learning.

2.2 Document Analysis

Drawing upon the above analytical framework, this report considers ways in which policymakers and schools have responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. With a focus on collating insights that have not yet been highlighted in previous research, the report is based on a **Desktop Review** of relevant documents on the COVID-19 education response.

This rapid review was undertaken to collate evidence on the COVID-19 responses and re-opening strategies in Lao PDR. The inclusion criteria for the document review focused on both gray literature from the period 2012–2022. Documents relating to education research, policies, programs, news articles, and blog posts are sourced from the government of Lao PDR websites, development partner portals (including United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], Global Partnership for Education [GPE], and the World Bank), implementing organizations, bilateral donors, and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) repository. These include national education sector plans, education laws, disaster risk response plans, sub-sector policies, and policies relating to early childhood education, indigenous education, gender, curricula, pedagogical documents, and teaching standards.

Stakeholders in Lao PDR were also consulted for additional support in identifying resources. However, there is the limited publicly available information on policy and practice at this time. For this reason, any relevant literature in the fields of education, health, economics, and policy responses was collected and reviewed. Although academic literature was outside the original scope of the review, academic studies were also included to fill gaps in understanding educational responses during the pandemic. Documents collected as part of the desk review were analyzed against the analytical framework to understand levels of readiness to respond to COVID-19 in Lao PDR. Documents were collected and analyzed in English and Lao languages with the support of in-country research teams.

2.3 Limitations

This report forms part of a broader study that aims to investigate the ways in which schools and education systems in Asia adapted to changes and challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. This report is based on an analysis of documents that provides insights into Lao PDR, a context where education preparedness and responses during the pandemic remain under-researched.

To date, there has been little publicly available research examining the ways in which the education sector of Lao PDR has responded to the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, this report provides more detail into the ways in which education policies currently support schools, staff, and students across Lao PDR. The report also considers how educational policies and practices have evolved during the pandemic and reflects on the lessons learned that can promote recovery and resilience in Lao PDR.

3 READINESS: PREPAREDNESS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN LAO PDR

Over the past two decades, Lao PDR has made significant gains in halving the poverty rate, reducing malnutrition, and improving health and education outcomes (World Bank, 2021). However, after decades of rapid expansion of the education sector, the quality of education remains a concern. As it has in other countries in the Asia region, the pandemic has exacerbated the challenges facing Lao PDR. Understanding where the education system was at the onset of the pandemic provides important context for understanding the country's readiness to respond to the needs of students, parents and communities, teachers, and schools, during the pandemic and into the future.

Lao PDR provides education to approximately 6.5 million students across 9,000 primary schools and 1,000 secondary schools. Schooling is offered only in the Lao language, although only around half the population speaks Lao as a first language (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2018). Before the pandemic, Lao PDR was already facing a learning crisis with low-level attainment, low transition rates, and high drop-out rates. Many of the education challenges in Lao PDR have strong poverty, ethnicity, and gender dimensions, which impede access to quality education for many children. Almost one in four households live in poverty, and the costs of attending school (such as contributions to school fees and uniforms) can make school unaffordable for some families (World Bank, 2015a).

Lao children attend school for an average of 10.8 years but only attain skills equivalent to approximately six years of education (World Bank, 2021). A recent Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM, 2019) report shows that 50 percent of Lao students in Grade 5 were in the lowest Band (2) and are still at the stage of matching single words to an image of a familiar object or concept. In the early grades, the Multiyear Teacher Development study found that 50 percent of teachers reported students not being ready to start school and would require intensive support in early language and cognitive development skills to succeed in the classroom (Wong et al., 2021). Access to early childhood education remains low, with only 15 percent of students who enter Grade 1 attending an early childhood education (ECE) program (UNICEF, 2015). Lack of school readiness and low quality also contribute to high drop-out rates among students, which has shown a backward trend in recent years, with the Grade 1 dropout rate increasing to 6 percent in the 2018–2019 school year. Primary completion rates have remained stagnant at 86 percent (UIS, 2022). The physical barriers to school access and a lack of demand for education contribute to low attendance rates and poor performance. A World Bank study found that out-of-school children are more likely to live in villages with 'incomplete' schools that do not offer Grade 4 and Grade 5, low parent perception of the quality and relevance of education, and an insufficient supply of teachers (World Bank, 2016).

Within this context, Lao PDR has embarked on a series of education reforms focused on policies expanding access to schools, enhancing teacher quality, and promoting inclusive education. Under the Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021–2025 (ESSDP), priorities in the basic education sector include curriculum reform, content knowledge, and pedagogical skills of primary teachers. Specifically, there is a strong emphasis on improved student learning outcomes through greater access to ECE, improved curricula, and assessment. The ESSDP also targets interventions in the 40 most disadvantaged districts in Lao PDR to mitigate the risk of vulnerable students falling further behind and dropping out of the education system. Importantly, the ESSDP recognizes the need to develop and expand support mechanisms for students and teachers in rural and remote areas who were not able to access online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the promotion of digital learning and a strengthened disaster contingency plan for better monitoring and planning of emergency responses.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Lao PDR, 14,000 schools were closed to most students from March until May 2020, affecting over 1.7 million learners. Schools gradually reopened in May and fully opened in June 2020, with the school term extended into the summer break to make up for lost instruction time (MOES, 2021). School closures across all Lao provinces occurred again in April 2021 due to increasing case numbers. During these periods, an estimated 1,900 schools were also used as COVID-19 testing centers and quarantine centers for returning migrant workers (MOES, 2021). School closures disrupted original reading periods, final examinations, and graduation (**Table 1**).

Table 5. School Calendar During COVID-19 Pandemic

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Normal Year	1 st term				Exam	2 nd term				Exam	Break	Break
2019-2020					Exam		School closure	School closure	Partial open	Fully open		
2020-2021								School closure	School closure	School closure	School closure	Partial open
2021-2022	1 st term				Pilot Open	Fully open	Recess	2 nd term				

Consistent with findings across other centralized education systems in Asia, such as Nepal and China, Lao PDR was prepared to coordinate and mobilize resources more readily to respond to crises (Joyne, Gibbs, & Sims, 2020). This is due to high-level leadership at the central level to coordinate government policy responses, such as the rapid communication of government directives and channeling of resources to the education sector from the central to the district education offices. At the onset of the pandemic, education guidelines included policies to support remote learning and the establishment of a centralized online learning platform (Kang Panya Lao) with resources to help teachers plan and deliver lessons to suit their local context. Other features of government readiness to support educational responses included having national plans and strategies in place (such as the ESSDP and the national disaster risk management plan), existing monitoring systems to track student learning pre- and post-pandemic (such as national and regional assessments), and a focus on support for vulnerable populations (through the government’s commitment to prioritize the 40 most disadvantaged districts).

These efforts helped to maintain the continuity of learning across Lao PDR in the early and ongoing phases of the pandemic through face-to-face, blended, and remote delivery of lessons (MOES, 2021). However, a rapid monitoring phone survey of households by the World Bank found that over the past 12 months, 42 percent of children (based on data gathered from 1,610 household interviews) stopped attending classes temporarily or permanently, with the proportions higher among rural households, mainly due to unavailability of online classes during school closures (World Bank, 2022).

For rural students, 72 percent of rural households reported the unavailability of online classes as the primary reason for not attending classes. Concerns about learning loss were cited by most respondents, with the bottom 40 percent (based on consumption distribution) more likely to be concerned about learning loss. Urban households were more able to invest in remedial strategies to safeguard against learning loss, including tutoring (29 percent), improved Internet connection (21 percent), and purchasing devices (17 percent). The bottom 40 percent were less likely to have out-of-pocket expenses for remedial education compared to the top 60 percent, despite reporting deeper concerns about learning loss.

4 RESPONSE: SYSTEM AND SCHOOL RESPONSES IN LAO PDR

This chapter presents the findings of a document review focused on readiness and response in Laos. The data are presented with consideration given to the six key themes outlined in the analytical framework (for more details, see **Annex A**):

Leadership

Leadership focuses on improving student learning, supporting ongoing teacher professional learning and collaboration, engaging all members of the school community, and promoting the well-being and growth of the school community. Leadership can occur at various levels, including at policy, school, or classroom level.

Collaboration

Quality collaboration can occur between systems and schools, schools and families, and school staff. Collaboration supports learning and well-being, engagement, motivation, and student outcomes.

Well-Being and Inclusion

Well-being is a valued outcome of schools, structures, processes, and programs that support the inclusion of all members of the school community (students, teachers, school leaders, and families). A sense of well-being can support staff and student engagement and participation.

Differentiation

Differentiation relates to multiple pathways for learning, flexible options for engaging in learning, responsiveness to individual needs, using evidence to inform decision-making and planning, teacher autonomy to adjust and respond to the needs of their students and the context for teaching and learning, and support for teachers to enable a differentiated approach (training, resources, mentoring).

Reflection

A culture of reflection looks for pathways to improvement and growth, uses evidence to evaluate impact, and chances to identify areas for improvement, involving all members of the school community in the process of reflection. Feedback is also an integral part of the reflective process.

Growth

Growth is an emphasis on making progress, change, and improvement, and other structures and processes that support teachers, students, and families to contribute to improvement within their school community.

4.1 Leadership

The Lao government, with support from development partners, made a concerted effort to respond early to the COVID-19 pandemic. A coordinated approach across several line ministries helped ensure that government priorities and policy responses were implemented more efficiently to reach all levels of government and the community. This included strategies for increased funding provision, technology, public health messaging, and data collection (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021). Despite challenges facing the country, efforts by the Lao government to contain the spread of COVID-19 appear to have been largely successful due to the early implementation of a coordinated response strategy led by the National Taskforce

Committee for COVID-19 Prevention and Control. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) (MOES, 2020) created its own response framework for the education sector, which prioritizes: (1) the prevention and spread of COVID-19, (2) continuity of learning, and (3) safe re-opening of schools.

Support for Remote Learning

The Lao PDR COVID-19 Response Plan identified continuity of learning as a priority during periods of school closures. As a response, the government introduced different learning modalities to support the needs of different learners, including children with special needs, ethnic children, and those in rural and remote areas. Key remote learning interventions included a mix of high-tech, low-tech, and no-tech solutions, such as the development of an online learning platform, educational content for broadcasting through a dedicated TV channel, and the printing of educational resources. However, there is limited evidence of students accessing remote learning through these different modalities during school disruptions.

In remote areas where access to online and TV learning is limited, there were provisions for small groups of children to meet with their teachers on a regular basis, following strict social distancing protocols. Due to Lao PDR's mountainous geography and lack of rural infrastructure, rural communities lag in access to technology; just 0.3 percent of rural households have fixed broadband, 2 percent have computers, 49 percent have television, and 15 percent have radios, according to a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (CSIS, 2022). Given the technology gap in rural communities, it is expected that children in rural and remote areas will have limited access to remote learning during the pandemic. According to the 2017 Lao Social Indicator Survey, across Lao PDR, 79 percent of households have access to TV, while 92 percent have access to a mobile phone (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2018). Despite a high mobile usage rate, there was limited evidence of the use of mobile technology to support remote learning during the pandemic. This suggests an opportunity to leverage mobile technology more fully as part of the Lao government's plan for the digital transformation of the education system in line with the National Digital Economy Plan (UNICEF, 2022a).

Local education authorities such as provincial and district education officers and pedagogical advisors also led school-level remote learning practices through support for teachers and regular communication with parents. Recognizing that vulnerable children are at higher risk during crises, the MOES collaborated with other government ministries and agencies, such as the Lao Women's Union and Lao Youth Union, to set up psychosocial support hotlines for students and teachers.

Prioritizing School Reopening

Under the Lao PDR Education COVID-19 Response Plan, MOES also introduced several key interventions. The first initiative identified was to adhere to the 'Framework for School Reopening strictly,' a strategy that included six key dimensions stakeholders could use to access and prepare for the situation prior to reopening. The second approach was to adopt the Safe Schools Guidance for 'COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools' policy, which denotes common practices of safety to prevent infection as well as avoid the spread of the virus.

In May 2020, the Lao government announced that some schools could open at a limited capacity. Priority was given to students in Grade 5 (primary school), Grade 9 (lower secondary school), and Grade 12 (upper secondary school), while all other students continued to learn remotely (MOES, 2021). Community-based ECE centers that operated under the support of development partners were handed over to the MOES, and identified grades of the most vulnerable groups of students were prioritized. To facilitate this transition, MOES worked

collaboratively with local and international partners to plan a safe and effective transition back to school.

In 2021, due to the rising number of COVID-19 infections, full school reopening dates were postponed to October 4. However, return to school was actively encouraged by the government through the promotion of multiple modalities and campaigns targeting parents and the community to encourage children to return to school. The government saw the return of students to school as critical to long-term human capital development and economic growth in Lao PDR to support the country's graduation from Least Developed Country Status by 2025 (MOES, 2020). This is highlighted in one of the pillars of the 9th National Socioeconomic Development Plan (NSED) (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2016).

4.2 Collaboration

Cross-Sector Coordination

Evidence of collaboration during the response phase was observed at multiple levels. Cross-sector coordination was an effective mechanism used by the Lao government to channel support to the education sector. For example, many line ministries (such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare) diverted funding to the education sector, including the provision of top-up school grants to all public schools for the procurement of hygiene supplies as part of the COVID-19 prevention measures, along with communication packages relating to Safe Operations School Guidance (MOES, 2021). Video conferencing equipment and information and communications technology (ICT) packages were also made available to the MOES central and provincial offices to support coordination between education stakeholders.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism, a first-ever channel dedicated to providing learning content was also successfully launched for students called LAO ESTV (Education and Sports TV) on Channel 8 from 6 am to 10 pm daily (Monday to Sunday) in response to the pandemic. Existing content from educational TV programs such as "My Village TV" and "Learn Together Laos" was initially used, and further content was gradually developed and broadcast. To ensure broader access to remote learning, additional tablets and satellite TVs were provided to select schools in the 40 priority districts. The government also shared lifesaving COVID-19 prevention messages through the LAO ESTV platform, community radio, and WhatsApp messaging (UNICEF, 2021a, b).

Collaboration with Development Partners

Collaboration with development partners allowed the Lao government to continue and scale up the delivery of remote education services during the pandemic, particularly to the most disadvantaged students. For example, through a \$2.6 million grant from USAID, the Lao government was able to bridge the gap in education, including the learning-teaching curriculum for both face-to-face classrooms and remote settings. This support will also extend to contribute to enhancing the inclusiveness of vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities and minorities who do not speak the Lao language to allow them to have access to quality education (USAID, 2022). In particular, the partnership will address the disparity in access to ECE by providing expanded ECE support and transition to and completion of primary school for children in remote areas. Teachers, school leaders, and parents will be supported with knowledge and skills to support the learning needs of all children (UNICEF, 2022b).

Other bilateral partners, such as the Australian Government, through the Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) Program, scaled up its support for teacher training in digital and online learning. Led by the Department of Teacher Education, a blended learning pilot was conducted across three provinces with master and provincial teacher trainers, with plans to cascade the training to all provinces in the future (BEQUAL, 2020). The purpose of

the training was to introduce a flexible mode to support teacher professional learning during and post COVID-19. The workshops provided trainers with the opportunity to practice ICT skills and deliver workshops using a blended approach.

The Lao government also received a GPE grant of \$70,000 to support the implementation of its Education COVID-19 Response Plan (GPE, 2020). The funding was used to develop and distribute learning materials, including textbooks, TVs, and satellite sets to support the continuity of learning for children in remote areas. Support also includes the development of online and broadcast learning resources, such as the “My House” series targeted at early learners. The series aims to promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of young Lao children.

Khang Panya Lao Online Learning Platform

In collaboration with UNICEF, the Lao PDR government developed a teaching and learning platform (Khang Panya Lao) to support online learning as well as an application for offline access (**Figure 2**). The application acts as a medium for learning but has also become a tool in which teachers can advance their academic skills. It has raised the opportunity for teachers from only utilizing the traditional platforms of teaching such as pen, paper, and blackboard to an advanced digital interface of smart mobile phones, tablets, and online websites. In addition to national curriculums and textbooks being converted from physical books into the PDF files in Khang Panya Lao for convenience, the teachers are also able to access more teaching resources such as interactive games, story books, instruction videos. Apart from supporting students to study at home, Khang Panya Lao is also being implemented in the classroom. It functions as a supplementary asset for teachers to optimize their teaching methods further and to engage with students. The platform has a function that tracks the records of students and what they have been previously learning, so that teachers are able to monitor and evaluate the progress of their students and support their learning journey. The number of registered users of the Khang Panya Lao online learning platform has grown from 700 in mid-April 2021 to over 20,000 by the end of June 2021.

Figure 14. Khang Panya Lao e-Flyer



Collaboration with the Community

Active engagement with local education departments, teachers, and parents was also important in the initial response period to build support and trust within the school community. Clear lines of communication were established to broadcast the directives from the MOES to support the continuity of learning. This included public health information to parents and school communities to prevent the transmission and spread of COVID-19, tips for parents to support learning at home, and messages to promote the return to school. To ensure public health information and other communication reached a wider audience, including at the village level, nearly 5,000 USB sticks were distributed containing public speaking announcements for use on community loudspeaker systems (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021), one of the most widespread means of communication in villages across the country. Teachers were given a directive through the district education offices to continue delivering lessons through TV, radio, or online platforms and take-home packs. Communication between education stakeholders, including district officials, school leaders, teachers, and village education development committees, was facilitated using WhatsApp, Skype, and Facebook to ensure effective coordination of the Education Response Plan.

Prior to the pandemic, many households across Lao PDR had limited resources at home (such as textbooks and storybooks) to support learning. At the onset of the pandemic, when schools were closed abruptly, the lack of existing learning materials at home impeded the continuity of learning for many students, particularly those in the most disadvantaged districts. According to a survey of parents in the Learn to Read program, lack of learning materials, digital devices, and cost of Internet/mobile data had the greatest impact on student learning during school disruptions (USAID, 2021). In response, the MOES printed learning materials and take-home packs to support students who could not access online learning or broadcast media (MOES, 2021). Textbooks and learning materials for preschool, primary, and secondary students were printed and distributed to more than 750,000 households during the pandemic (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021). In some schools, teachers were able to complete the curriculum on time by distributing home learning packs to students and monitoring student learning through regular assessments of their work (USAID, 2021).

For the most hard-to-reach schools with no electricity, face-to-face learning was allowed with small groups of children, including those with disabilities (MOES, 2021). Where parents were not able to support learning due to work commitments or lack of literacy skills, there were examples of older siblings who could read Lao assisting pre-primary and Grade 1 students with reading and learning during school disruptions (USAID, 2021).

4.3 Well-Being and Inclusion

Protecting the health and well-being of students appeared to be a priority for Lao PDR. Five approaches were established to promote continuity of learning while ensuring the safety of staff and students. These included (1) learning face-to-face in class; (2) home or distance learning; (3) studying through television, websites, or the radio; (4) studying online via Internet connection and application; and (5) mixed methods delivery. School areas marked as *green* (referring to locations without positive COVID-19 cases) were allowed to conduct the teaching and study using both face-to-face and blended modes of delivery. Schools located in red zones (areas of infected cases) continued to study and deliver lessons remotely.

The Education COVID-19 Response Plan recognizes and prioritizes the needs of all learners by ensuring that education responses are more inclusive, particularly to address the needs of children with disabilities. This is in line with the NSEDP, which aims to support a more inclusive education system by promoting the right to education for children with disabilities, improving teacher training to understand inclusive education practices, and ensuring children with disabilities have the foundational competencies and skills from early childhood education to secondary school (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2016). While there is limited information on the status of children with disability in Lao PDR, the 2017 Lao Social Indicator

Survey indicates that 2 percent of children aged 2 to 4 years have a functional disability (UNICEF & Government of Lao PDR, 2020). In 2007–2008, it was reported that only 4 percent of school-aged children with disabilities attended an educational program or school (UNICEF, n.d.).

During the pandemic, the MOES provided tablets with accessibility options for children with disabilities to access online learning through Kang Panya Lao. Videos available on the platform included subtitles as well as sign language interpretation. For children who cannot access online learning, 100 children’s books have been translated into the Lao language and adapted to accessible electronic formats for learners with disabilities (MOES, 2020). In addition, an online teacher training course was developed to build the capacity of teachers to support children with disabilities in emergency contexts. All new teacher training videos developed for primary teachers are more accessible through the inclusion of sign language (UNESCO, 2022a).

Mental Health Support

Building on previous work recognizing the importance of children’s well-being in Lao PDR (UNICEF, 2019; UNICEF & Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2018), UNICEF disseminated television and radio programs on child protection, mental health psychosocial support services, online protection, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (UNICEF, 2021a). The Lao Women’s Union and Lao Youth Union also developed hotlines aimed at young people to provide professional counseling to support mental health issues among children and adolescents and case management support for girls who experience violence in any setting (MOES, 2021). UNICEF also re-ran the “My Village” program on Ministry-supported television, a program that supports the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of all children, including children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2021a, b).

Health and Hygiene

UNICEF also broadcasted the early childhood development television series “My House,” which focused on raising awareness of hygiene practices among young children and their families. Storybooks based on the series were also distributed to families. Additional UNICEF programs on education, child protection, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene were also developed in sign language and with Lao subtitles to raise awareness among children with different abilities (UNICEF, 2021a). UNICEF distributed Safe School Operation Guidelines along with posters to all ECE centers. All ECE centers and pre-primary and primary schools across the country received additional top-up grants for the purchase of soap, cleaning materials, and other hygiene kits as part of the COVID-19 prevention efforts. Schools also organized for their local communities to assist in providing water to schools that were required to enable handwashing and hygiene practices (UNICEF, 2021a).

4.4 Differentiation

While new modalities for learning have been introduced or scaled up during the pandemic, there needs to be more evidence of how these modalities have supported the different needs of children in Lao PDR. Students who were able to continue learning from home did so through radio, television, or online resources. However, due to the lack of broadcast and digital infrastructure in many rural and remote areas across Lao PDR, many students did not access learning during school closures. According to the World Bank household survey, almost half of all students surveyed did not participate in remote learning during school closures (World Bank, 2022). While local education authorities and schools provided standardized take-home packs for these students, there needs to be more data on how effective the materials were in meeting the needs of all students or whether they were used at all.

4.5 Growth

Monitoring student outcomes is important to understand the impact of the pandemic on learning. For example, data on potential student learning gaps during and after post-pandemic can help inform government policies and teaching practices relating to remediation and catch-up programs. Interviews conducted for this study with officials from the local Department of Education across 18 provinces in Lao PDR found that assessment policies were varied and appeared to be set at the discretion of each provincial education office. Of the 18 provinces, only two reported that they assessed students when they returned to school at the beginning of the new academic year. This could reflect concerns that children would fail or not achieve the minimum standards to advance to the next grade and is also consistent with reports from the Learn to Read evaluation (USAID, 2021). In the two provinces where exams were conducted, students who scored below five were required to revisit the exam before the end of the semester.

There needs to be more information about student learning outcomes during remote learning. However, most teachers interviewed from the Multiyear Teacher Development Study reported that students did not retain previously taught content, and upon returning to school, teachers had to repeat lessons to catch up with pre-pandemic learning (Huang, 2022). Further, only one in five teachers interviewed reported assessing their students when school resumed. Teachers from the Learn to Read program reported using formative assessment based on learning achievement to date to provide final grades (USAID, 2021). This suggests that many teachers may need more support on how to transition students back to school and provide remedial support where it was needed.

4.6 Reflection

As in many contexts in the Asia region, there is still limited evidence in Lao PDR on the practices at the classroom level to support student learning during the pandemic. There is an opportunity to learn from the experiences of teachers, parents, and students who lived through the pandemic to inform system recovery and reform. There is also increased attention on the role that teachers and academic leaders play in mitigating impacts on learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Noting the challenges and weaknesses in the Lao education system to respond adequately to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has made a commitment to transform the education system to be more resilient to future disruptions. This includes sustainable financing of the education sector to expand the teaching workforce, improve the quality of teachers, ensure all schools meet fundamental quality standards, and increase access to digital and flexible learning approaches (MOFA, 2022). The National Digital Economy Development Plan provides a road map for the digitalization of education in Lao PDR, which will expand access to ICT infrastructure to support multiple learning modalities, especially in rural areas.

The government is committed to strengthening the effectiveness of teachers over the medium to long term with support for teacher development in areas such as inclusive education, content knowledge, digital literacy and pedagogy, formative assessment, and multi-grade teaching (MOFA, 2022). As part of the review of the Teacher Education Curriculum, the first Information and Communications Technologies Competency Standards for Teachers (ICT-CST) were launched in April 2022, with 11 standards and 47 performance indicators under six domains (UNESCO, 2022b). The Lao government is also working with development partners to support teachers to continue to deliver blended approaches to learning after the pandemic. In July 2022, Lao PDR received \$621,000 as part of a partnership with UNICEF and the Government of Japan, with intentions to support the education sector—especially the academic learning of both teachers and students. The grant includes the provision of physical and digital learning materials, laptops, and tablets to access digital platforms and participation in training courses in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to improve the digital literacy of teachers. Teachers and academic staff have begun to participate

in training courses so they can continue to reflect on ways to teach students effectively into the future (UNICEF, 2022).

5 CHALLENGES TO EDUCATION RESPONSES

This review identified three significant challenges that were prevalent across reports from school and policy leaders in Lao PDR in adapting education systems to respond to COVID-19: (1) access to resourcing, (2) participation in schooling, and (3) teacher quality.

5.1 Access to Resourcing

In the last five years, Lao PDR has experienced a surge in natural disasters that have destroyed school facilities, educational equipment, and teaching and learning materials, particularly textbooks and teacher guidebooks. This further exacerbated the lack of provision of materials, particularly in rural areas (MOES, 2021). A limited government budget for education and education infrastructure has left an estimated 25 percent of schools with no clean water, making it a challenge to practice proper hygiene as part of pandemic control mechanisms. About half of schools do not have electricity. The use of modern technology in education as such is limited, and digital literacy remains low, including among teachers (GPE, 2020).

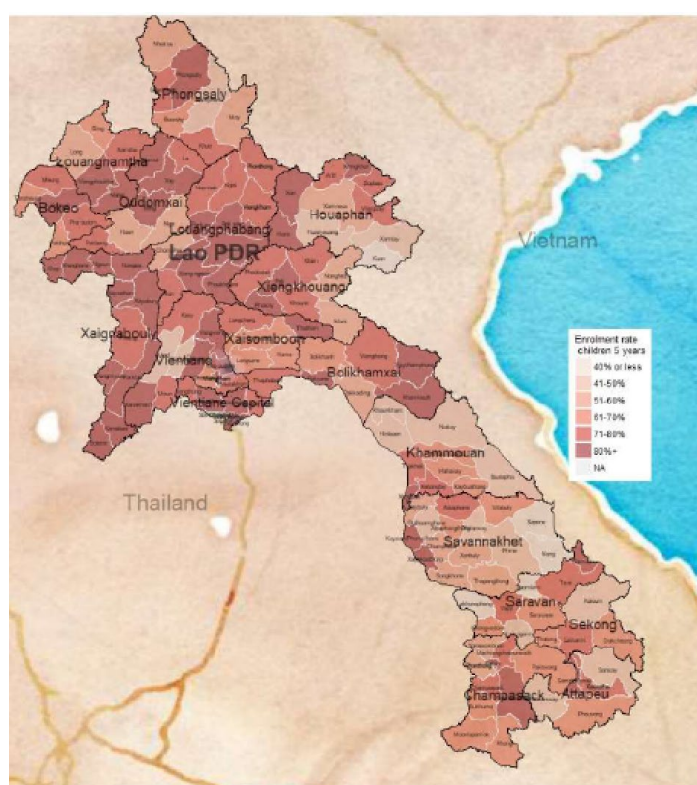
The COVID-19 pandemic has left Lao PDR in a vulnerable financial position. According to the World Bank (2021), predictions of very low or even negative economic growth are also expected to affect family incomes, which in turn will impact decisions affecting children's participation in school. According to estimates by the World Bank, the economic impact of COVID-19 has also pushed vulnerable households further into poverty due to disruptions to the labor market, loss of income, and increasing food insecurity (World Bank, 2021). Poverty was found to be a key contributing factor to low school completion rates and education inequality in Lao PDR.

5.2 School Preparedness and Participation in the Early Grades

Access to ECE has increased significantly in Lao PDR over the past decade. Lao PDR has seen a rise in the Early Child Development Index (ECDI) among young children across all groups over the past five years. While most 3–4-year-old children are developmentally 'on track' based on ECDI results, many fail to meet the expected level of competency for literacy and numeracy development. A World Bank study on ECE also found that poor nutrition, lack of access to health care services, and insufficient stimulation at home contribute to poor developmental outcomes and lack of readiness to enter school, especially for children from ethnic and poor households (World Bank, 2016). The pandemic placed additional barriers in front of early learners, including the ability to pivot to remote learning and potential implications for the ability of the teacher to connect students and curriculum in the early years and meet students at their point of need (UNICEF, 2017).

By the age of 6, 80 percent of children were enrolled in primary school (this is the statutory age for attending primary school), and 40 percent of 5-year-olds were enrolled in primary rather than ECE (UNICEF, 2017). This may be because school is generally free of charge, ECE may only be available in some areas, and some parents may prefer to start school earlier. The socioeconomic background is also a factor (World Bank, 2015). In general, access, enrollment, and school readiness are better in the northern provinces and worse in the south, and better in urban areas compared to rural areas (**Figure 3**).

Figure 15. ECE Enrollment Rate at 5 Years of Age*



*Source: Dewees, A., & Loizillon, A., 2016.

Ninety-two percent of children who are primary-school age attend either ECE or school. This figure drops as they move through the school system, where only 60 percent are expected to attend lower secondary, 23 percent continue to attend primary school despite their age, and 17 percent are out of school (UNICEF, 2017). The Labour Force and Child Labour Survey (2010) also placed the rate of child labor at approximately 10 percent (International Labour Organization, 2010). While gender parity at the primary level has continued to improve, other disparities persist, with students from poor, rural, and ethnic households facing significant disadvantages (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2018). Support for students with diverse learning needs remains low.

School attendance was expected to drop because of COVID-19 due to the lack of capacity of poorer families to send their children to school. Reporting from the Learn to Read program suggests that during periods of school closure, some parents took their children to the fields, and as a result, some never returned to school due to being used to going to the fields and parents' fear of their children contracting COVID-19 when schools reopened (USAID, 2021). There is also increasing concern that these children may never return to school, which puts vulnerable children further at risk of low educational attainment, poor health, child labor, and early child marriage (UNICEF, 2019). The World Bank, in coordination with the Lao Bureau of Statistics, reports pressures on an already-weak job market, and the Poverty Assessment report estimates that poverty will increase by 1.4 percent to 3.1 percent in 2020, compared to the 0.6 percent decline that would have been expected without COVID-19 (World Bank, 2021).

5.3 Teacher Quality

The National Teaching Standards developed in 2017 have yet to be implemented, compounded by challenges relating to inefficient and inequitable distribution of the teaching workforce. Teaching quality in Lao PDR varies; many teachers are poorly remunerated, absenteeism rates are high, and many teachers need to engage in farming in addition to their teaching roles to feed themselves and their families. In 2017, MOES reported on a national teacher survey into the availability, deployment, and salary status of teachers. They indicated that 12,000 more teachers were required to fulfill national needs, with shortfalls being greatest in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, staff at the Education Management Information System Section of the Department of Planning indicated that out of 66,119 active teachers, over 12,000 were ‘voluntary,’ meaning they are government trained and working in government schools but not being paid state salaries (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2021). Poor learning outcomes are reflected in the low quality of teaching, which is represented by a combination of low content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers (UNICEF, 2017). These challenges were further exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic when teachers lacked the support and capacity to transition quickly to remote teaching. However, there is limited evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning practices at the classroom level and what teachers and school leaders did to adapt the curriculum or instruction during remote learning to support students.

6 RECOVERY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT IN LAO PDR

As this review has demonstrated, the education system of Lao PDR faced many challenges prior to the pandemic, including low levels of access to resources, low education levels among children, and teacher quality frameworks that remain in the early stages of implementation. These existing challenges position the children of Lao PDR as particularly vulnerable to learning shocks and losses. However, because of support from external agencies during the pandemic and renewed political commitment from the Lao government to transform the education sector, there are new opportunities to understand the innovative policies, programs, and educational practices that have recently been implemented. In particular, the high level of coordination across the Lao government and development partners has provided an opportunity for greater efficiency in responding to the pandemic, for example, through targeted funding for vulnerable populations, a focus on teacher quality, and the development of an online platform to support blended learning approaches.

There is also evidence of new policies that support ongoing adaptation to the curriculum and instruction time to cater to remediation and catch-up learning. Recognizing the need to mitigate potential learning gaps and promote effective learning when schools resumed, the Lao government has introduced the 80% Curriculum to guide teaching and learning across three focus areas: (1) to ensure modalities include offline, online, and self-practice; (2) to shorten instruction time; (3) to focus the curriculum on core subjects. According to interviews with provincial education authorities for this review, all 18 provinces have adopted the 80% Curriculum. It will be important for the Lao government to continue tracking student progress in the recovery period to determine if policies supporting curriculum adaptation have been effective in improving student learning and retention.

Understanding the practices of schools and families impacted by accessibility challenges also requires further research. Despite a coordinated effort to support the continuity of learning throughout school lockdown periods, there are concerns that many children remain unreachable and disengaged from learning due to a lack of access to digital learning, low level of digital literacy, including among teachers, and lack of support from parents and caregivers. A recent study conducted by ACER on the effectiveness of teachers in Lao PDR found that limited support was provided for teachers and students during school closures and that remote

learning was not feasible due to rural locations, limited access to the Internet, and low levels of parental literacy (Hollingsworth et al., 2022). However, there is little research on ways in which individual schools or teachers in Lao PDR have supported families of different need levels or how teachers have adapted teaching and learning practices to accommodate different levels of access, particularly during periods of disruption.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this review was to explore the system and school-level practices that have supported learning continuity in Asia during the pandemic and explore the extent to which support mechanisms have been implemented during the pandemic.

Overall, the policies and programs reviewed provide emergent insight into the readiness of the Lao PDR education system. While some policies and practices have been developed to support learning in Lao PDR before and during the pandemic, resources remain scarce and inequitable across contexts, necessitating ongoing collaboration with external agencies to support response and recovery efforts. Because of a lack of research, it also remains to be seen which school-level practices have supported the continuity of learning and engagement, particularly in contexts with lower levels of access and differing needs, during the pandemic. Reflecting on the analytical framework presented in the main report, there are indicators of collaborative practices among government levels, leadership, and collaborative efforts to support students during periods of disruption. There is little information available on ways in which systems and schools have differentiated the delivery of curricular assessments; however, this does not necessarily mean these practices are not occurring.

There needs to be more evidence of policies focused on improving inclusion and mitigating the impacts of marginalization, though encouragingly, evidence of support for physical and mental health is increasing. Finally, a focus on growth at the system level still needs to be improved in publicly available documents in Lao PDR, and there needs to be more information as to how teachers have assessed students during the pandemic. The findings of this study, therefore, support several key recommendations that may support policymakers and government representatives in Lao PDR, which are outlined in **Table 2**:

Table 6: Recommendations for Policymakers and Government Representatives

Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in research focused on school-level needs and responses in Lao PDR • Integrate and improve digital infrastructure and capacity for blended learning delivery, including differentiated approaches to learning, especially for disadvantaged areas • Gain insights from teachers on what worked best and for which types of learners • Promote knowledge sharing among teachers and educators through peer learning networks • Strengthen parent and school partnerships to improve student learning, particularly in the early years, to support school readiness • Consider the role of mental health and well-being in broader learning agendas

This study provides insights for system leaders to reflect on current levels of readiness to support learners in Lao PDR. More research is needed to understand what has worked and why before and during the pandemic. Insights from school leaders and teachers have not been widely shared in the literature on education responses in Lao PDR, particularly in marginalized or disadvantaged settings. There is also a paucity of information on the extent to which community support has been leveraged during the pandemic. These insights could support an understanding of ways in which Lao PDR can continue to work toward longer-term resilience, regardless of access to resources.

It is our hope that future research can focus on school-level insights into recovery and resilience in Lao PDR, building on the preliminary findings presented in this review. Reflecting on the insights presented in this report, consideration might therefore be given as to how those policymakers, representatives, and donors working in Lao PDR can best engage with the education sector through a combination of research, monitoring, and ongoing support.

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ANNEX A: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This analytical framework underpins the design and implementation of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) mapping study across six countries in the Asia region. It will be used to guide data collection, analysis, and reporting to meet the objectives of the study: (1) to fill the gap in comparative analyses on countries in developing Asia, and (2) to focus on policies and actions countries have taken to mediate and remediate learning loss and learning inequalities during COVID-19.

The framework is informed by the extensive literature on effective teaching and learning and draws from the emerging evidence base on COVID-19 impacts on education systems worldwide. The figure below depicts the different interacting levels of the education system (policy, school, agents) that impact on equitable student learning. In the context of COVID-19, the three phases—Readiness, Response, and Recovery—provide the operational context that influences how education systems plan for and manage their strategies for improvement and resilience.

This framework draws on USAID’s Reigniting Learning: Strategies for Accelerating Learning Post-Crisis²⁷ evidence review and Return to Learning during Crises²⁸ toolkit and evidence review on strategies to accelerate learning and the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)²⁹ on promising policy responses to support greater education system resilience and responsiveness. Both share similar elements in defining a path forward that prioritizes the policies and practices to promote: (1) equity and inclusion, (2) flexibility in learning interventions and assessments, and (3) building the capacity of educators. However, this framework also seeks to broaden the ways in which we recognize system readiness and quality by focusing on the interplay between policy, practice, and equitable learning.

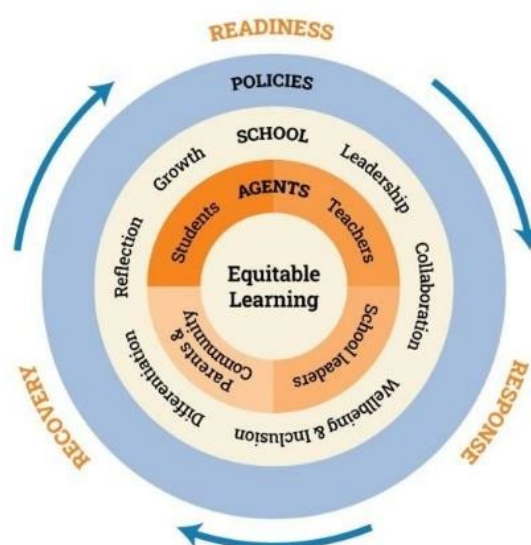
By exploring possibilities and opportunities rather than deficits, this framework will guide the investigation into how the different levels of the education system operate and interact at each phase of the COVID-19 planning and management cycle. Within each country’s context, evidence will be collected on which systematic levers and school-level practices education systems can mobilize in safeguarding equitable learning among educational agents during and after the pandemic. Examples of innovative, flexible, and responsive systems and school practices relevant to the context will be explored and presented against the framework, creating meaningful pathways for comparative education systems to learn and adapt into the future. Lessons will be drawn from each country’s response to COVID-19 to highlight the most promising approaches to address persistent quality and equity challenges in the education system.

²⁷ Sarr, K.G., Tolani, N., Rodriguez Morales, I., Aghabozorg, R. & Mulcahy-Dunn, A. (2020). Reigniting learning: strategies accelerating learning post crisis. A review of evidence. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Available online. https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/Technical_Report_Accelerating_Learning_Post-Crisis_Full_Report.pdf

²⁸ Boisvert, K., Weisenhorn, N., & Bowen, J. (2021). *Returning to learning during crises: Decision-making and planning tools for education leaders*. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Available online. <https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/Returning%20to%20Learning%20During%20Crises.pdf>

²⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2020). *Lesson for education from COVID-19: A policymaker’s handbook for more resilient systems*. Available online. <https://www.oecd.org/education/lessons-for-education-from-covid-19-0a530888-en.htm>.

Analytical Framework



Equitable Learning

Drawing upon the USAID and OECD frameworks, we place equitable learning at the center of the framework, surrounded by those practices that can improve equitable learning opportunities among students, but also parents/caregivers, teachers, and school leaders. Equity is also highlighted as an area of interest in examining indicators of readiness, response, and recovery potential in the context of the pandemic. While research into the impacts of the pandemic on student learning has not yet demonstrated broad evidence of learning loss, there is convincing evidence of learning inequity in many contexts³⁰, including low- to middle-income countries³¹.

The COVID-19 Context

The COVID-19 crisis has caused unprecedented levels of disruption to education systems worldwide. Across the Asia region, it is estimated that around 760 million children were impacted by school closures at the height of the pandemic. Government response strategies have varied across the region, with some countries imposing prolonged school lockdowns while others have had short, repeated closure periods. As countries begin to reopen schools and continue to prepare for subsequent waves of COVID-19 infection, there is a need to develop the greater capability of education systems to: (1) safeguard learning in the early response phase, and (2) address persistent barriers to learning equality by harnessing the opportunities for systemic change.

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education³² provides a useful framework for understanding how systems can better respond to emergencies and how they can improve preparedness to build a more resilient education system. The Preparedness phase involves having plans and processes that document what should happen during and after an emergency, such as national disaster response plans. The Response phase refers to policies, plans, and actions to manage priority areas, such as the

³⁰ Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, H. (2020). *COVID-19 and Student Learning in the United States: The Hurt Could Last a Lifetime*. McKinsey and Co.

³¹ Reimers, F.M. (Ed) (2022). Primary and secondary education during COVID-19: Disruptions to educational opportunities during a pandemic. Springer. Available online. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-3-030-81500-4.pdf>

³² Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). (2012). *Minimum standards for education: Preparedness, response, recovery*. Available online. <https://inee.org/resources/inee-minimum-standards>

closing of schools. The Recovery phase focuses on returning students to pre-emergency learning. The three phases are represented in a cycle to reflect an iterative process, where data-driven monitoring and evaluation processes facilitate systems readiness and improvement. In our framework, we have adapted the INEE standards to consider **Readiness, Response, and Recovery** not only in the context of emergencies but in relation to system resilience during and beyond the pandemic.

Policies

This framework assumes that resilient education systems rely on the interaction between policies and institutions with classroom-level practices and the ability of agents to mobilize them. Successful policy implementation requires skilled teachers and effective school leaders to connect classroom practices with the broader education reform agenda.³³ Well-designed policies, supported by political commitment and strong institutional structures, including capacity and resourcing, have the best chance of success.

The OECD (2020) proposes three key policy priorities to take education forward beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. It challenges systems to take a transformational view of education that values people and processes over classrooms and devices. This links to the second policy priority, which calls for investments in teachers through carefully designed professional development that builds resilience and responsiveness to the new learning environment which considers new learning approaches that meet the learning needs of all children. The third priority area focuses on equity and inclusion in learning that combines policies that support effective learning interventions with student engagement and well-being.

In the context of COVID-19, education systems must understand the policy levers and school-level inputs that are necessary for safeguarding learning to pre-pandemic trajectories. For example:

- Policies support schools and teachers to develop emergency distance learning materials and activities accessible to all children, particularly the most marginalized.
- Government health authorities decide when schools reopen, and all educational authorities adhere to the Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools.
- Education planners develop and adapt instructional times, curricula, and learning resources and tools, as well as modify examinations and promotion procedures to make them feasible.

School-Level Practices

There is no doubt that quality inputs at the school level have the potential to influence student outcomes positively.³⁴ The quality of those inputs and the potential they bring for student learning and well-being depend on what students, teachers, school leaders, and parents do and how they interpret and enact broader policies that guide classroom practice and student learning. When we consider the school-level practices that have the potential to promote a resilient approach to change and support equitable outcomes for all, it is helpful to conceptualize the school as a community made up of four key stakeholder groups that come together to support learning and well-being. They are the students, the teachers, the school leaders, the parents, and the community. We refer to these different stakeholder groups as “Agents” in recognition of the active role they can play in identifying needs within the school community and responding to those needs, particularly during a time of change or disruption. School-level factors that have the potential to influence student outcomes positively include the following.

³³ Schleicher, A. (2018). *What makes high-performing school systems different. World Class: How to Build a 21st-Century School System*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

³⁴ Hattie, J. (2003). Teachers make a difference, What is the research evidence? [University of Auckland](#).

- **Leadership:** Leadership that focuses on improving student learning, supporting ongoing teacher professional learning and collaboration, engaging all members of the school community, and promoting the well-being and growth of the school community. In the context of this framework, we acknowledge that leadership can occur at various levels, including at policy, school, or classroom levels. In this current study, we are interested in how leadership at the school level contributes to resilience in the face of challenges and supports equitable outcomes. This leadership may come from school leaders themselves, but also collaborative leadership involving teachers, families, and the local community.
- **Collaboration:** Quality collaboration between school and families to support learning and well-being, professional collaboration between teachers that is focused on improving learning and the impact on student outcomes³⁵, and collaboration between students and teachers (e.g., formative assessment³⁶) to improve student engagement, motivation, and learning.³⁷
- **Reflection:** A culture of reflection that looks for pathways to improvement and growth, uses evidence to evaluate impact, and identifies areas for improvement, involves all members of the school community in the process of reflection. Feedback is also an integral part of the reflective process³⁸ allowing agents across various levels of the school to develop a sense of agency.
- **Differentiation:** Multiple pathways for learning, flexible options for engaging in learning, responsiveness to individual needs, using evidence to inform decision-making and planning, teacher autonomy to adjust and respond to the needs of their students and the context for teaching and learning, support for teachers to enable a differentiated approach (training, resources, mentoring).³⁹
- **Well-Being and Inclusion:** An emphasis on promoting well-being as a valued outcome of school, structures, processes, and programs that support the well-being of all members of the school community (students, teachers, school leaders, and families) can support student engagement, and learning⁴⁰ Inclusion should also be considered a key condition for well-being.⁴¹
- **Growth:** an emphasis on making progress, change and improvement, and other structures and processes that support teachers, students, and families to contribute to improvement within their school community.⁴²

While the system and school structures are crucial components of educational quality, understanding what happens in a school setting can offer meaningful insights into overcoming barriers to educational quality. Exploring which school-based practices and responses have

³⁵ Donohoo, J. (2018). Collective teacher efficacy research: Productive patterns of behaviour and other positive consequences. *Journal of educational change*, 19(3), 323-345.

³⁶ William*, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C., & Black, P. (2004). Teachers developing assessment for learning: Impact on student achievement. *Assessment in education: principles, policy & practice*, 11(1), 49-65.

³⁷ Timperley, H., Ell, F., & Le Fevre, D. (2017). Developing adaptive expertise through professional learning communities. In *Teachers leading educational reform* (pp. 175-189). Routledge.

³⁸ Hattie, J., & Clarke, S. (2019). *Visible learning: Feedback*. Routledge.

³⁹ Tomlinson, C. A., Murphy, M. (2016). *Leading for differentiation: Growing teachers who grow kids*. Hawker Brownlow Education.

⁴⁰ Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American psychologist*, 55(1), 68.

⁴¹ Goldan, J., Hoffmann, L., Schwab, S. (2021). A matter of resources? – students' academic self-concept, social inclusion and school well-being in inclusive education. *Resourcing Inclusive Education*, 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-363620210000015008>.

⁴² Griffin, P. E. (2017). *Assessment for teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

been effective in supporting the continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has yet to be well examined, particularly in Asia.

In the context of this framework, the above school-level practices are intentionally broad and reflect the established body of research on the importance of in-school practices on student learning. This is a point of difference to many existing frameworks that assess school improvement or education quality, which often base quality on access to resources, infrastructure, school management systems, standards-based curricula, and summative assessment.

APPENDIX C. COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE MAPPING STUDY—BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES: READINESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

All Children Reading–Asia (ACR–Asia)

COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE MAPPING STUDY

*Building Resilience in the Philippines:
Readiness, Response, and Recovery*

Submission Date: November 28, 2022

AID-OAA-TO-16-00017
TOCOR: Mitch Kirby

Submitted by: **RTI International**
3040 East Cornwallis Road
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-0155
Tel: (919) 541-6000

Authored by: **Dr. Anna Dabrowski, Maya Conway, Yung Nietschke, Dr. Amy Berry, and Chaula Yoga Pradhika (PT Australian Council for Educational Research Indonesia).**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACTRC	Assessment, Curriculum, and Technology Research Centre
ALS	Alternative Learning System
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BECLP	Basic Education Continuity of Learning Policy
BLR	Bureau of Learning Resources
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
DepEd	Department of Education
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction Management
EFA	Education for All
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ELLNA	Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment
K	Kindergarten
LR	Learning Resource
LRMDS	Learning Resource Management and Development System
MDL	Modular Distance Learning
MELC	Most Essential Learning Competencies
NAT	National Achievement Test
NEAEA	National Environmental Awareness and Education Act
ODL	Online Distance Learning
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OER	Open Education Resources
PhP	Philippine Pesos
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SEA-PLM	Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TV/R	TV/Radio-Based Instruction
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

1 OVERVIEW

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis has caused unprecedented levels of disruption to education systems worldwide. Across the Asia region, it is estimated that around 760 million children were impacted by school closures at the height of the pandemic. Government response strategies have varied across the region, with some countries imposing prolonged school lockdowns while others have had short, repeated closure periods. As countries begin to reopen schools and prepare for subsequent waves of COVID-19 infection, there is a need to develop a higher capability of education systems to safeguard learning and address persistent barriers to learning equality by harnessing the opportunities for systemic change. However, school-based practices and responses that have effectively supported learning continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic have yet to be well examined, particularly in Asia. While the system and school structures are crucial components of educational quality, understanding what happens in a school setting can offer meaningful insights into overcoming barriers to education quality.

This report presents the research findings undertaken in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. This report forms part of a broader study that explores the system and school-level practices that have supported learning continuity in Asia during the pandemic. The study will focus on the policymaker practices that supported teaching and learning and consider ways school leaders, teachers, and parents have worked to support children during periods of disruption. Rather than comparing the responses of Asia countries, this study will highlight innovations in the system and school policies and programs in the Philippines and make recommendations based on insights from the Philippines' education system. The study will focus on the school system and participants that support students in the Philippines but will not include students themselves.

2 METHODOLOGY

To understand the ways in which the education sector of the Philippines has responded to COVID-19, evidence has been drawn from research, policy, and current examples of practice. The scope covers policies and practices focused on supporting teaching and learning, with emphasis on the conditions that support students in the early years.

2.1 Research Questions

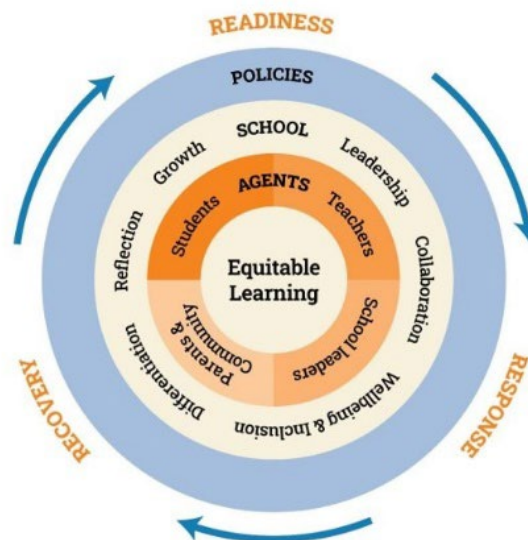
The study was guided by four sets of research questions:

1. How are countries' planned responses aligned with available evidence and frameworks on how to safeguard children's learning progress and social and emotional development, as well as address learning inequalities during the COVID-19 emergency and its aftermath? Do planned responses consider the needs of learners in the early grades?
2. What was the evolution of each country's basic education response to COVID-19, from the initial crisis response to measures they took as the situation stabilized into the "new normal" to their long-term plan for recovery and transformation following the pandemic?
 - a. To what extent was the country prepared to respond? What structures and processes were in place that promoted responsiveness and resilience to the pandemic?
 - b. What was the country's initial planned response in 2020? Was this a temporary measure or part of a plan for longer-term system strengthening moving forward?

- c. Where is the country currently in its response? Is this an extension of temporary measures or part of a plan for longer-term system strengthening moving forward?
 - d. What plans are in place to strengthen the responsiveness and resilience of the system moving forward?
3. At response timepoints (b) and (c), how successful have select countries been in implementing the proposed solutions?
 4. What are the gaps, challenges, and risks for reaching the most disadvantaged schools and learners through technology-based remote learning solutions in response to COVID-19? How could opportunities be leveraged to allow these interventions to be successful in the future, including policy-enabling factors and promising classroom-based practices?

An analytical framework was developed to guide the investigation of the research questions that consider the intersections between policy, school, and stakeholder-level indicators that contribute to a resilient education system (**Figure 1**). The framework is informed by the extensive literature on effective teaching and learning and draws from the emerging evidence base on COVID-19 impacts on education systems worldwide.

Figure 16. Analytical Framework



In the context of COVID-19, the three phases—Readiness, Response, and Recovery—provide the operational context that influences how education systems plan for and manage their strategies for improvement and resilience.⁴³ As such, each phase is aligned with the research questions to examine: (1) an education system’s preparedness in anticipation of risks to learning, (2) a continual process of response and adaptation to mitigate those risks during the crisis, and (3) a focus on effective early recovery and long-term education transformation that protects the needs of all learners. The three phases are represented in a cycle to reflect

¹ This framework draws on USAID’s Reigniting Learning: Strategies for Accelerating Learning Post-Crisis evidence review and Return to Learning during Crises toolkit and the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on promising policy responses to support greater education system resilience and responsiveness. Each phase is underpinned by the central notion of resilience, in which change is embraced by educators during periods of disruption, and moving forward, rather than returning to what has always been done, is recognized, and rewarded. Both share similar elements in defining a path forward that prioritizes the policies and practices to promote: (1) equity and inclusion, (2) flexibility in learning interventions and assessments, and (3) building the capacity of educators. However, this framework also seeks to broaden the ways in which we recognize system readiness and quality, by focusing on the interplay between policy, practice, and equitable learning.

an iterative process, where data-driven monitoring and improvement facilitate greater systems strengthening and resilience.

A particular focus of this study is on school-level practices that safeguard children's learning and social-emotional well-being during and after the pandemic. Based on the established body of research on the importance of school-level practices, the analytical framework identifies six quality inputs that have the potential to influence student outcomes positively and should be considered preconditions for a resilient education system. A full description of the analytical framework can be found in **Annex A**.

Leadership

Leadership focuses on improving student learning, supporting ongoing teacher professional learning and collaboration, engaging all members of the school community, and promoting the well-being and growth of the school community. Leadership can occur at various levels, including at the policy, school, or classroom level.

Collaboration

Quality collaboration can occur between systems and schools, schools and families, and school staff. Collaboration supports learning and well-being, engagement, motivation, and student outcomes.

Well-Being and Inclusion

Well-being is a valued outcome of school structures, processes, and programs that support the inclusion of all members of the school community (students, teachers, school leaders, and families). A sense of well-being can support staff and student engagement and participation.

Differentiation

Differentiation relates to multiple pathways for learning, flexible options for engaging in learning, responsiveness to individual needs, the use of evidence to inform decision-making and planning, teacher autonomy to adjust and respond to the needs of their students, and the context for teaching and learning, and support for teachers to enable a differentiated approach (training, resources, mentoring).

Reflection

A culture of reflection looks for pathways to improvement and growth, uses evidence to evaluate impact, and chances to identify areas for improvement, involving all members of the school community in the process of reflection. Feedback is also an integral part of the reflective process.

Growth

Growth is an emphasis on making progress, change, and improvement, and other structures and processes that support teachers, students, and families to contribute to improvement within their school community.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Drawing upon the above analytical framework, the study employs multiple methods to offer a descriptive account of the ways in which policymakers, teachers, school leaders, and parents have responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. With a focus on gathering qualitative insights that have not yet been gathered in previous research, the study featured three key data collection and analysis activities, which are explained in more detail below:

- **Desktop Reviews** of relevant documents on COVID-19 education responses in the Philippines. This rapid review was undertaken to collate evidence from various education systems about their COVID-19 responses and reopening strategies.
- **Key Informant Interviews** with Ministry officials and regional donor representatives ($n=15$) to understand the decision-making process and implementation of the planned response, the strategic focus of the planned response at different points in time, as well as the focus moving forward. Interview data were collected face-to-face by in-country researchers. Where live interviews were not possible, phone or online communication was used. See **Annex C** for the complete interview protocols.
- **Survey:** A non-representative survey with purposefully selected school leaders ($n=20$), teachers ($n=39$), and parents ($n=36$) examining COVID-19 specific policies and practices within school communities was conducted. The sample was based on a variety of geographic locations, the experience of teachers, and gender and language backgrounds. Online and paper-based surveys were distributed in both the Filipino and English languages to ensure a diversity of insights. Open-ended data about challenges and opportunities were also collected as part of the survey. See **Annex C** for the full survey instruments.

2.2.1 Participant Demographics

The geographic representation in this sample includes respondents located in urban, remote, and provincial areas. There was equal gender representation among the school leaders and slightly more boys than girls among the students (as reported by their parents in the survey). However, more women teachers responded to the survey than did men. While many teachers (approximately 40 percent) had more than 11 years of teaching experience, the sample also included beginning teachers (5 percent) and teachers with less than ten years of experience (50 percent). More than 50 percent of households surveyed spoke a language other than Filipino at home.

It is also important to note that online access to teaching and learning materials appears to have been available to all participants who responded to this study. This note is important as accessibility issues are common in parts of the Philippines, even though our research suggests there are efforts to improve access to data, devices, and Internet platforms. Parental education levels are also high that attributable to the selection of parents by school leaders rather than in-country researchers. Therefore, the study should not be considered representative but rather as providing detailed insights into the experiences of policymakers, practitioners, and parents during the pandemic. Participants' demographics are illustrated in **Figures 2 to 6**.

Figure 17. Location of Participants

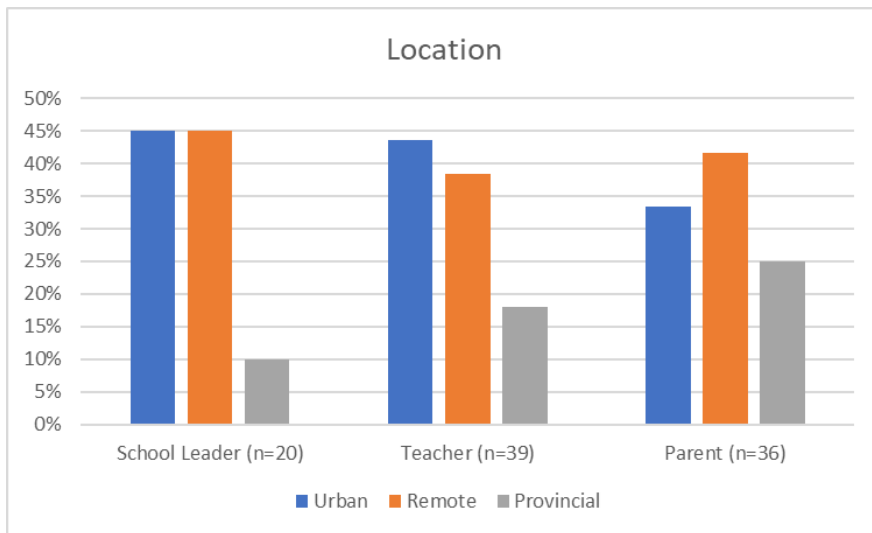


Figure 18. Gender Breakdown of Participants

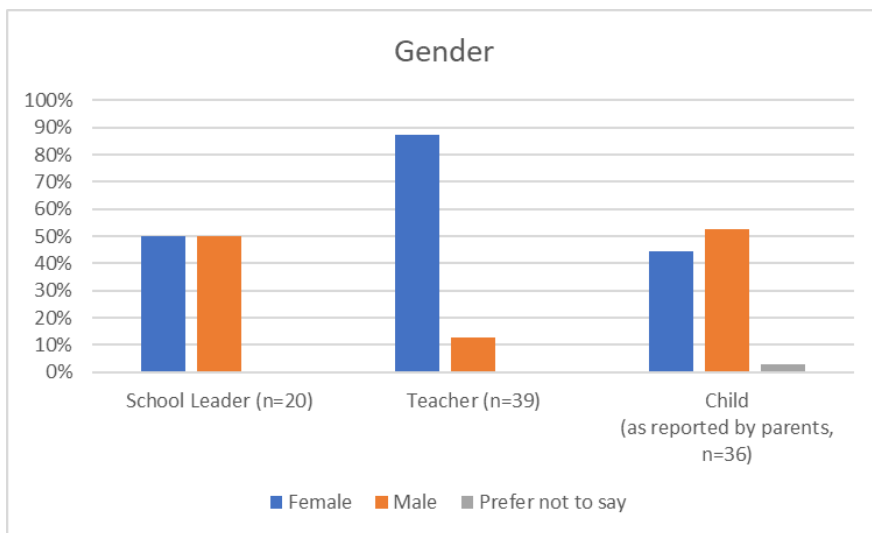


Figure 19. Years in the Profession

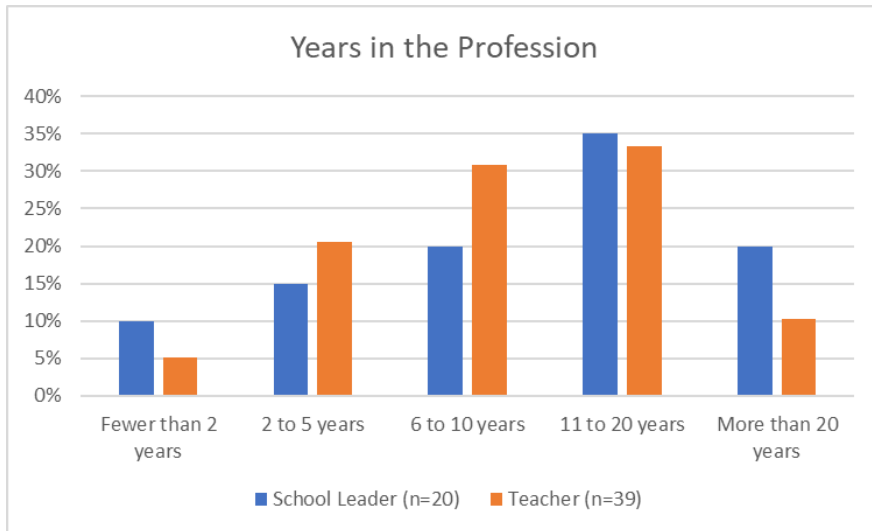


Figure 20. Languages Spoken in the Home

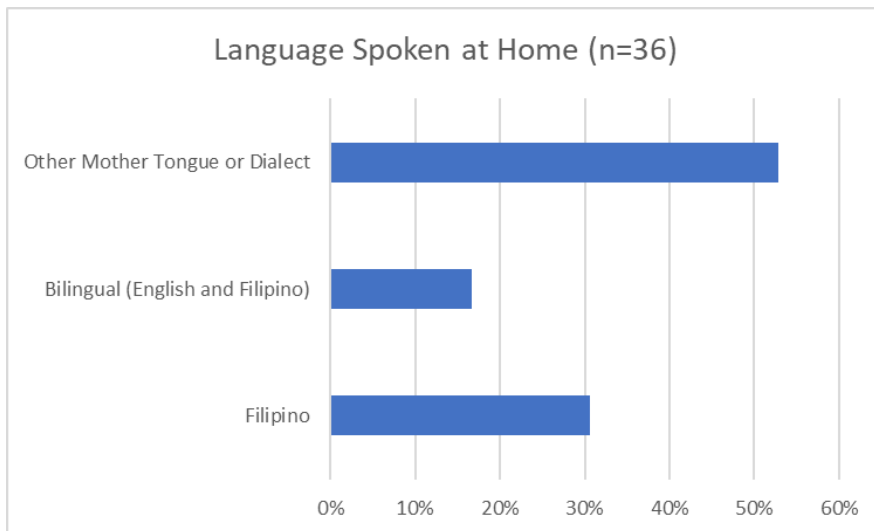
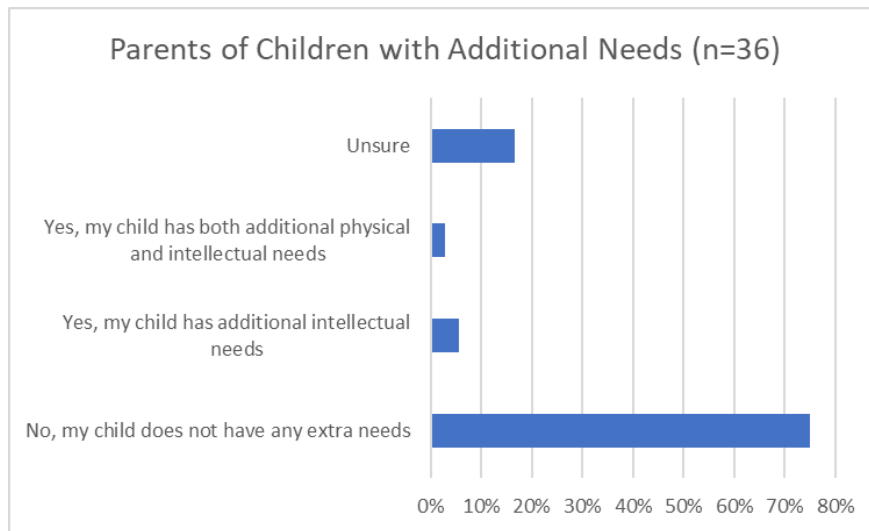


Figure 21. Children with Additional Learning Needs



2.3 Analysis

- **Documents** collected as part of the desk review were analyzed against the analytical framework in order to understand levels of readiness to respond to COVID-19 in the Philippines. Documents were collected and analyzed in English and Filipino with the support of in-country research teams.
- **Interview data** were subject to inductive thematic analysis using the *Dedoose* platform against the analytical framework developed for the study. Saturation in themes was reached during the process of analysis. The findings of the interviews confirmed those key challenges and opportunities facing the Philippines as raised in the desktop review and identified additional opportunities to those highlighted in the survey.
- **Survey data** were subject to descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS, with additional open-ended responses subject to thematic analysis in the survey platform *Alchemer*. The survey data provided insight into the experiences of school-level participants and were triangulated with the key informant interview data and document analysis to consider perceptions of given and received support in the Philippines education system.

2.4 Limitations

This study aims to investigate the ways in which schools and education systems in the Philippines adapted to changes and challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. To fill the current gap of school-based insights around teaching and learning practices, the study is largely based on qualitative data. Thus, the data included in this study are not representative, although they may reflect the insights gathered by other studies on education in the Philippines.

3 READINESS: PREPAREDNESS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

3.1 Education Reform Policies

To improve the quality of education students receive, the Philippines has implemented several major education reforms over the previous decade. These reforms focus on areas of educational practice common in high-quality education systems, including policies regarding access, teacher quality, and inclusive education. The pandemic has also led to renewed efforts to support students, particularly in times of crisis and disruption. Understanding where the education system was at the onset of the pandemic provides an important context for understanding the country's readiness to respond to the needs of students, parents and communities, teachers, and schools during the pandemic and into the future.

Over the past decade, the education system has witnessed several important reforms. First, the expansion of basic education to 13 years of schooling, and second, the introduction of the mother tongue as the language of instruction in primary education (Pouezevara et al., 2020). The Alliance for the Education Sector has also attempted to support several Quality Education Development Tasks, namely implementing school-based management and national competency-based teaching standards; implementing kindergarten (K) education; and introducing extended K to Grade 12 (K–12) curriculum. All these interventions aim to improve the quality of the education system in the years to come (UNESCO, 2021).

Educational Expansion and Reform

In 2013, the Philippines government implemented a major education reform in the expansion of the education system (Cagasan et al., 2020). In addition to adding a K year prior to Grade 1, 2 additional years were added to the secondary school education system, culminating in the development of a K–12 education structure, reflecting the 13-year education sequence found in high-performing education systems. K was also made both compulsory and free in 2012, a reform that acknowledges the importance of early learning in broader educational participation and achievement (UNICEF, 2018).

Assessment Programs and Practices

Students in the Philippines participate in several internal and external assessments. System-specific assessments directed at younger students include the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment (ELLNA), Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA). A recent EGRA found a decline in literacy skills in both English and Filipino, with a concerning rise in the number of children who were unable to provide any correct responses National Achievement Tests (NAT) (Department of Education, 2017) are also conducted in Grades 6, 10, and 12. These tests for older students provide information about performance but are not a requirement for graduation or university admissions (Arinto, 2020). The Philippines also participates in several external assessments, including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) (Department of Education, 2017). Classroom-based assessments are less common than summative assessments of proficiency; however, recent initiatives to incorporate assessment practices as part of daily teaching and learning are becoming more common (Cagasan et al., 2020).

Improving Teaching Quality

To improve national teacher quality, the Philippine government has implemented several initiatives, including the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers. The Philippine Professional Standards act as a framework for defining teacher quality as related to

knowledge, practice, and professional engagement (Department of Education, 2017). The standards also outline expectations for teachers across a range of teaching and learning situations at different career stages (Department of Education, 2017, p. 9).

Co-designed Resources

The Department of Education (DepEd) manages a central learning resource portal, or the Learning Resource Management and Development System (LRMDS), a repository of approved teaching materials and professional development resources that teachers can download and use in their K–12 classes (RTI, 2020). This resource hub accommodates printable and digital learning modules, teacher's guides, activity sheets, activity cards, lesson plans, and some media assets like illustrations, videos, audio, and photos that teachers can use in their classrooms (Arinto, 2020). Many resources are developed and shared among teachers and only published after going through a strict quality assurance process through the school, division, and regional bodies, before being uploaded onto the portal by the LRMDS administrator.

Policies for Inclusion and Equity

According to the Philippines DepEd (2017), the Philippines has long attempted to promote inclusive education and support students with additional needs (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusive education policies were officially adopted in 1997 by DepEd, with 'Silahis Centres' ('school within schools') supporting the implementation of inclusive education policies. The development of infrastructure and education for small and remote schools (also known as "last-mile schools"); and mandated opportunities for out-of-school youth through the Alternative Learning System (ALS) (RTI, 2020). In addition, mother tongue language provision has been expanded with the law now mandating that children learn in their mother tongue in early primary school and gradually transition to English and Filipino as they move to higher grades (RTI, 2020). There are also many initiatives to promote gender equity in the Philippines, in the education system, and more broadly. Assessment and planning mechanisms that support students' needs with different learning needs are still emergent.

Education for Sustainable Development

Within the Philippines' Education for All (EFA) Plan of Action 2001–2015, education for sustainable development is a key focus. In 2008, the Philippine government implemented the National Environmental Awareness and Education Act (NEAEA), which mandated all relevant agencies to integrate environmental education into public and private school curricula for all levels of education (UNESCO, 2021). Specific law has also been implemented regarding human rights teaching within the curricula across all education levels (Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies et al., 2013, as cited in UNESCO, 2021). These initiatives attempt to prepare students for a changing world and to assume responsibility for creating a more sustainable future.

Emergency and Crisis Management

In 2008, the Philippines also implemented Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) within the national basic education framework. The framework focuses on three outcomes: access, quality, and governance (DepEd, 2015a). This framework attempts to provide a foundation for supporting the safe continuity of learning during periods of crisis via the system and school-level coordination and recovery efforts. At the start of the pandemic, a School Safety Assessment Tool⁴⁴ for schools to use in assessing their readiness to return to face-to-

⁴⁴ The School Safety Assessment Tool supports schools in the safe reopening of face-to-face classes and provides necessary information on improvements and adjustment prior to the implementation of face-to-face classes. For more details please see: [UM | UPDATED SCHOOL SAFETY ASSESSMENT TOOL \(SSAT\) | DepEd Dasma](#)

face learning was also developed. However, no emergency management plans prioritize the needs of early childhood learners.

Open Education Resources

Awareness of Open Education Resources (OER) designed to support teaching practice has increased in the Philippines since 2012. As a result of research, which highlights disparate access to resources among students in the country, an LRMS has been established, which has since become a flagship program of the Bureau of Learning Resources. Today, the Learning Resource Portal (LR Portal) aims to strengthen resource development and distribution systems at the region and division levels and foster the provision of quality learning materials, particularly in reading in the early grades (Arinto, 2020; Pouezevara et al., 2020).

In 2013, the Philippines government implemented a major education reform in the education system expansion (Cagasan et al., 2020). In addition to adding a K year prior to Grade 1, 2 additional years were added to the secondary school education system, culminating in a K–12 education structure development, reflecting the 13-year education sequence found in high-performing education systems. K was also made both compulsory and free in 2012, a reform that acknowledges the importance of early learning in broader educational participation and achievement (UNICEF, 2018).

The next section of this report provides more detail on the ways in which education policies and practices in the Philippines supported student participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also considers how these practices have evolved and reflected on the lessons learned that can promote recovery and resilience in the Philippines into the future.

4 RESPONSE: SYSTEM AND SCHOOL RESPONSES IN THE PHILIPPINES

At the onset of the pandemic, the central DepEd established a Basic Education Continuity of Learning Policy (BECLP), which provided an anchor for several other policies and government directives, including guidelines for supporting vulnerable students such as those with disability. The BECLP also aimed to promote the health, safety, and welfare of learners, teachers, and DepEd personnel. As part of the BECLP, the curriculum was also adapted to focus on the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC), and standardized assessments were suspended. The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), also provided 126 million Philippine pesos (PhP) (\$2.5 million) to help the Philippine government's implementation of the BECLP to support learning continuity.

In March 2020, DepEd launched DepEd Commons, a searchable online database of interactive digital resources for teaching and learning that has registered 2.6 million views within its first two weeks of launching (Arinto, 2020). DepEd has also promoted initiatives to support participation in educational resource sharing and collaboration between community members and schools during the pandemic (Arinto, 2020). For example, DepEd's Open Education *Digital Rise Program* has been widely used during the pandemic and aims to develop information-seeking, media access, and technology skills among teachers and students (Arinto, 2020).

The Department of Education implemented multiple learning modalities to ensure that online learning offered a chance for continuity of learning (DepEd, 2020). These modalities included modular distance learning (MDL), online distance learning (ODL), TV/radio-based instruction (TV/R), and blended learning. Printed and digital resources, including learning materials, textbooks, activity sheets, worksheets, study guides, and other study materials, were also distributed, with consideration given to the needs of different types of learners. Parents and teachers were also given professional learning support and resourcing to adopt remote learning during periods of disruption (Pouezevara et al., 2020).

Challenges

Like many countries in Asia, the education system of the Philippines has faced many challenges during the pandemic. The length of remote learning periods has been a significant barrier to the continuity of learning. Remote learning began in March 2020. As of 2021, remote learning continued in many regions, exacerbating the risk of disruption to learning, disengagement, and dropout, but also the risk of children developing mental health conditions, missing out on school-given vaccinations and being vulnerable to child labor and child marriage (UNICEF Philippines Representative Oyunsaikhan Dendevnorov, as cited by UNICEF, 2021).

During the pandemic, a higher percentage of children have stopped attending school in the Philippines than in other countries in Asia, and a relatively low percentage of children have attended online classes during the pandemic due to weak Internet connections and a lack of digital devices (Morgan & Trinh, 2021). Now that periods of remote learning have largely ceased, in the Philippines, there are concerns that girls may not return to school as quickly as boys, as evidenced by higher school attrition rates for girls than boys in the Philippines during the Asian financial crisis (Lavado et al., 2022; World Bank, 2020).

In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), school disruptions and emergency education were not new; however, COVID-19 presented different challenges due to the widespread and ongoing nature of disruptions. The BARMM government responded quickly by adapting DepEd's BECLP as a response to resource and capacity constraints for delivering remote and online learning for the BARMM population. This policy included an adapted curriculum and alternative learning system. However, the transitional process in the BARMM added further challenges to the government's response due to a lack of preparedness and a lack of formal structures and policies in place during school disruptions.

There needs to be more information on school-level responses and the ways in which the policies and practices mentioned above have been enacted at a school level. Accordingly, the next section presents the findings of surveys with school leaders, teachers, and parents, as well as interviews with key policymakers across the Philippines, focused on responses to the pandemic across the education sector. The data are presented by the six key themes outlined in the analytical framework:

4.1 Leadership

4.1.1 Government Policies

At a policy level, participants reported that the Philippines government was quick to implement lockdowns and health policies to reduce the impact of COVID-19 and protect the population. These efforts are perceived as effective preventive measures to slow the spread of the virus in the community, protecting the health and well-being of those in school environments. There was also clear evidence of political commitment from the initial response phase to continue delivering education services. To support the continuity of learning across the Philippines, DepEd introduced remote learning in March 2020.

The implementation of remote learning involved a coordinated effort between ministry officials, school leaders, and teachers. Policies for learning continuity and remote learning focused on supporting a broad range of schools and students, but perhaps more importantly, ensuring schools were made aware of such policies and supported to implement them.

“Many policies were issued during the pandemic, and we needed to put them together into one cohesive document so that our principal could understand the different policies and how to manage the school. Different bureaus released issuances, and there was a need to develop a framework to guide the school head, and that's why we developed the toolkit.”

—(OFFICER, DEPED)

“The change was a bit drastic in the educational system since from our usual face-to-face classroom setting, we were introduced to blended learning or as we call in DepEd the distance learning modality... [the Schools Effectiveness Division was] initiated to create a manual, or as we call it the school effectiveness toolkit... we wrote it in a way that the schools can easily understand it so as we call it digestible... we thought that schools may be overwhelmed if they will read tons of DepEd orders all at once.”

—(OFFICER, DEPED)

“Where we implemented the full lockdown, so the DepEd was fast to issue the proper policies for the schools to shift to blended learning. So, there were policies in terms of modular learning for the areas that do not have access to the Internet, and then there were also policies in terms of the blended meaning combination of modules and online learning for areas where the students and the teachers have access to the Internet.”

—(POLICYMAKER, DEPED)

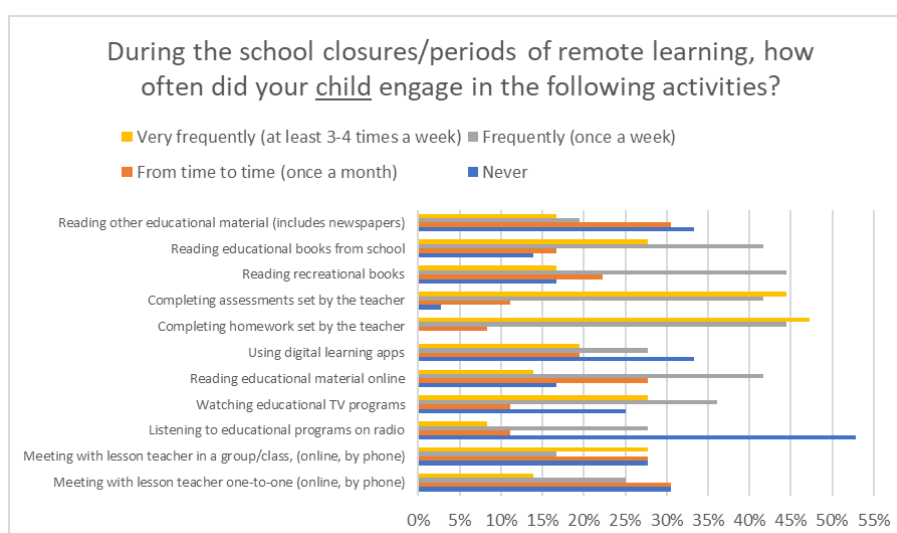
In all, 100 percent of school leaders responded that they were aware of policies regarding remote learning delivery and expectations of the ministry and provincial offices that were aimed at ensuring continuity of learning. The data collected as part of this study suggest that both government and school leaders were motivated to succeed in the implementation of remote learning and make improvements during COVID-19 and in the future.

4.1.2 School Leadership

At the school level, there was evidence of increased autonomy for schools to identify and respond to their relevant needs. While DepEd provided support and resources, schools identified a need for increased budgets and a focus on the development of interim learning materials. Increased funding also enabled schools and local governments to hire learning support aides to help teachers.

High levels of responsiveness and motivation to ensure learning continuity was observed across the schools surveyed. Most teachers also reported that during the pandemic, they were expected to deliver remote learning, provide students with adequate resources to continue learning, and communicate teaching and learning strategies with parents and families. It is likely due to high levels of school and government leadership that 100 percent of parents surveyed responded that their child continued to learn remotely through school during periods of remote learning. This may be because children were given different opportunities to engage with learning through a wide provision of modes and modalities, as **Figure 7** demonstrates.

Figure 22. Children’s Engagement During Remote Learning



As the graph demonstrates, there were observable differences in the frequency between online/virtual materials compared to physical materials and handouts provided by the teacher. The survey also shows direct engagement with the teacher (either by phone or online application). Interestingly, radio broadcasting programs used often in low-income and emergency settings during times of crisis appear to have yet to have as broad a reach as other modalities for learning.

4.2 Collaboration

Collaboration between the government and DepEd was found to be key to the development of policies and guidelines supporting adaptation to the provision of education services across the country at community and school levels. Study participants highlighted the impact of collaboration and support from local governments in producing and distributing learning materials (providing paper, printers, ink, and buildings to use as distribution centers). Collaboration with external stakeholders also supported the DepEd in working with local private businesses/individuals to support local schools.

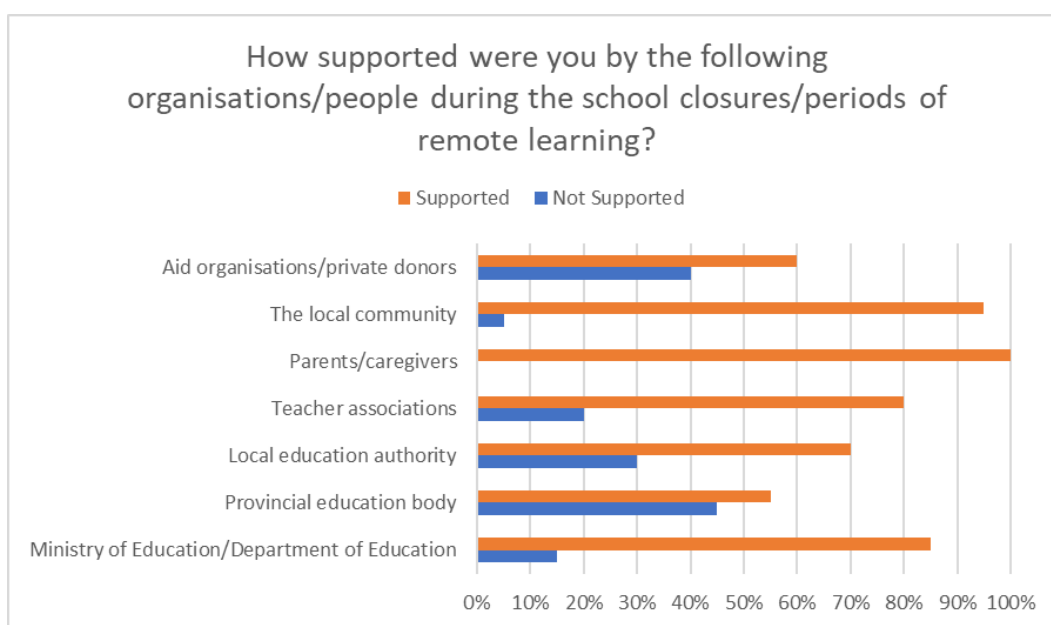
Collaboration between DepEd and universities to train teachers in remote teaching and develop broadcast lessons for radio and TV was also reported in the Philippines. Partnerships with external stakeholders, such as private education providers and donors, were formed to develop training and learning resources/materials, to support the delivery of remote learning practices. Partnerships with parents and the community also occurred, with an aim to support children's learning through different modalities. In the BARMM, support from development partners led to the development of paper-based learning materials and teacher training resources. Community groups were also formed to provide community education for students during remote learning while parents were at work.

“The participation of different stakeholders when it comes to responding to the educational needs during the pandemic... we saw the advantage of localities that have the multi-stakeholder participation from [the] private sector, local government, national government, even the parents and the teachers... that’s what they call it in a good school-based management, it’s the enabler for responding to the needs during the pandemic.”

—(POLICYMAKER, DEPED)

The pandemic also offered an opportunity to accelerate reform and improvement agendas and contribute to the strengthening of relationships between schools and systems and schools and families. From **Figure 8**, 100 percent of school leaders, for example, reported feeling supported by parents and caregivers, while most also felt supported by the local community and DepEd.

Figure 23: School Leader Perceptions of Support



4.2.1 Collaboration Between Teachers and Parents

As a result of the transition to remote learning, participants indicated that collaboration had increased between teachers and families. In many cases, teachers reported increasing their meetings with parents, with 80 percent of teachers reporting communication with parents on a weekly basis on ways to support student learning.

“I constantly have my open communication with the parents regarding the academic status and behavior of their kids.”

—(TEACHER)

“Regular meeting with parents has greatly helped us to know the situation of students, especially during the pandemic.”

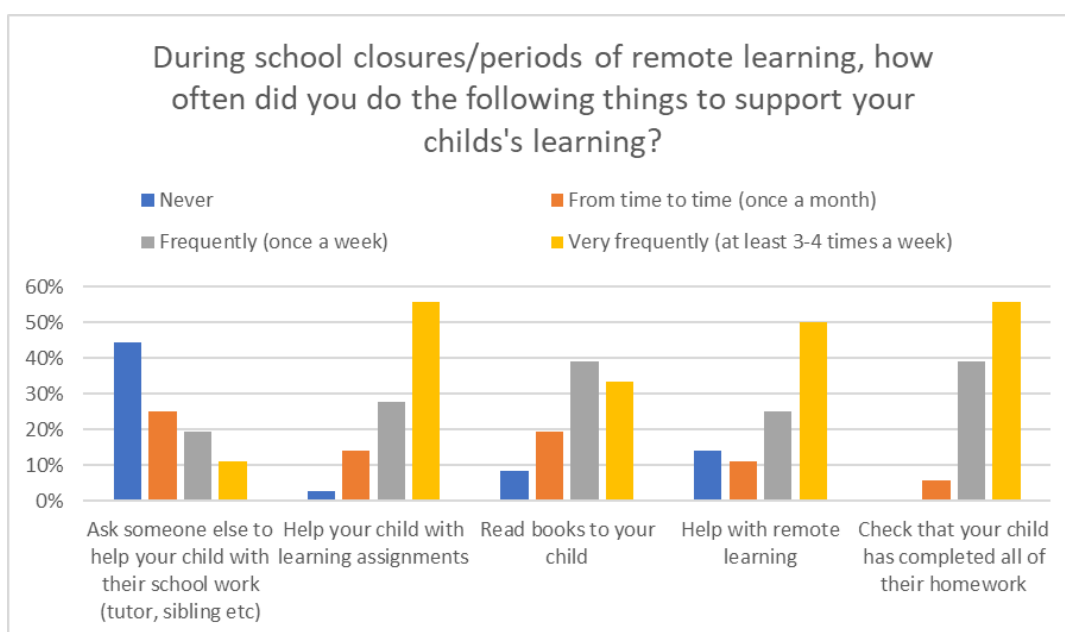
—(SCHOOL LEADER)

“The strong collaboration among parents and teachers to produce quality students even in these times of pandemic”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

Most parents reported that they were satisfied with the support level provided by their child’s school, as shown in **Figure 9**. Most parents also identified that their child was, to a moderate or large extent, interacting with family members in similar ways prior to remote learning. Parents reported that their children were motivated to engage with educational materials and were eager to complete take-home packs of learning material. During remote learning periods, most parents indicated that they supported by helping their children with learning assignments, helping with remote learning, and checking that their children had completed homework.

Figure 24. Parental Support During Remote Learning



Collaboration Between Teachers and School Leaders

School leaders indicated that they met with teachers frequently online and by phone to discuss ways to support student learning and understand the teachers' changing needs and the challenges they were facing. Most school leaders also reported providing additional weekly training on remote learning mechanisms. Overall, 84 percent of teachers were satisfied with the support level provided by their school. Most teachers also agreed they met their school leader weekly to discuss their needs and challenges via various modalities. Like parents, teachers reported continuity of teaching and learning practices during the pandemic. However, based on previous research in the Philippines, it is crucial to realize that many teachers in the Philippines likely faced connectivity challenges, even if these results do not indicate this to be the case.

4.3 Well-Being and Inclusion

Student Mental Health

Policymakers in the Philippines reported a growing mental health crisis and a lack of qualified staff to support them. Mental health and well-being were seen as key concerns for many system leaders; however, supporting vulnerable students (particularly those with low levels of literacy or additional learning needs) was seen as especially challenging, with schools reporting various levels of success.

“Their main concern actually is the mental health of the students during the pandemic... some teachers and principals attempted to respond to and are successful, and on the other hand, some schools are not successful in responding to the mental health needs of the students.”

—(POLICYMAKER, NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION)

“Mental health, that is also a problem in DepEd, the lack of guidance counselor, and that was made very visible by the pandemic. We often heard that children are stressed and not coping without social interaction, so the need for guidance counselors was heightened.”

—(OFFICER, DEPED)

While system-level support for remote learning and learning continuity was repeatedly highlighted in interviews with both system and school-level participants, more information was needed about mechanisms to support mental health and well-being. Policymakers reported that student mental health was a growing concern for educators, with many teachers reporting they conducted home visits to check in with families and students. Monitoring of student well-being through home visits was also reported by educators.

“We support the students by creating a safe and conducive e-learning environment for them. We make sure that the home and school relationship is open and consistent in communicating progress, challenges, and interventions. We made home visitation if necessary. We consider the unique family set up at home to help the children further.”

—(TEACHER)

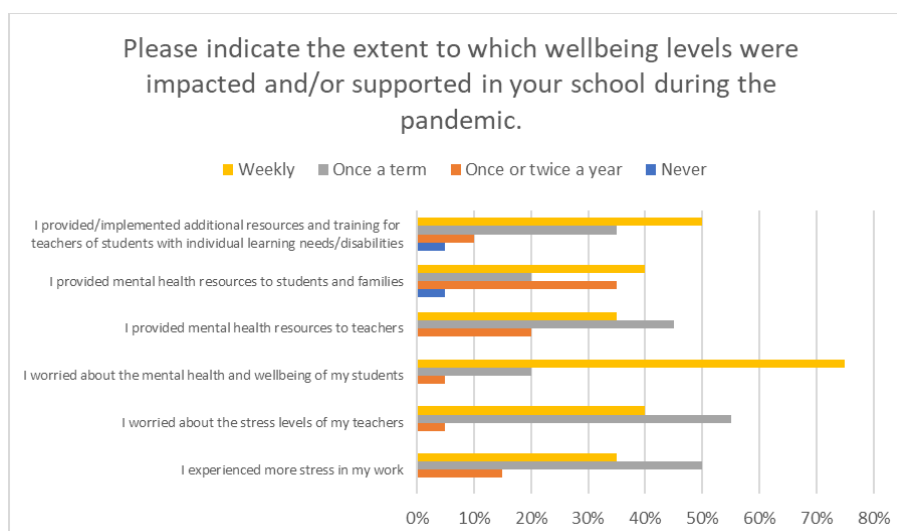
4.3.1 Educator Well-Being

“Handling mental health issues...No one is prepared for that, because even the teachers themselves, or even the principals, are also facing some mental health issues. So, it's a big barrier for us to be able to move forward.”

—(POLICYMAKER, DEPED)

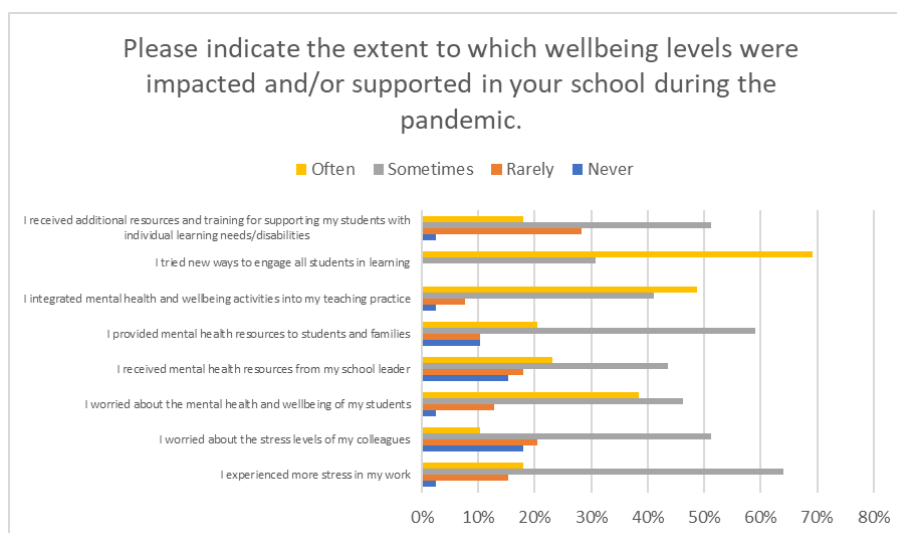
The mental health of educators was also impacted during the pandemic. Policymakers expressed concerns about teachers’ and school leaders’ mental health and well-being. As shown in **Figure 10**, most school leaders also responded that they worried about the stress levels of teachers and the mental health and well-being of their students. Most school leaders said that they responded by providing additional resources and training for teachers of students with individual learning needs and mental health resources to teachers. School educators did not provide further details on the type or quality of mental health resources provided. School leaders also reported monitoring the mental health and well-being of teachers, while teachers also reported regularly monitoring the mental health and well-being of students.

Figure 25: School Leader Perceptions of Well-Being



Despite support from school leadership, many teachers indicated that they had experienced more stress in their work than prior to the pandemic, as indicated in **Figure 11**. Teachers also indicated that they 'sometimes' or 'often' worried about their students' mental health and well-being (85 percent) and experienced more stress at work (82 percent). In response to trying to maintain well-being levels during the pandemic, most teachers said they integrated mental health and well-being activities into their teaching practice (90 percent) and provided mental health resources to students and families (80 percent).

Figure 26. Teacher Perceptions of Well-Being



4.3.2 Promoting Well-Being and Inclusion

During periods of remote learning, many educators reported adapting their practice to cater to the needs of different students, such as those with special learning, psychosocial needs, or different language backgrounds. Efforts were made by local government agents, as well as teachers, to distribute tablets and free Internet data in some areas and for some students (particularly those at-risk or those with different learning needs). Consideration of the importance of promoting social-emotional learning and interaction between students during periods of remote learning was also highlighted by teachers who participated in the study.

“Since most of our students are [Indigenous People], we contextualized our lesson into Manobo so that our learners can easily understand our lesson.”

—(TEACHER)

“To make learning more fun and enjoyable, I use different online educational applications when teaching them.”

—(TEACHER)

“I provide them opportunities to express their feelings, and I always ask them how they feel before we start our class sometimes, I let them talk and socialize with their classmates as I can see the changes and the progress they made when we started doing that in the class.”

—(TEACHER)

For children with access to technology, technology is identified as key to supporting differing learning needs and aiding the Philippines education system's ability to transition to remote

learning. Technology is seen as having many benefits and advantages, but only for those students and families with access to devices, data, and connectivity. For other students, the reliance on technology for continuity of learning appears to have exacerbated existing inequalities.

“The best alternative work that can support our students during [the] pandemic is to constantly contact them through social media platforms and continuously give them moral support all throughout the school year.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

“We’re trying our best to make the students learn. When we give the modules to the parents, we explain to them what to do with these at the same time because we can’t go online; because often there’s no electricity.”

—(TEACHER)

4.4 Differentiation

As part of the BECLP, a school-based survey was conducted by DepEd at the beginning of the pandemic to map the needs of learners and their parents and their readiness for remote learning. Data were used by the school, division, and region to devise relevant continuity learning plans and to support budget decisions at the school, division, and regional levels. As part of this initiative, multiple modalities were used for distance learning, including online, paper-based modules, and television and radio.

“Another important policy was the provision of the distance learning modalities that are included in the Learning Continuity Plan. Having the online learning modality, DepEd TV, [MDL] and, and radio education.”

—(POLICYMAKER, DEPED)

Teachers also reported differing levels of readiness for remote learning; 100 percent of teachers surveyed reported trying new ways to engage students in learning. Teachers also reported adjusting the delivery of curricula and focusing on core content areas and capabilities. As mentioned earlier in the report, students were also supported through home visits. Although many teachers were trying to learn how to use the technology as they were going, teachers also reported examples of “*contextualization*” and “*differentiated instruction*” being supported with increased flexibility and different modalities.

“We intensified our home visitation such as providing intervention in reading and numeracy.”

—(TEACHER)

“We are sending learning materials aside from modules, and reading materials, in math, English, Filipino, and Mother Tongue Based. We do have teachers in Teach for the Philippines. They identify slow learners and then conduct home visits.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

“I tried using different strategies outside of just using paper and pencil for the students’ exercises... I also used other methods to meet students’ needs outside of academics (emotional, social, etc.) by using my consultation hours because they were not given an opportunity during regular class time. Examples are giving students the opportunity to set up meetings/interactions with their classmates that are not teacher-led such as online recess and flipped classroom where the student will share their skills and passion with their classmates.”

—(TEACHER)

“Students were given an extension to pass schoolwork (homework/seatwork), reduced the work given to students, used a variety of methods (break out rooms, online games/activities) to provide students the opportunity to talk to the kapta bed-students.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

4.5 Reflection

Survey and interview findings concurred that the Philippines government was responsive and made early decisions to support the continuity of learning, including the development and dissemination of learning materials in new modalities, such as via television lessons (Figure 12). The responsiveness and motivation of school leaders and teachers were also well-documented throughout the findings.

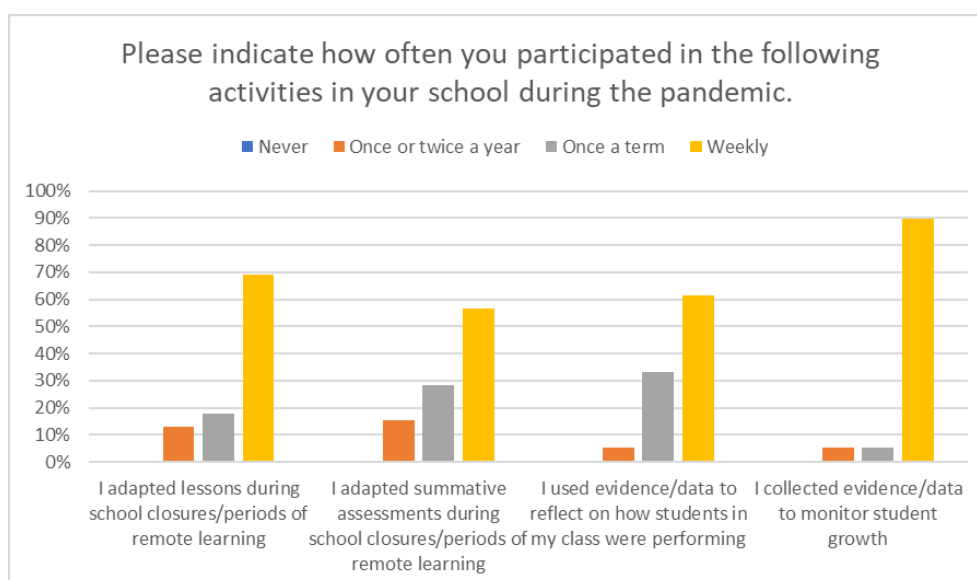
“We have a very good, a very responsive... Schools Division Superintendent. Because even at the start of the pandemic, when we first hear that education must continue, we immediately meet. She immediately met all our DepEd officials and talked about what are the things that we need to do in anticipation to the closure of the schools.”

—(OFFICER, DEPED)

“I tried new strategies to engage the students on Zoom: use of online websites/apps, use of movement activities, gamification of lessons with digital tools.”

—(TEACHER)

Figure 27. Teacher’s Adapted Teaching Practices



In schools in the Philippines, there was a recognition of the need to accelerate learning and make up for lost ground during the pandemic as part of future planning and to reflect on opportunities for improving teaching and learning practice. There was an acknowledgment of the extent to which teachers required support through the provision of learning support aides to support teachers in their work, assist teachers with preparing materials, and coordinate with parents. There was an acknowledgment of the need to focus not only on the challenges of the pandemic but opportunities for improving education programs and practices in the future.

“The curriculum simplification, I think, is one [change].... The continuous training of teachers. That’s another important part. The decision to reopen schools. I think that’s very important for learning recovery... I hope that this would be part of this new plan, like a national remedial learning program or national catch-up program, because, as in other countries, there would be a high level of learning loss after these two years, and we need to find ways to accelerate and minimize the learning loss to accelerate the recovery and minimize the learning loss.”

—(POLICYMAKER, DEPED)

“We are working on the Learning Recovery and Transition Plan... it may be so difficult to accept... we have to come up with a Learning Recovery and Transition Plan, but we just don’t focus on learning recovery, on the losses or the gaps, but ... we also have to focus also on the learning and innovation gains.”

—(OFFICER, DEPED)

4.6 Growth

The School Safety Assessment Tool is a promising step forward in raising expectations for the school environment and the student's experience at school. Asking teachers to develop learning modules and lesson plans and having these reviewed by Area Supervisors is also an important example of regional autonomy. This approach worked well to promote greater local uptake and ownership of the curriculum and create conditions for a shared focus on practices that promote engagement and growth.

A focus on student growth was also reported in school-level data; 100 percent of school leaders agreed that, during the pandemic, their school communicated teaching and learning strategies with parents and families and assessed student learning. Most teachers who participated in the study agreed that they were expected to assess student learning and monitor student engagement by their school. **Figure 12** above also highlights that most teachers reported using evidence/data to reflect on how students were performing and highlighted their collection of data to monitor student growth (35 percent of teachers reported using evidence to reflect on growth weekly).

During the pandemic, most teachers reported that they collected evidence/data weekly to monitor student growth. Most teachers surveyed also indicated reflecting on how the students in their class were performing and adapting lessons and summative assessments to monitor student growth and progress. The integration of remote mechanisms was reported as promoting flexible learning while also enabling students to develop technology-based skills. Different use of learning modes and modalities, and ongoing communication with staff and families, were also recognized as key enablers in supporting a focus on growth and achievement.

“I use extensive monitoring of my student's participation. We found a good platform where we can monitor the recordings and assess areas that I am not able to observe during the actual class time. The platform, I can say, is designed for education and support plays like boardgames and the actual output of my students.”

—(TEACHER)

“Communication is one of the best ways to support our learners during the pandemic. Because in this way, we will be able to monitor them or assess their achievements and performance.”

—(TEACHER)

Surveys with teachers suggest that most teachers adapted assessment and monitoring practices during the pandemic. However, some teachers reported finding that assessment and

monitoring student growth is challenging during the remote learning periods. A lack of awareness of the availability of comparative data and mechanisms for improving student learning was also identified as an area that could improve a school’s focus on growth.

“I find it hard to test their skills and comprehension.”

—(TEACHER)

“[We need to be] training teachers to use available or baseline data to improve the teaching/learning process.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

5 CHALLENGES TO EDUCATION RESPONSES

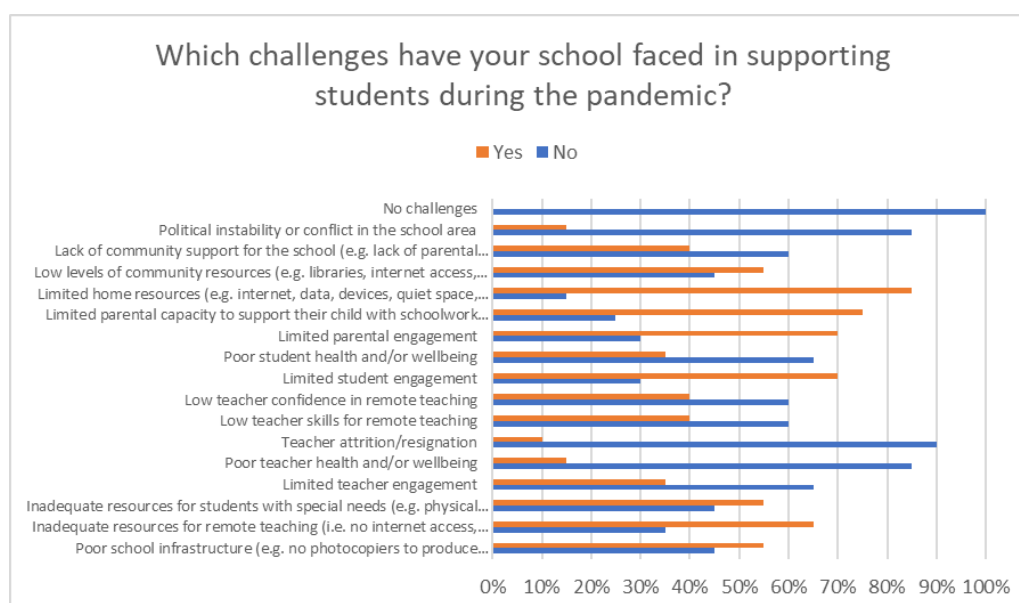
Although the data presented as part of this study outline positive practices in response to the pandemic, the study has identified two significant challenges for school and policy leaders in the Philippines in adapting education systems as a result of COVID-19: (1) parental capacity to support remote learning, and (2) return to face-to-face learning.

5.1 Parental Capacity to Support Remote Learning

Based on the data collected as part of the survey, parents did not appear to face significant barriers to their child’s learning during periods of remote learning. Most households surveyed reported access to resources with the capacity to facilitate remote learning, for example, mobile phones, computers, and an Internet connection. In total, 92 percent of households had access to a mobile phone, 72 percent had access to a computer and an Internet connection, and 75 percent had a television. Also, 58 percent of the parents had radio access.

However, despite these high reporting rates on access to devices, most school leaders selected limited home resources as an ongoing challenge they faced in supporting students during the pandemic. Most school leaders surveyed identified parental capacity to support their child’s education as a key challenge (**Figure 13**).

Figure 28. School Leader Perceptions of Challenges in Supporting Students



Teachers also identified limited parental capacity and low levels of community resources as major barriers to participation. Limited student engagement was also seen as a challenge. Study participants also highlighted a lack of access to materials as a challenge and noted that many students were not prepared to participate in remote learning due to limited home infrastructure, location, or adequate parental support.

“Some learners/parents can’t get [paper-based] modules [on time] due to the distance of their home to school.”

—(TEACHER)

“It is difficult to contact parents because not everyone has a cell phone. There are many children who do not want to go to school... Many learners do not want to study.”

—(TEACHER)

Educators reported that many parents who were working were not able to support their children adequately with remote learning and that gender impacted caring responsibilities, with mothers bearing the load of childcare responsibilities. Parents with low literacy levels or limited knowledge of curriculum content also needed help to help their children learn at home. Inadequate remote learning resources, including both paper-based and digital modalities, were also reported as a barrier for students with additional learning needs.

“The parents became... really the teacher, not just the supporter but the teachers of their kids. So, there is a very difficult balancing act. Especially for parents and mothers, especially mothers and older sisters, who need to respond to their work or household chores and the needs of their siblings or daughters and sons in terms of their educational needs.”

—(POLICYMAKER, NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION)

“[There was] difficulty in addressing the extra needs of students who are lagging behind.”

—(TEACHER)

Disparate literacy levels among children also reduced the potential to engage with different modalities used in remote learning materials, including paper-based resources. Many digital or online mechanisms do not warrant high literacy levels and are being used globally to engage children of different skills and abilities. Policymakers outlined that disparate access to devices and data meant that most teachers were using paper-based learning modules, especially in the BARMM.

“Students lack equipment such as tablets, cell phones, and other gadgets that they can use in online classes. Students do not have a fast and stable Internet connection”.

—(TEACHER)

However, paper-based resources can be problematic for children with low literacy levels, reducing engagement and ability to comprehend resources without support from teachers. It is important to examine ways to support parents in communities without access to devices, but also in those areas where literacy levels are low and disadvantage is often prolific. Understanding the practices of schools and families impacted by accessibility challenges requires further research. As Akamai noted (2017, as cited in Winthrop, 2020), the Philippines has the lowest Internet connectivity in Asia with accessibility issues most pronounced in marginalized communities.

Return to Face-to-Face Learning

Support for a return to face-to-face learning was also highlighted as a challenge, both for policymakers and members of the school community. Concerns around parental preferences

for continuing online learning were highlighted as particularly apparent in private schools. Online learning was preferred by those from private schools who had moved back to their provinces during periods of remote learning, as well as those who had concerns about the safety of their children. Department representatives also reported concerns around safeguarding the health and well-being of children and outlined the importance of risk assessments in understanding readiness to reopen at a school level.

“For most of the parents in the public school, they were more than willing to send their children back to school, but for the private schools, we are already seeing a very huge number of parents who don’t want to let their kids go back to school... they prefer the online schooling.”

—(POLICYMAKER, DEPED)

“There was an adjustment on the part of our learners... many of our learners, our teachers, and the parents are requesting to go back to or to return to schools... and as much as we want the learners to go back to schools or to return to the schools, it shouldn’t be at the expense of their health and safety. So, what the department did was after in preparation for the reopening of our schools, we created a School Safety Assessment Tool, so the purpose is to assess the readiness of our schools to participate or to go back to our physical classroom, and then at the same time, the tool also intends to gather information from our schools to help them in preparing for the safe reopening of classes.”

—(OFFICER, DEPED)

At the time of reporting, face-to-face learning had commenced widely in the Philippines. Together with partners, the United Nations continues to work closely with the government to support safe in-person schooling (Kahambing, 2021; Mabilec, 2021; UN, UNICEF, WHO, & UNESCO, 2021). However, given concerns around engagement and attrition within some student communities, support for more flexible learning options, and adapted ways to promote face-to-face learning, are worth examining in the future.

6 RECOVERY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

While the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have been extensively researched and reported, the identification of enablers that supported schools to adapt to the changes brought on the COVID-19 is equally important to note. Based on the many policies the Philippines had in place prior to the onset of the pandemic, coupled with the rapid mobilization of considered policies for educational continuity, the Philippines is well positioned to recover, particularly with the support of external agencies. However, as in all contexts, children who are disadvantaged are likely to experience continued vulnerability. This chapter will provide a reflection on lessons learned about what works best to support recovery and educational improvement in the Philippines.

6.1 Partnerships

This study found that many schools and education providers in the Philippines are well-positioned to respond to the challenges raised due to strengths in leadership, partnerships, and inclusion. During the pandemic, investment in remote learning and support from external partners, as well as districts and schools, were widely reported. If the high level of collaboration between local government and schools, local communities and schools, external

stakeholders, and DepEd continues after the pandemic, the Philippines may be well-placed to respond to crises and challenges into the future.

“So, that means one of the enablers are support from Local Government Units, from those education specific non-government organizations as well as those who are non-traditional partners of education that, [non-government organizations] that are not traditionally supporting education, you know, have shifted some of their support towards education, acknowledging the needs. And, of course, probably the support that the greater development community has provided including us and other bigger partners. So, I think it’s the collective effort, right, of the school community as well as the overall development community is one of the great assets of schools in terms of support, have been supported during the pandemic.”

—(POLICYMAKER, DEPED)

Effective collaborations between schools and families also led to improved learning opportunities for students during the pandemic. Parents developed a stronger understanding of the educational process, became further invested in their child’s education outcomes, and gained a stronger understanding of how to enhance support for student learning at home.

As Section 3 highlights, there were already many policies and practices in place in the Philippines that helped the country to shift to remote learning, including practices focused on partnerships and collaboration. It is important to acknowledge that parents, as well as teachers, were also given professional learning support and resourcing to adopt remote learning at the start of the pandemic (Pouzevara et al., 2020). However, educators and policymakers who participated in this study highlighted an ongoing need to strengthen support systems across the education system to encourage continued collaboration during times of future crisis.

“It is better for the government to have programs in place in case any unforeseen events come again. Provide regular training or seminars to teachers or staff of not only public schools but also private schools.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

6.2 Support for Teacher Practice

In the Philippines, the necessity to adapt to the challenges faced by education systems during the COVID-19 pandemic led to the development of strategies and practices to improve the quality and provision of education for children. Many of these adapted practices and learnings from the difficulties faced during this time have established a strong basis for positive progression across education systems.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that not all teachers were equipped with the skills or resources for remote learning, and some schools did not have adequate budgets to support targeted teacher training. Some teachers expressed a desire to return to traditional forms of learning rather than to adapt or change their practice, while school leaders highlighted the need for more visible support and ready-made resources to assist teachers in the delivery of remote learning.

“We need support for the teachers and learners to boost their morale.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

“Hopefully, the department can produce ready-made videos, PowerPoint presentations, and other teaching-learning appropriate to the situation. The teacher could not do this because they lacked the equipment and sufficient skills to do so.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

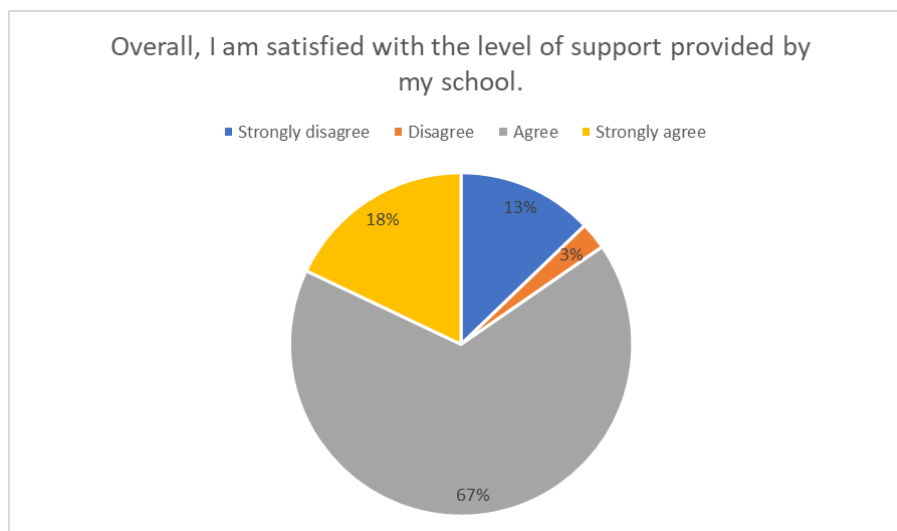
“Provide additional training to teachers on how they can teach their lessons more effectively using modern technology and how they can help their students during face-to-face, hybrid, or ODL classes. It is also good to continue to develop the ODL method of teaching to be an alternative method in case we experience another type of pandemic.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

Positive examples of school autonomy are also highlighted in the study, where teachers and school leaders have demonstrated the capacity to lead and innovate the delivery of remote learning to suit the needs of their local contexts. This includes adapting pedagogical approaches, the curriculum, instructional time, and assessment of students. School autonomy is crucial to system recovery and resilience, and teachers need to be supported and have the agency to make decisions about school-level improvements, where the learning outcomes and well-being of their students are central.

Overall, it appears that teachers experienced high levels of responsibility for supporting the continuity of learning. Many were faced with the challenge of making time for home visits, downloading and printing off learning materials, and distributing these materials to families. Although this is a challenge, it is also a strength of the education system in the Philippines. Teachers were able to pivot to invest the time and effort necessary to visit homes and make sure families had the materials and support needed. This is not the case in all countries. However, more support needs to be provided to teachers so they do not bear the responsibility for ensuring learning continuity into the future. Shared responsibility for resource provision between policymakers and school leaders will ensure teachers do not get overwhelmed or burn out. Despite concerns around teacher support, most teachers reported being satisfied with the level of support provided by their school, as **Figure 14** below demonstrates.

Figure 29. Teacher Perceptions of School Support



Numerous teachers who participated in the study also provided recommendations for ways in which school and system leaders can continue to provide support into the future. Additional resources and training, an adaptation of blended learning, and meaningful collaboration between community members and educators were highlighted as key opportunities for supporting quality teaching into the future.

“Provide us more resources and training to support the needs of the students and the teachers.”

—(TEACHER)

“I would like my school to continue providing us teachers, as well as our students and parents, the same support they gave us during the pandemic and more. They can provide us with more types of equipment or devices that can boost our productivity and that we can use during the hybrid learning.”

—(TEACHER)

“Be open to listening to community members and have concrete, institutionalized, and intentional steps, and guidelines to support them/us... Instead of just well-meaning reminders... Reminders are good, but until they are institutionalized and monitored, having an equitable and healthy learning environment becomes ‘optional.’”

—(TEACHER)

6.3 Flexible Learning Modalities

The pandemic marked the introduction of a blended learning modality and long-term plans to continue to use blended learning to meet the needs of learners according to context, learning requirements, and access to resources. Teachers were given many different opportunities to try new ways of teaching, and 85 percent of school leaders and teachers reported an intention to continue to use blended pedagogies into the future. However, study participants also highlighted the need for a consistent approach to teacher training across different school types.

“If the government’s focus is quality education, private schools (small or growing) should also provide teachers with adequate and quality training for remote learning. What has happened is that we each have our own approach to delivering learning to children. There is no concrete program for private schools.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

School leaders also reported a desire for ongoing system support for future blended learning, shaped by guidance and support mechanisms that enhance student engagement and learning.

“Provide clear and concrete policies and guidance on the practice of remote learning, such as what the school should do to students who do not actively participate in school activities.”

—(SCHOOL LEADER)

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 7. Summary of Readiness, Response, and Recovery Strategies to Support Pathways to Resilience

Phase	Strategies
Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education reform policies supporting education quality improvements, including teacher quality and effectiveness • Cross-government coordination for disaster risk management • Policy supporting digitalization of education and blended learning approaches • Policies supporting resourcing for disadvantaged populations
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of emergency declared • Implementation of remote learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of content for online learning platforms and broadcasting • District-level resourcing to provide teachers and students with devices for learning • Training in remote learning for parents and teachers
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted teaching and learning strategies at the school level (e.g., adapted curriculum, learning mode, instructional time, assessment) • Establishment of learning networks for upskilling • Strengthened engagement with parents and the community
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering school-parent-community partnerships • Building teacher confidence in digital literacy and blended pedagogy • Supporting teachers with additional training and a focus on workload and well-being • Incorporating blended and flexible learning approaches to support equity of access

The aim of this study was to understand the extent to which the Philippines' education sector was prepared to respond to the pandemic and explore how different levels of the education system adjusted support children in the Philippines. The research found that while the Philippines faces challenges across its education system, there are also many opportunities to leverage innovation and motivation at the school level. In particular, teachers' willingness to trial new methods of teaching and adjust their practices to support equitable participation should be recognized as a key contribution and sustained into the future.

The study has highlighted positive examples of the school and home partnership, where children's learning success became a shared responsibility between the school and parents. This partnership should be reinforced and fostered post-pandemic through continued, regular communication with parents about teaching and learning strategies to support monitoring and growth. Strategies to build parental capacity to support learning at home also provide parents with an opportunity to contribute to their children's learning.

Historic education improvement agendas in the Philippines have the potential to build system resilience in the long term, enhance the education system's ability to respond to the pandemic, and move forward with previous education initiatives designed to improve education quality. Throughout the pandemic, well-designed policies ensured that schools were able to implement new programs and practices, with remote learning mechanisms, including paper-based, low-mid tech (radio, TV, phone), and high-tech (online, digital) particularly important at this time. Although access to devices and data remains a challenge for some schools in the Philippines, many teachers reported trying new modes and modalities to deliver lessons, conduct assessments and monitoring of student learning, with some teachers reporting optimism around the potential for these mechanisms to foster inclusive learning. Awareness of the importance of mental health and well-being as part of inclusive and sustainable practice was apparent in the responses of many teachers. Examples of differentiation and reflection on practice and learning throughout the pandemic, both at systems and school levels, were also apparent.

In terms of ongoing system improvement, data collected as part of this study indicate that access to resourcing and policies, including teacher training, needs to be more consistent across schools in the Philippines. Schools with adequate resourcing were more likely to be able to support continuity of learning. There were some perceptions that public schools received higher levels of support, particularly for teacher training than private schools, despite many private schools reporting a need for improved teacher training in remote delivery. The

delivery of policies and programs that support mental health and well-being could have been better examined across schools in the Philippines. More evidence is needed on the quality and implementation of mental health and well-being programs, which are crucial during times of crisis.

Consistent processes for monitoring student growth, both formative and summative, also remain emergent. It is, therefore, important that teacher development is prioritized to leverage increased teacher confidence in digital pedagogy that has developed over the pandemic. Blended approaches to learning should continue to be encouraged and appropriately resourced at both school and system levels. This will also contribute to the further development of the digital literacy skills of educators, families, and students, as well as improving access for children who may be marginalized based on location or ability. It is important to note that the findings presented in this study are not representative and should be considered alongside other research on education challenges and successes experienced in the Philippines.

Finally, as noted throughout this report, although school-level participants in this study were selected from different geographic locations, gender groups, and linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds, the data must be interpreted carefully. High levels of education, experience, and access to technology were widely reported by educators and families in this study. Thus, while the perspectives presented in this report offer insight into the educational experiences of educators and families, it is important to realize that these experiences are rare across some school communities. Further research should continue to seek the insights of those in the most marginalized settings to improve our understanding of what works and for whom, regardless of resourcing. With these insights considered, the findings of this study support several key recommendations, which are outlined in **Table 2** for policymakers, educators, parents, and families in the Philippines.

Table 8. Recommendations for Policymakers, Educators, and Parents/Families

Policymakers	Educators	Parents/Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equitable provision of resources to schools • Integrate a focus on mental health as part of school improvement agendas • Prioritize parental engagement during periods of remote learning • Enhance the digital literacy of teachers, parents, and students • Explore options for effectively sustaining blended learning pedagogy • Promote knowledge and resource sharing among teachers from diverse settings • Communicate the location of existing government resources to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice self-care and collaborate with colleagues to adapt resources that can be delivered remotely • Adapt and contextualize remote learning practices to support different learner needs (including adapting resources based on access, ability, and location) • Enhance your capacities to deliver teaching and learning practices remotely • Participate in training on assessment and monitoring • Encourage parental engagement through formal communication channels and feedback loops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions about your children’s learning and ask what you can do to reinforce learning at home • Encourage your child’s learning by showing an interest and asking questions • Learn how to use different tools and technologies if you have them in the home • Ask where to find paper-based resources if you do not have access to devices or data • Learn more about how your child likes to learn • Encourage your child to ask for help for their learning and to talk about their feelings and friendships in the home

This study provides insights for the system and school leaders to reflect on what can improve educational experiences for school children during periods of crisis and beyond. System actors, school leaders, and teachers in the Philippines have demonstrated a resilient and adaptive approach to their practice during the pandemic and an obvious motivation to improve conditions that foster safe and equitable learning. If the school-level practices highlighted in this study can be embedded in purposeful policies and practices that promote professional learning, this will contribute to changing teachers' mindsets and new skills being applied and shared. Further consideration might be given as to how DepEd can best position itself as a partner in reform efforts that promote family engagement, high-quality teaching, and leverage opportunities for equitable learning.

“Let's accept that times are changing, and traditions are not always conducive to the development of students and teachers. Sometimes it has to be let go because it is the very thing that is hindering our progress... I hope new ideas will be given more space and enough consideration, especially since our situation is new and different. Hopefully, our institutions will be more open to exploring more progressive methods of continuing education. It's about time.”

(Teacher)

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ANNEX A: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This analytical framework underpins the design and implementation of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) mapping study across six countries in the Asia region. It will be used to guide data collection, analysis, and reporting to meet the objectives of the study: (1) to fill the gap in comparative analyses on countries in developing Asia, and (2) to focus on policies and actions countries have taken to mediate and remediate learning loss and learning inequalities during COVID-19.

The framework is informed by the extensive literature on effective teaching and learning and draws from the emerging evidence base on COVID-19 impacts on education systems worldwide. The figure below depicts the different interacting levels of the education system (policy, school, agents) that impact on equitable student learning. In the context of COVID-19, the three phases—Readiness, Response, and Recovery—provide the operational context that influences how education systems plan for and manage their strategies for improvement and resilience.

This framework draws on USAID’s Reigniting Learning: Strategies for Accelerating Learning Post-Crisis⁴⁵ evidence review and Return to Learning during Crises⁴⁶ toolkit and evidence review on strategies to accelerate learning and the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)⁴⁷ on promising policy responses to support greater education system resilience and responsiveness. Both share similar elements in defining a path forward that prioritizes the policies and practices to promote: (1) equity and inclusion, (2) flexibility in learning interventions and assessments, and (3) building the capacity of educators. However, this framework also seeks to broaden the ways in which we recognize system readiness and quality by focusing on the interplay between policy, practice, and equitable learning.

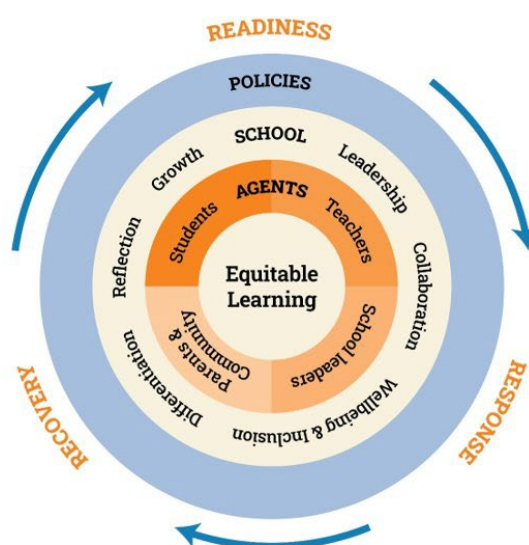
By exploring possibilities and opportunities rather than deficits, this framework will guide the investigation into how the different levels of the education system operate and interact at each phase of the COVID-19 planning and management cycle. Within each country’s context, evidence will be collected on which systematic levers and school-level practices education systems can mobilize in safeguarding equitable learning among educational agents during and after the pandemic. Examples of innovative, flexible, and responsive systems and school practices relevant to the context will be explored and presented against the framework, creating meaningful pathways for comparative education systems to learn and adapt into the future. Lessons will be drawn from each country’s response to COVID-19 to highlight the most promising approaches to address persistent quality and equity challenges in the education system.

⁴⁵ Sarr, K.G., Tolani, N., Rodriguez Morales, I., Aghabozorg, R. & Mulcahy-Dunn, A. (2020). Reigniting learning: strategies accelerating learning post crisis. A review of evidence. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Available online. https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/Technical_Report_Accelerating_Learning_Post-Crisis_Full_Report.pdf

⁴⁶ Boisvert, K., Weisenhorn, N., & Bowen, J. (2021). *Returning to learning during crises: Decision-making and planning tools for education leaders*. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Available online. <https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/Returning%20to%20Learning%20During%20Crises.pdf>

⁴⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2020). *Lesson for education from COVID-19: A policymaker’s handbook for more resilient systems*. Available online. <https://www.oecd.org/education/lessons-for-education-from-covid-19-0a530888-en.htm>.

Analytical Framework



Equitable Learning

Drawing upon the USAID and OECD frameworks, we place equitable learning at the center of the framework, surrounded by those practices that can improve equitable learning opportunities amongst students, but also parents/caregivers, teachers, and school leaders. Equity is also highlighted as an area of interest in examining indicators of readiness, response, and recovery potential in the context of the pandemic. While research into the impacts of the pandemic on student learning has not yet demonstrated broad evidence of learning loss, there is convincing evidence of learning inequity in many contexts,⁴⁸ including low- to middle-income countries.⁴⁹

The COVID-19 Context

The COVID-19 crisis has caused unprecedented levels of disruption to education systems worldwide. Across the Asia region, it is estimated that around 760 million children were impacted by school closures at the height of the pandemic. Government response strategies have varied across the region, with some countries imposing prolonged school lockdowns while others have had short, repeated closure periods. As countries begin to reopen schools and continue to prepare for subsequent waves of COVID-19 infection, there is a need to develop the greater capability of education systems to: (1) safeguard learning in the early response phase, and (2) address persistent barriers to learning equality by harnessing the opportunities for systemic change.

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education⁵⁰ provides a useful framework for understanding how systems can better respond to emergencies and how they can improve preparedness to build a more resilient education system. The Preparedness phase involves having plans and processes that document what should happen during and after an emergency, such as national disaster response plans. The Response phase refers to policies, plans, and actions to manage priority areas, such as the

⁴⁸ Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, E. (2020). *COVID-19 and student learning in the United States: The hurt could last a lifetime*. McKinsey & Company, 1.

⁴⁹ Reimers, F.M. (Ed) (2022). Primary and secondary education during COVID-19: Disruptions to educational opportunities during a pandemic. Springer. Available online. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-3-030-81500-4.pdf>

⁵⁰ Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). (2012). *Minimum standards for education: Preparedness, response, recovery*. Available online. <https://inee.org/resources/inee-minimum-standards>

closing of schools. The Recovery phase focuses on returning students to pre-emergency learning. The three phases are represented in a cycle to reflect an iterative process, where data-driven monitoring and evaluation processes facilitate systems readiness and improvement. In our framework, we have adapted the INEE standards to consider **Readiness, Response, and Recovery** not only in the context of emergencies but in relation to system resilience during and beyond the pandemic.

Policies

This framework assumes that resilient education systems rely on the interaction between policies and institutions with classroom-level practices and the ability of agents to mobilize them. Successful policy implementation requires skilled teachers and effective school leaders to connect classroom practices with the broader education reform agenda.⁵¹ Well-designed policies, supported by political commitment and strong institutional structures, including capacity and resourcing, have the best chance of success.

The OECD (2020)⁵² proposes three key policy priorities to take education forward beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. It challenges systems to take a transformational view of education that values people and processes over classrooms and devices. This links to the second policy priority, which calls for investments in teachers through carefully designed professional development that builds resilience and responsiveness to the new learning environment which considers new learning approaches that meet the learning needs of all children. The third priority area focuses on equity and inclusion in learning that combines policies that support effective learning interventions with student engagement and well-being.

In the context of COVID-19, education systems must understand the policy levers and school-level inputs that are necessary for safeguarding learning to pre-pandemic trajectories. For example:

- Policies support schools and teachers to develop emergency distance learning materials and activities accessible to all children, particularly the most marginalized.
- Government health authorities decide when schools reopen, and all educational authorities adhere to the Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools.
- Education planners develop and adapt instructional times, curricula, and learning resources and tools, as well as modify examinations and promotion procedures to make them feasible.

School-Level Practices

There is no doubt that quality inputs at the school level have the potential to influence student outcomes positively.⁵³ The quality of those inputs, and the potential they bring for student learning and well-being, depends on what students, teachers, school leaders, and parents do and how they interpret and enact broader policies that guide classroom practice and student learning. When we consider the school-level practices that have the potential to promote a resilient approach to change and support equitable outcomes for all, it is helpful to conceptualize the school as a community made up of four key stakeholder groups that come together to support learning and well-being. They are the students, the teachers, the school leaders, the parents, and the community. We refer to these different stakeholder groups as “Agents” in recognition of the active role they can play in identifying needs within the school community and responding to those needs, particularly during a time of change or disruption.

⁵¹ Schleicher, A. (2018). *What makes high-performing school systems different. World Class: How to Build a 21st-Century School System*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

⁵² Organization for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD). (2020), OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2020 Issue 2, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/39a88ab1-en>.

⁵³ Hattie, J. (2003). *Teachers make a difference, What is the research evidence?* University of Auckland

School-level factors that have the potential to influence student outcomes positively include the following.

- **Leadership:** Leadership that focuses on improving student learning, supporting ongoing teacher professional learning and collaboration, engaging all members of the school community, and promoting the well-being and growth of the school community. In the context of this framework, we acknowledge that leadership can occur at various levels, including at policy, school, or classroom level. In this current study, we are interested in how leadership at the school level contributes to resilience in the face of challenges and supports equitable outcomes. This leadership may come from school leaders themselves, but also collaborative leadership involving teachers, families, and the local community.
- **Collaboration:** Quality collaboration between school and families to support learning and well-being, a professional collaboration between teachers that is focused on improving learning and the impact on student outcomes,⁵⁴ a collaboration between students and teachers (e.g., formative assessment⁵⁵) to improve student engagement, motivation, and learning.⁵⁶
- **Reflection:** A culture of reflection that looks for pathways to improvement and growth, uses evidence to evaluate impact, and identifies areas for improvement, involves all members of the school community in the process of reflection. Feedback is also an integral part of the reflective process⁵⁷, allowing agents across various levels of the school to develop a sense of agency.
- **Differentiation:** Multiple pathways for learning, flexible options for engaging in learning, responsiveness to individual needs, using evidence to inform decision-making and planning, teacher autonomy to adjust and respond to the needs of their students and the context for teaching and learning, support for teachers to enable a differentiated approach (training, resources, mentoring).⁵⁸
- **Well-Being and Inclusion:** An emphasis on promoting well-being as a valued outcome of school, structures, processes, and programs that support the well-being of all members of the school community (students, teachers, school leaders, and families) can support student engagement and learning.⁵⁹ Inclusion should also be considered a key condition for well-being.⁶⁰
- **Growth:** An emphasis on making progress, change and improvement, and other structures and processes that support teachers, students, and families to contribute to improvement within their school community.⁶¹

While the system and school structures are crucial components of educational quality, understanding what happens in a school setting can offer meaningful insights into overcoming

⁵⁴ Donohoo, J. (2018). Collective teacher efficacy research: Productive patterns of behaviour and other positive consequences. *Journal of educational change*, 19(3), 323-345.

⁵⁵ Wiliam*, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C., & Black, P. (2004). Teachers developing assessment for learning: Impact on student achievement. *Assessment in education: principles, policy & practice*, 11(1), 49-65.

⁵⁶ Timperley, H., Ell, F., & Le Fevre, D. (2017). Developing adaptive expertise through professional learning communities. In *Teachers leading educational reform* (pp. 175-189). Routledge.

⁵⁷ Hattie, J., Clarke, S. (2019). *Visible learning: Feedback*. Routledge.

⁵⁸ Tomlinson, C. A., Murphy, M. (2016). *Leading for differentiation: Growing teachers who grow kids*. Hawker Brownlow Education.

⁵⁹ Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American psychologist*, 55(1), 68.

⁶⁰ Goldan, J., Hoffmann, L., Schwab, S. (2021). A matter of resources? – students' academic self-concept, social inclusion and school well-being in inclusive education. *Resourcing Inclusive Education*, 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-363620210000015008>.

⁶¹ Griffin, P. E. (2017). *Assessment for teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

barriers to educational quality. Exploring which school-based practices and responses have been effective in supporting the continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has yet to be well examined, particularly in Asia.

In the context of this framework, the above school-level practices are intentionally broad and reflect the established body of research on the importance of in-school practices on student learning. This is a point of difference to many existing frameworks that assess school improvement or education quality, which often base quality on access to resources, infrastructure, school management systems, standards-based curricula, and summative assessment.

ANNEX B: FULL DESK REVIEW

To improve the quality of education students receive, the Philippines has implemented several major education reforms over the previous decade. These reforms focus on areas of educational practice that are common in high-quality education systems, including policies regarding access, teacher quality, and inclusive education. The pandemic has also led to renewed efforts to support students, particularly in times of crisis and disruption. Understanding where the education system was at the onset of the pandemic provides important context for understanding the country's readiness to respond to the needs of students, parents and communities, teachers, and schools, during the pandemic and into the future. Over the past decade, the education system has witnessed several important reforms. First, the expansion of basic education to 13 years of schooling, and second, the introduction of the mother tongue as the language of instruction in primary education (Pouzevara et al., 2020).⁶² The Alliance for the Education Sector has also attempted to support several Quality Education Development Tasks, namely: implementing school-based management and national competency-based teaching standards; implementing kindergarten (K) education; and introducing extended K to Grade 12 (K–12) curriculum. All these interventions aim to improve the quality of the education system in the years to come (UNESCO, 2021).

Readiness

Educational Expansion and Reform

In 2013, the Philippines government implemented a major education reform in the expansion of the education system (Cagasan et al., 2020). In addition to adding a K year prior to Grade 1, two additional years were added to the secondary school education system, culminating in the development of a K–12 education structure, reflecting the 13-year education sequence found in high-performing education systems. K was also made both compulsory and free in 2012, a reform that acknowledges the importance of early learning in broader educational participation and achievement (UNICEF, 2018).

Assessment Programs and Practices

Students in the Philippines participate in several internal and external assessments. System-specific assessments directed at younger students include the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment (ELLNA), Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA). A recent EGRA found a decline in literacy skills in both English and Filipino, with a concerning rise in the number of children who were unable to provide any correct responses^[1]. National Achievement Tests (NAT) (Department of Education, 2017) are also conducted in Grades 6, 10, and 12. These tests for older students provide information about performance but are not a requirement for graduation or university admissions (Arinto, 2020). The Philippines also participates in several external assessments, including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) (Department of Education, 2017). Classroom-based assessments are less common than summative assessments of proficiency. However, recent initiatives to incorporate assessment practices as part of daily teaching and learning are becoming more common (Cagasan et al., 2020).

⁶² Pouzevara, S., Arinto, P., Dunuan, L. & Sasing, M. (2020). Philippines EdTech ecosystem profile. Prepared for USAID under the All Children Reading-Philippines Project, AID/OAA-TO-16-00017. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI. Available online. <https://shared.rti.org/content/philippines-education-technology-ecosystem-profile>

Improving Teaching Quality

To improve national teacher quality, the Philippine government has implemented several initiatives, including the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (shown in the figure below). The Philippine Professional Standards act as a framework for defining teacher quality as related to knowledge, practice, and professional engagement (Department of Education, 2017). The standards also outline expectations for teachers across a range of teaching and learning situations at different career stages.

The Philippines Professional Standards for Teachers⁶³

PHILIPPINE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS			
CAREER STAGES			
Career Stage 1 Beginning Teachers	Career Stage 2 Proficient Teachers	Career Stage 3 Highly Proficient Teachers	Career Stage 4 Distinguished Teachers
Beginning Teachers have gained the qualifications recognized for entry into the teaching profession.	Proficient Teachers are professionally independent in the application of skills vital to the teaching and learning process.	Highly Proficient Teachers consistently display a high level of performance in their teaching practice.	Distinguished Teachers embody the highest standard for teaching grounded in global best practices.
They have a strong understanding of the subjects/areas in which they are trained in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy.	They provide focused teaching programs that meet curriculum and assessment requirements.	They manifest an in-depth and sophisticated understanding of the teaching and learning process.	They exhibit exceptional capacity to improve their own teaching practice and that of others.
They possess the requisite knowledge, skills and values that support the teaching and learning process.	They display skills in planning, implementing and managing learning programs.	They have high education-focused situation cognition, are more adept in problem solving and optimize opportunities gained from experience.	They are recognized as leaders in education, contributors to the profession and initiators of collaborations and partnerships.
They manage learning programs and have strategies that promote learning based on the learning needs of their students.	They actively engage in collaborative learning with the professional community and other stakeholders for mutual growth and advancement.	They provide support and mentoring to colleagues in their professional development, as well as work collaboratively with them to enhance the learning and practice potential of their colleagues.	They create lifelong impact in the lives of colleagues, students and others.
They seek advice from experienced colleagues to consolidate their teaching practice.	They are reflective practitioners who continually consolidate the knowledge, skills and practices of Career Stage 1 teachers.	They continually seek to develop their professional knowledge and practice by reflecting on their own needs, and those of their colleagues and students.	They consistently seek professional advancement and relevance in pursuit of teaching quality and excellence.
			They exhibit commitment to inspire the education community and stakeholders for the improvement of education provision in the Philippines.

Co-designed Resources

The Department of Education (DepEd) manages a central Learning Resource Portal or the Learning Resource Management and Development System (LRMDS), a repository of approved teaching materials and professional development resources that teachers can download and use in their K–12 classes (RTI, 2020). This resource hub accommodates printable and digital learning modules, and teacher’s guides, activity sheets, activity cards, lesson plans, and some media assets like illustrations, videos, audio, and photos that teachers can use in their classrooms (Arinto, 2020). Many resources are developed and shared by teachers themselves and only published after going through a strict quality assurance process through the school, division, and regional bodies, before being uploaded onto the portal by the LRMDS administrator.

Policies for Inclusion and Equity

According to the Philippines DepEd (2017), the Philippines has long attempted to promote inclusive education and support students with additional needs (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusive education policies were officially adopted in 1997 by DepEd, with ‘Silahis Centres’ (‘school within schools’) supporting the implementation of inclusive education policies. The development of infrastructure and education for small and remote schools (also known as “last-mile schools”); and mandated opportunities for out-of-school youth through the Alternative Learning System (ALS) (RTI, 2020). In addition, the mother tongue language

⁶³ Department of Education (DepEd). (2017). “National adoption and implementation of the Philippine professional standards for teachers.” DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017. August 11, 2017. Pasig City: DepEd.

provision has been expanded, with the law now mandating that children learn in their mother tongue in early primary school and gradually transition to English and Filipino as they move to higher grades (RTI, 2020). There are also many initiatives to promote gender equity in the Philippines, in the education system, and more broadly.

Education for Sustainable Development

Within the Philippines' Education for All (EFA) Plan of Action 2001–2015, education for sustainable development is a key focus. In 2008, the National Environmental Awareness and Education Act (NEAEA) was implemented by the Philippine government, which mandated all relevant agencies to integrate environmental education into public and private school curricula for all levels of education (UNESCO, 2021). Specific law has also been implemented regarding the teaching of human rights within the curricula across all education levels (Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies et al., 2013, as cited in UNESCO, 2021). These initiatives attempt to prepare students for a changing world and to assume responsibility for creating a more sustainable future.

Emergency and Crisis Management

In 2008, the Philippines also implemented Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) within the national basic education framework. The framework focuses on three outcomes: access, quality, and governance (DepEd, Order No. 21, s., 2015). See the figure below (DepEd, Order No. 21, s., 2015, p.6). This framework attempts to provide a foundation for supporting the safe continuity of learning during periods of crisis through the system and school-level coordination and recovery efforts. However, there is no education in emergency plans to support young learners. Assessment and planning mechanisms that recognize the needs of all students are, therefore, still emergent.

Open Education Resources

Awareness of Open Education Resources (OER) designed to support teaching practice has been increasing in the Philippines since 2012. As a result of research that highlights disparate access to resources amongst students in the country, an LRMDs was established, which has since become a flagship program of the Bureau of Learning Resources (BLR). Today, the Learning Resource Portal (LR Portal) aims to strengthen resource development and distribution systems at the region and division levels and foster the provision of quality learning materials, particularly in reading in the early grades (Arinto, 2020; Pouezevara et al., 2020).

Response

Like that in many countries in Asia, the education system of the Philippines has faced many challenges during the pandemic. However, the length of school-related closures has been a significant barrier to the continuity of learning. School closures began in March 2020. As of 2021, school closures continued in many regions, exacerbating the risk of disruption to learning, disengagement, and dropout, but also the risk of children developing mental health conditions, missing out on school-given vaccinations, and being vulnerable to child labor and child marriage (UNICEF Philippines Representative Oyunsakhan Dendevnorov, as cited by UNICEF, 2021).

A higher percentage of children have stopped going to school in the Philippines than in other countries in Asia, and a relatively low percentage of children (21 percent) attended online classes due to weak Internet connections and a lack of digital devices (Morgan & Trinh, 2021). It is also expected that girls may not return to school as quickly as boys following school closures, as evidenced by higher school dropout rates for girls than boys in the Philippines during the Asian financial crisis (Lavado et al., 2022; World Bank, 2020). However, despite these challenges, there have been several examples of responsive and innovative practices apparent in the education system during the pandemic, which are discussed below.

Teaching and Learning During a Pandemic

DepEd developed the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BELCP), which provided guidance on education delivery while ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of learners, teachers, and DepEd personnel. The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), also provided PhP126 million (\$2.5 million) to help the Philippine government's implementation of the BELCP to support learning continuity. In March 2020, DepEd launched the DepEd Commons, a searchable online database of interactive digital resources for teaching and learning, which registered 2.6 million views within its first two weeks of launching (Arinto, 2020). DepEd also implemented multiple learning modalities to ensure that online learning offered a chance for continuity of learning (DepEd, 2020). These modalities included modular distance learning (MDL), online distance learning (ODL), TV/radio-based instruction (TV/R), and blended learning. Printed and digital resources, including learning materials, textbooks, activity sheets, worksheets, study guides, and other study materials, were also distributed, with consideration given to the needs of different types of learners. Parents and teachers were also given support to adopt remote learning during periods of disruption (Pouzevara et al., 2020).

Resource Sharing

Resource sharing was increasing before the pandemic in the Philippines due to the availability of DepEd-curated OER and the practice of sharing content through social media. However, DepEd has also promoted initiatives to support participation in resource sharing and collaboration during the pandemic (Arinto, 2020). The DepEd's Open Education Digital Rise Program, for example, has been widely used during the pandemic and aims to develop information-seeking, media access, and technology skills among teachers and students (Arinto, 2020).

Recovery

Based on the many policies the Philippines had in place prior to the onset of the pandemic, the country is well-positioned to recover, particularly with the support of external agencies. However, as in all contexts, children who are disadvantaged are likely to experience *continued* vulnerability. As of 2022, the Philippines has now begun to reopen schools across the country. Near the end of 2021, DepEd's leadership enabled the start of in-person classes and its coordination with relevant agencies, including the Department of Health. Together with partners, the United Nations continues to work closely with the government to support safe in-person schooling in anticipation of eventual scale-up (Mabolec, 2021; UN, UNICEF, WHO, & UNESCO, 2021). A staggered approach to reopening relies on the support of low rates of transmission, stringent health and safety measures, commitment from Local Government Units to facilitate ongoing safety, and parental consent for student attendance from parents or guardians (Kahambing, 2021).

Conclusion and Next Steps

As this review has demonstrated, historic education improvement agendas in the Philippines have the potential to build system resilience in the long term, enhance the education system's ability to respond to the pandemic, and move forward with previous education initiatives designed to improve education quality. However, there are further opportunities for understanding how policies driven by the government of the Philippines have been enacted during the pandemic. Understanding the practices of schools and families impacted by accessibility challenges requires further research. As Akamai's 2017 quartal report (cited in Winthrop, 2020) has noted, the Philippines has the lowest Internet connectivity in Asia, with accessibility issues most pronounced in marginalized communities. However, there needs to be more information on ways in which schools have supported families of different need levels or how teachers have adapted teaching and learning practices to accommodate different levels of access, particularly during periods of disruption.

It also remains to be seen which school-level practices have supported the continuity of learning during the pandemic. Reflecting on the analytical framework presented in the main report, there are indicators of collaborative practices among teachers, leadership (in the hierarchical sense), efforts to reflect on the progress of the system to date, and policies designed to differentiate the delivery of curricula for students of additional needs. Although there are many policies focused on inclusion, there needs to be more information on practices and programs designed to support well-being among students and staff in recent literature. Finally, while a focus on growth can be observed in system-level internal and external assessments, there needs to be more information as to how teachers have assessed students during the pandemic.

Overall, the frameworks and policies reviewed remain focused on system initiatives and policy perspectives rather than providing insights into examples of teacher practice. Insights from school leaders and teachers have yet to be widely shared in the literature on education responses in the Philippines, particularly in marginalized or disadvantaged settings. Although reflection on the lessons learned during the pandemic is crucial to broader system recovery, broader reform and improvement efforts must focus on school-level indicators of resilience. The Philippines has many structures in place that can support educational recovery and reform, thus, it is important to understand the ways in which teachers understand and enact these structures in their practice, including during periods of disruption. These lessons can provide insights for the Philippines now and into the future.

ANNEX C: INSTRUMENTS

C.1 Survey Protocols

School Leader (Filipino)

Talatanungan para sa Pinuno ng Paaralan o Prinsipal _FIL

Ang Pagtugon sa Covid 19 na Pandemya ng mga Sistema ng Edukasyon sa Asya

1) Bago magpatuloy, maaring paki tiyak kung ikaw ay Pinuno sa Paaralan.*

Oo

Hindi

The COVID-19 Pandemic Response of Education Systems in Asia

2) Bago magpatuloy, maaring paki tiyak kung ikaw ay Pinuno sa Paaralan.*

Oo

Hindi

SEKSIYON A: TUNGKOL SA IYO

3) Paaralan*

4) Saan matatagpuan ang inyong paaralan (school address)? *

Bayan/Liblib

Probinsya/Lalawigan

Kalungsuran/Lungsod

5) Ano ang iyong kasarian?*

Babae

Lalaki

Pinipiling huwag sabihin

6) Ilang taon ka nang nagtrabaho bilang isang Pinuno ng Paaralan?

(Huwag isama sa bilang ang kahit anong panahon ng extended leave gaya ng maternity/paternity/long service leave)

*

Mas mababa sa 2 taon

2 hanggang 5 taon

6 hanggang 10 taon

11 hanggang 20 taon

Higit sa 20 taon

7) Ikaw ba ay may mga anak o isang taga pangalaga sa bahay?*

Oo

Hindi

Pinipiling huwag sabihin

SEKSIYON B: MGA HAMON

8) Aling mga sumusunod na hamon ang kinaharap ng inyong paaralan sa pagsuporta sa mga mag-aaral sa panahon ng pandemya?

(Lagyan ng tsek ang lahat ng angkop na sagot.)*

Please tick

Kakulangan ng imprastruktura sa paaralan (Halimbawa: walang photocopiers para sa paggawa ng mga ipamamahaging worksheets, wala o limitadong internet)

Hindi sapat na mga kagamitan para sa remote teaching (Halimbawa: kawalan ng internet, printed materials para sa mga guro)

Hindi sapat na kagamitan para sa mga mag-aaral na may espesyal na pangangailangan (special needs) (Halimbawa: pisikal na kapansanan, mental o emosyonal/sikolohikal na kapansanan)

Kakulangan sa panahon para sa pakikibahagi ng mga guro

Hindi mabuting kalusugan o wellness ng mga guro

Pag-kapagod sa trabaho ng mga guro

Pag-bitiw ng mga guro sa trabaho

Kakulangan sa abilidad ng guro para mag remote teaching

Mababang kumpyansa (confidence) ng guro sa remote teaching

Limitadong interes sa pakikibahagi ng mga mag-aaral

Hindi mabuting kalusugan o wellness ng mga mag-aaral

Limitadong interes sa pakikibahagi ng mga magulang

Limitadong kakayahan ng mga magulang na suportahan ang kanilang anak sa mga gawain sa paaralan (Halimbawa: kakulangan ng kakahayang magbasa at magsulat, trabaho

Limitadong kagamitan sa bahay (Halimbawa: internet, data, devices, tahimik na espasyo, mesa, mga aklat)

Limitadong kagamitan sa komunidad (Halimbawa: silid-aklatan, internet access, kuryente sa mga pampublikong lugar, atbp.)

Mahina ang suporta ng komunidad para sa paaralan (Halimbawa: kawalan ng pakikibahagi ng mga magulang, kawalan ng kagamitan sa komunidad)

Pabago-bagong estadong politikal o kaguluhan sa kinaroroonan ng paaralan

Walang nararanasan na hadlang

SEKSIYON C: PANANAW UKOL SA SUPORTA

9) Gaano ka sumasang-ayon sa mga sumusunod na pahayag?

Sa panahon ng pandemya, ang aming paaralan ay...*

Lubos na hindi sang-ayon Sang-ayon Hindi sang-ayon Lubos na sang-ayon

Inasahang maghatid ng remote learning sa mga panahon na nakasara ang paaralan

Nagbigay ng mga kagamitan sa mga guro (Halimbawa: internet connection, digital facilities, learning materials) upang maipagpatuloy nila ang kanilang pagtuturo

Nagbigay ng sapat na mga kagamitan sa mga mag-aaral (Halimbawa: internet connection, digital facilities, devices, learning materials) upang maipagpatuloy ang kanilang pagkatuto

Naipagbigay-alam sa mga magulang at mga pamilya ang mga pamamaraan sa pagtuturo at pagkatuto

Sinubaybayan ang mental health at well-being ng mga guro

Sinubaybayan ang mental health at well-being ng mga mag-aaral

Baguhin ang mga inaasahan (expectations) para sa pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral (Halimbawa: pag-angkop nga mga pagsasanay, pagtutok sa literacy lamang)

Subukan ang mga makabagong pamamaraan para mahikayat ang mga mag-aaral sa pagkatuto

Sinubaybayan ang pakikibahagi ng mga mag-aaral

Sukatin ang kalidad ng pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral

Nagbigay ng karagdagang suporta para sa mga dehado na mag-aaral (Halimbawa: mga babae, mga mag-aaral na galing sa mga pamilyang may mababang kita)

Nagbigay ng karagdagang suporta para sa mga mag-aaral na may iba't ibang pangangailangan o kakayahan sa pagkatuto

10) Paano ka nabigyan ng suporta ng mga sumusunod na organisasyon o mga tao sa panahon na nakasara ang paaralan? *

Hindi sinuportahan	Sinuporta-han
Kagawaran ng Edukasyon	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Tanggapan na pang lalawigan	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Local na komunidad o barangay	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Asosasyon ng mga guro	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Mga magulang / taga pangalaga	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Mga magulang / taga pangalaga	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Ayuda mula sa mga organisasyon / mga pribadong donors	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

11) Alam mo ba ang mga polisiya tungkol sa remote learning delivery at mga inaasahan ng kagawaran ng edukasyon / tanggapan ng panlalawigan para matiyak na patuloy ang pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral?*

Oo
 Hindi

12) Ano pa ang ibang suporta ang kinailangan/kailangan ninyo mula sa mga tanggapan or opisina na nabanggit habang nasa panahon ng pandemiya? Ipaliwanag ang iyong sagot.*

13) Ano pa ang ibang suporta ang kinailangan/kailangan ninyo mula sa mga tanggapan o organisasyon na nabanggit para sa kinabukasan? Ipaliwanag ang iyong sagot.*

SEKSIYON D: PAMUMUNO AT KOLABORASYON

14) Isaad kung gaano kadalas nangyari ang mga sumusunod sa inyong paaralan sa panahon ng pandemya.*

Never	Once or twice per year	Once a term	Weekly
Dumalo ako sa professional development tungkol sa remote learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nakipag-ugnayan ako sa mga sanga ng gobyerno na gumagawa ng mga polisiya at ibang organisasyon tungkol sa mga paraan ng pagsuporta sa mga mag-aaral sa panahon ng pandemya	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nagbigay ako sa mga guro ng karagdagang pagsasanay tungkol sa remote learning (telebisyon, radyo, paper-based delivery)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Nagbigay ako sa mga guro ng karagdagang pagsasanay sa remote learning gamit ang teknolohiya sa internet

Nakipagpulong ako sa mga guro upang pag-usapan ang kanilang mga pangangailangan at mga hadlang sa pagturo

Nakipagpulong ako sa mga guro upang pag-usapan ang mga paraan ng pagsuporta sa pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral

Nakipag-ugnayan ako sa mga guro upang pag-usapan ang mga paraan ng pagsuporta sa pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral

Nakipagpulong ako sa mga magulang pag-usapan ang mga paraan ng pagsuporta sa pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral

SEKSIYON E: PAGLAGO AT PAGKAKAIBA

15) Pakisaad kung gaano ka dalas nangyari ang mga sumusunod na gawain sa inyong paaralan sa panahon ng pandemya?*

Hindi kailanman Isa o dalawang beses sa isang taon Kada termino ng pasukan
Kada linggo

Sinuportahan ko ang mga guro na maiangkop ang mga leksyon sa mga panahon na nakasara ang paaralan

Sinuportahan ko ang mga guro na maiangkop ang mga pagsasanay (assessments) sa mga panahon na nakasara ang paaralan

Sinamahan ko ng mga patunay at datos upang pagnilayan kung epektibo ang pamamaraan ng pagtuturo sa aking mga mag-aaral

Nakipagpulong ako sa mga guro upang suriin ang kanilang paggamit ng mga patunay/datos upang subaybayan ang paglago ng mga mag-aaral

Balak kong pagbutihin ang resulta ng aming paaralan at mga mag-aaral (Halimbawa: long-term goals, strategic planning)

SEKSIYON F: WELL-BEING AT INKLUSYON

16) Pakisaad kung gaano kadalas nangyari ang mga sumusunod sa inyong paaralan sa panahon ng pandemya.*

Hindi kailanman Bihira Minsan Madalas

Nakaranas ako ng higit na pagod sa aking trabaho

Nabahala ako sa antas ng pagod ng aking mga kasamahan na guro

Nabahala ako sa mental health at well-being ng aking mga mag-aaral

Nagbigay ako sa mga guro ng mga gabay na may kinalaman sa mental health

Nagbigay ako sa mga mag-aaral at mga pamilya ng mga gabay may kinalaman sa mental health

Nagbigay ako ng mga karagdagang kagamitan at pagsasanay sa mga guro ng mga mag-aaral na may pansariling pangangailangan o kapansanan sa pagkatuto

SEKSIYON G: PAGNINILAY

17) Alin sa mga sumusunod ang inyong ginawa o balak na gawin upang suportahan ang inyong mga tauhan at mag-aaral matapos ang pagkatapos ng pandemya?*

Oo Hindi

Makipagtulungan sa mga guro tungkol sa mga paraan upang mapabuti ang pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral

- Makipagtulungan sa mga magulang/pamilya tungkol sa mga paraan upang mapabuti ang pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral
- Pagbisita sa bahay upang masubaybayan ang pakikibahagi ng mga mag-aaral
- Pagtawag sa telepono upang masubaybayan ang pakikibahagi ng mga mag-aaral
- I-angkop ang mga leksyon sa iba't ibang uri ng mga mag-aaral
- I-angkop ang mga pag-sasanay sa iba't ibang uri ng mga mag-aaral
- Gumamit ng mga prinsipyo ng blended/remote learning (Halimbawa: kaunting oras para sa face-to-face, mas maraming gawain sa online)
- Tutukan ang mental health at well-being ng mga guro
- Tutukan ang mental health at well-being ng mga mag-aaral
- Subaybayan ang paghusay ng mga mag-aaral gamit ang mga datos mula sa silid-aralan at paaralan

18) Ano ang naging pinakamabisang paraan upang suportahan ang mga mag-aaral sa inyong paaralan habang na sa panahon ng pandemya? Ipaliwanag ang iyong sagot.*

SEKSIYON G: PAGSUBAYBAY

19) Anong mga pamamaraan o polisiya ang makatutulong upang mapabuti ang kalidad ng edukasyon sa inyong paaralan sa panahon ng pandemya at sa hinaharap?*

20) Papayag ka bang lumahok sa isang follow-up individual interview bilang bahagi ng pag-aaral na ito?*

- Oo, payag akong makipag-ugnayan para sa isang pagtutuloy na panayam
- Hindi, huwag na kayong makipag-ugnayan sa akin

21) Kung pinili mo ay "Oo" sa itaas, pakibigay ang inyong contact details (numero ng telepono / email address) sa taong kumokolekta ng iyong talatanungan*

PASASALAMAT

Teacher (Filipino)

Talatanungan para sa mga Guro (Teacher Questionnaire_FIL)

Ang Pagtugon sa Covid 19 na Pandemya ng mga Sistema ng Edukasyon sa Asya

1) Sa pagpapatuloy, pakisaad na ikaw ay guro.*

- Oo
- Hindi

SEKSIYON A: TUNGKOL SA IYO

2) Paaralan

3) Saan matatagpuan ang inyong paaralan (school address)?*

- Bayan/Liblib
- Probinsya/Lalawigan
- Kalungsuran/Lungsod

4) Ano ang iyong kasarian?*

- Babae
- Lalaki
- Pinipiling huwag sabihin

5) Ilang taon ka na nagtatrabaho bilang guro?

(Maaring hindi isama sa bilang ang panahon ng mahabang pamamahinga tulad ng maternity/paternity/long service leave).*

- Mas mababa sa 2 taon
- 2 hanggang 5 taon
- 6 hanggang 10 taon
- 11 hanggang 20 taon
- Higit sa 20 taon

6) May mga anak ka ba o isang taga pangalaga?*

- Oo
- Hindi
- Pinipiling huwag sabihin

SEKSIYON B: MGA HAMON

7) Aling mga hamon ang kinaharap mo sa pagsuporta sa mga mag-aaral sa panahon ng pandemya?

(Lagyan ng tsek ang lahat ng angkop na sagot)*

Lagyan ng tsek

Kakulangan ng imprastruktura sa paaralan (Halimbawa: walang photocopiers para sa paggawa ng mga ipamamahaging worksheets, wala o limitadong internet)

Hindi sapat na mga kagamitan para sa remote teaching (Halimbawa: kawalan ng internet, printed materials para sa mga guro)

Hindi sapat na mga kagamitan para sa remote learning (Halimbawa: kawalan ng internet, printed materials para sa mga mag-aaral)

Hindi sapat na kagamitan para sa mga mag-aaral na may espesyal na pangangailangan (special needs) (Halimbawa: pisikal na kapansanan, mental o emosyonal/sikolohikal na kapansanan)

Kakulangan sa panahon para sa pakikibahagi ng ibang mga guro

Hindi mabuting kalusugan o wellness

Pag-kapagod sa trabaho ng mga guro

Pag-alis o pagbibitiw sa tungkulin ng mga guro

Kakulangan sa abilidad ng guro para mag remote teaching

Mababang kumpyansa (confidence) ng guro sa remote teaching

Limitadong interes sa pakikibahagi ng mga mag-aaral

Hindi mabuting kalusugan o wellness ng mga mag-aaral

Limitadong interes sa pakikibahagi ng mga magulang

Limitadong kakayahan ng mga magulang suportahan ang kanilang mga anak sa mga takdang aralin

Limitadong kagamitan sa komunidad (halimbawa: aklatan, internet cafes, imprastruktura sa komunikasyon)

Mahina na suporta ng ng komunidad para sa paaralan

Pabago-bagong estadong politikal o kaguluhan sa kinaroroonan ng paaralan

Walang nararanasan na hadlang

8) Ano pa ang ibang mga hadlang sa iyong pagtuturo bilang guro? Pakilista ang mga iyon sa ibaba.*

SEKSIYON C: PANANAW UKOL SA SUPORTA

9) Gaano ka sumasang-ayon sa mga sumusunod na pahayag?

Sa panahon ng pandemya, ang aming paaralan ay...*

	Lubos na hindi sang-ayon	Hindi sang-ayon	Sang-ayon	Lubos na sang-ayon
Inasahang maghatid ng remote learning sa mga panahon na nakasara ang paaralan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nagbigay ng mga kagamitan sa mga guro (Halimbawa: internet connection, digital facilities, learning materials) upang maipagpatuloy nila ang kanilang pagtuturo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nagbigay ng sapat na mga kagamitan sa mga mag-aaral (Halimbawa: internet connection, digital facilities, devices, learning materials) upang maipagpatuloy ang kanilang pagkatuto	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Naipagbigay-alam sa mga magulang at mga pamilya ang mga pamamaraan sa pagtuturo at pagkatuto	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sinubaybayan ang mental health at well-being ng mga guro	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sinubaybayan ang mental health at well-being ng mga mag-aaral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baguhin ang mga inaasahan (expectations) para sa pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral (Halimbawa: pag-a-adjust ng mga assessments, pagtutok sa literacy lamang)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subukan ang mga makabagong paraan para mahikayat ang mga mag-aaral sa pagkatuto	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sinubaybayan ang pakikibahagi ng mga mag-aaral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sukat in ang kalidad ng pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nagbigay ng karagdagang suporta para sa mga dehado na mag-aaral (Halimbawa: mga babae, mga mag-aaral na galing sa mga pamilyang may mababang kita)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nagbigay ng karagdagang suporta para sa mga mag-aaral na may iba't ibang pangangailangan o kakayahan sa pagkatuto (mataas o mababa)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10) Sa kabuuan, ako ay kontento sa antas ng suporta na ibinigay sa akin ng aming paaralan.*

- Lubos na hindi sang-ayon
- Hindi sang-ayon
- Sang-ayon
- Lubos na sang-ayon

11) Sinubukan mo gumamit ng kahit anong bagongistratehiya o pamamaraan sa pagtuturo sa panahon ng pandemya? Ano-ano ang mga ito? Paano mo ito ginamit na bahagi ng iyong pagtuturo?*

12) Gumamit ka ba ng kahit anong bagong modality sa panahon ng pandemya (telebisyon, apps, radyo, atbp) bilang bahagi ng iyong pagtuturo? Ano-ano ang mga ito?*

SEKSIYON D: PAMUMUNO AT KOLABORASYON

13) Please indicate how often you participated in the following activities in your school during the pandemic.*

	Never	Once or twice a year	Once a term	Weekly
Dumalo ako sa professional development tungkol sa remote learning	()	()	()	()
Nakipag-ugnayan ako sa ibang organisasyon tungkol sa mga paraan ng pagsuporta sa mga mag-aaral sa panahon ng pandemya	()	()	()	()
Nakatanggap ako ng karagdagang pagsasanay ukol sa remote learning (sa pamamagitan ng telebisyon, radio, paper-based)	()	()	()	()
Nakatanggap ako ng karagdagang pagsasanay ukol sa remote sa pamamagitan ng learning/IT/paper-based delivery	()	()	()	()
Nakipagpulong ako sa aking school leader upang pag-usapan ang aking mga pangangailangan at hamon	()	()	()	()
Nakipagpulong ako sa aking school leader upang pag-usapan ang mga paraan ng pagsuporta sa mga mag-aaral	()	()	()	()
Nakipag-ugnayan ako sa mga magulang tungkol sa mga paraan ng pagsuporta sa pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	()	()

SEKSIYON E: PAGLAGO AT PAGKAKAIBA

14) Pakisaad kung gaano kadalas nangyari ang mga sumusunod na gawain sa inyong paaralan sa panahon ng COVID-19.*

	Hindi kailan-man	Isa o dalawang beses sa isang taon	Isa	bawat termino ng pasukan	Kada linggo
Iniangkop ko ang mga aralin sa mga panahon na nakasara ang paaralan	()	()	()	()	()
Iniangkop ko ang mga lagumang pagtataya (summative assessments) sa mga panahon na nakasara ang paaralan	()	()	()	()	()
Sinamahan ko ng mga patunay o datos upang pagnilayan kung paano nagpe-perform ang mga mag-aaral sa aking klase.	()	()	()	()	()
Nangongolekta ako ng mga patunay o datos upang masubaybayan ang paglago ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	()	()	()

SEKSIYON F: WELL-BEING AT INKLUSYON

15) Please indicate the extent to which well-being levels were impacted and/or supported in your school during the pandemic.*

Hindi kailan-man	Bihira	Minsan	Mada-las		
Nakaranas ako ng higit na pagkapagod sa aking trabaho	()	()	()	()	
Nabahala ako sa antas ng stress ng aking mga kasamahan	()	()	()	()	
Nabahala ako sa mental health at well-being ng aking mga mag-aaral	()	()	()	()	
Nakatanggap ako ng mga gabay may kinalaman sa mental health mula sa aking school leader	()	()	()	()	
Nagbigay ako sa mga mag-aaral at mga pamilya ng mga kagamitang may kinalaman sa mental health	()	()	()	()	
Isinali ko ang mga gawain para sa mental health at well-being sa aking pagtuturo	()	()			()
Sinubukan ko ang mga bagong pamamaraan para mahikayat ang mga mag-aaral sa pagkatuto	()	()	()	()	
Nakatanggap ako ng mga karagdagang kagamitan at pagsasanay para sa pagsuporta sa ang aking mga mag-aaral na may pansariling pangangailangan o kapansanan sa pagkatuto	()	()			()

SEKSIYON G: PAGNINILAY

16) Ano ang naging pinakamabisang paraan upang suportahan ang mga mag-aaral sa inyong paaralan sa panahon ng pandemya? Ipaliwanag ang iyong sagot.*

17) Alin sa mga sumusunod ang inyong balak na gawin pagkatapos ng pandemya upang suportahan ang inyong mga kasamahan? *

Oo	Hindi		
Makipagtulungan sa mga kasamahan tungkol sa mga paraan upang mapabuti ang pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	
Makipagtulungan sa mga magulang/pamilya tungkol sa mga paraan upang mapabuti ang pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	
Pagbisita sa tahanan upang masubaybayan ang pakikibahagi ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	
Pagtawag sa telepono upang masubaybayan ang pakikibahagi ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	
I-angkop ang mga aralin sa iba't ibang uri ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	
I-angkop ang mga pagsasanay sa iba't ibang uri ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	
Gumamit ng mga prinsipyo ng blended/remote learning (Halimbawa: kaunting oras para sa face-to-face, mas maraming gawain sa online)	()	()	
Tutukan ang sariling mental health at well being	()	()	
Tutukan ang mental health at well being ng mga mag-aaral	()	()	
Subaybayan ang paghusay ng mga mag-aaral gamit ang mga datos mula sa silid-aralan at paaralan	()	()	

18) Ano ang nais mong makita na gawin ng inyong paaralan upang masuportahan ka at ang iyong mga mag-aaral sa hinaharap?*

SEKSIYON G: PAGSUBAYBAY

19) Papayag ka bang lumahok sa isang follow-up individual interview bilang bahagi ng pag-aaral na ito?*

- Oo, payag akong makipag ugnayan para sa susunod na panayam
 Hindi, huwag na kayong makipag-ugnayan sa akin

20) Kung ang sagot mo ay "Oo" sa itaas, pakibigay ang inyong contact details (numero ng telepono at email address) sa taong kumokolekta ng iyong talatanungan.*

PASASALAMAT

Parent (Filipino)

Talatanungan para sa Magulang (Parent Questionnaire_FIL)

Ang Pagtugon sa Covid 19 na Pandemya ng mga Sistema ng Edukasyon sa Asya

1) Para sa pagpatuloy, maaring sagutin kung ikaw ay magulang.*

- Oo
 Hindi

SEKSIYON A: TUNGKOL SA IYO AT IYONG PAMILYA

2) Pangalan ng paaralan ng inyong anak?

3) Saan matatagpuan ang paaralan na pinapasukan ng ang anak niyo?*

- Bayan/Liblib
 Probinsya/Lalawigan
 Kalungsuran/Lungsod

4) Ang sumasagot ng talatanungan na ito ay*

- Ina / Taga pangalagang babae
 Ama / Taga pangalagang lalaki
 Lolo/Lola
 Iba pa (halimabawa: kapatid, kamag-anak, iba pang taga pangalaga):

- 5) Ano ang pinakamataas na antas ng edukasyon ang inyong natapos?*
- Doctorate degree
 - Master's degree
 - Kolehiyo o Bachelor degree
 - Teknikal o bokasyonal na edukasyon
 - Nagtapos sa mataas na paaralan (high school)
 - Hindi nakatapos ng high school
- 6) Nagtrabaho ka ba ng full time noong panahon ng pandemiya?*
- Oo
 - Hindi
- 7) Ilang mga anak ang nasa bahay niyo na nasa edad 18 taong gulang at pababa?*
- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4 o higit pa
- 8) Pagungkol sa bata o anak na tinotukoy sa talatanungan na ito, ano ang kanyang edad?*
- 3 taong gulang
 - 4 taong gulang
 - 5 taong gulang
 - 6 taong gulang
 - 7 taong gulang
 - 8 taong gulang
 - 9 taong gulang
 - 10 taong gulang at pataas
- 9) Patungkol sa bata o sa anak na tinutukoy sa talatanungan na ito, ano ang kanyang kasarian?*
- Babae
 - Lalake
 - Mas naisin na ayaw ipaalam
- 10) Ano ang pangunahing wika na ginagamit sa inyong tahanan?*
- Pambansang wika na Tagalog
 - Ibang Filipino na wika
 - English
 - Pinaghalo na English at Filipino (bilingual)
- 11) May karagdagan ng pangangailangan ba ang inyong anak?*
- Hindi, walang ano mang dagdag na pangangailangan ang aking anak
 - Oo, ang aking anak ay may dagdag na pangangailangang pisikal
 - Yes, my child has additional intellectual needs
 - Yes, my child has both additional physical and intellectual needs
 - Hindi sigurado
 - Hindi nais sagutin
-

SEKSIYON B: TUNGKOL SA INYONG TAHANAN

12) Alin sa mga sumusunod na bagay o kagamitan ang matatagpuan sa inyong bahay?
(Kung ang bagay at sira o hindi gumagana kasalukuyan ngunit maaring maayos sa loob ng 30 araw, maaring piliin ang "Oo"*)

	Yes	No		
Computer/laptop/tablet			()	()
Internet connection	()		()	()
Telebisyon	()		()	()
Radyo	()		()	()
Cellphone	()		()	()
Landline	()		()	()
Refrigerator	()		()	()
Kalan (hotplate and oven, gas stove)	()		()	()
Automatic washing machine	()		()	()
May flush na palikuran	()		()	()
Tubig na galing sa gripo/poso	()		()	()
Pinakabit na kuryente, generator, o solar			()	()
Car, motorcycle, or moped	()		()	()
Bisekleta	()		()	()

13) Sa inyong bahay, anong ang pangunahing sanhi ng ilaw?*

- () Walang ilaw sa gabi
- () Kandila
- () Ilaw na mitsa
- () Gas na lampara
- () De-kuryenteng ilaw
- () Solar na lampara

14) Alin sa mga sumusunod na kagamitan sa bahay ang mayroon ang iyong anak sa inyong bahay?
(Kung ang gamit ay sira o hindi gumagana sa kasalukuyan ngunit maaaring maayos sa loob ng 30 araw, mangyaring piliin ang 'Oo')*

	Oo	Hindi		
Ballpen o lapis	()		()	()
Ruler	()		()	()
Calculator	()		()	()
Mga aklat o libro	()		()	()
Mga kwaderno (notebooks) para sa gawain sa paaralan			()	()
Mesa na nakalaan lamang para sa mga gawain sa paaralan			()	()
School bag	()		()	()
Pangkulay na lapis o pen	()		()	()
Computer/laptop/tablet	()		()	()

15) Ilan ang mga aklat kahit anuman paksa ang makikita sa inyong tahanan?

(Maliban sa mga aklat na ginagamit sa paaralan, e-books, diyaryo, o mga pahayagan)*

- () Wala o kakaunti (0-10)
- () Sapat upang mapuno ang isang istante o shelf (11-25)
- () Sapat upang mapuno ang isang lagayan ng mga aklat o bookcase (26-100)
- () Sapat upang mapuno ang dalawang lagayan ng mga aklat o bookcase (101-200)
- () Sapat upang mapuno ang tatlo o higit pang lagayan ng mga aklat o bookcase (lagpas 200)

SEKSIYON C: TUNGKOL SA PAG-AARAL NG IYONG ANAK SA MGA PANAHONG NAKASARA ANG PAARALAN

16) Sa mga panahong nakasara ang paaralan, gaano mo kadalas ginawa ang mga sumusunod na bagay upang suportahan ang pagkatuto ng iyong anak?*

Hindi kailanman From time to time (once a month) Paminsan-minsan (isang beses sa isang buwan) Napakadulas (hindi bababa sa 3-4 na beses)

Humingi ng tulong sa ibang tao na tulongan ang iyong anak sa kanyang gawain sa paaralan (tutor, kapatid, etc)

Tulongan ang iyong anak sa mga takdang-aralin

Magbasa ng aklat sa iyong anak

Umalalay sa remote learning

Siniguradong natapos ng iyong anak ang lahat ng kanyang takdang-aralin

17) Sa mga panahong nakasara ang paaralan, pinagpatuloy ba ng inyong anak ang pagkatuto sa pamamagitan ng remote learning?*

Oo
 Hindi

18) Sa mga panahon na nakasara ang paaralan, gaano kadalas ginagawa ng inyong anak ang mga sumusunod na tungkulin?*

Hindi kailanman Paminsan-minsan (isang beses sa isang buwan) Madalas (isang beses isang linggo) Napakadulas (hindi bababa sa 3-4 na beses sa isang linggo)

Pakikipagpulong tungkol sa aralin na kaharap mag-isa ang guro (online, sa telepono)

Pakikipagpulong sa guro kasama sa grupo o buong klase (online, by phone)

Pakikinig ng programang pang-edukasyon sa radyo

Panonood ng programang pang-edukasyon sa telebisyon

Pagbasa sa online ng mga materyal/babasahing pang-edukasyon

Pag gamit ng mga digital learning apps

Pagtapos ng mga itinakdang aralin ng guro

Pagtapos ng mga pagsasanay (assessments) itinakda ng guro

Pagbasa ng mga aklat na panlibang (recreational books)

Pagbasa ng mga aklat mula sa paaralan

Pagbasa ng iba pang babasahing pang-edukasyon (kabilang ang pahayagan/dyaryo)

19) Gaano nailalarawan ng mga sumusunod na pahayag ang pag-uugali ng iyong anak sa mga panahong nakasara ang paaralan?*

Hindi nailalarawan Hindi gaanong nailalarawan Bahagyang nailalarawan Labis na nailalarawan

Ang aking anak ay ganadong gumamit ng mga kagamitang pang-edukasyon

Ang aking anak ay sabik na makakumpleto ang remote/online learning (halimbawa: mag-log on sa online learning, matuto ng aralin sa radyo o telebisyon)

Ang aking anak ay sabik na tapusin ang takdang aralin na take-home packs (module)

Ang aking anak ay malungkot na walang pasok

Ang aking anak ay ganadong gumawa ng mga mga gawaing bahay

Ang aking anak ay nakikisalamuha sa mga buong pamilya gaya ng nakagawian

 Ang aking anak ay naging balisa ngayon kumpara noon bago mag pandemiya

20) Ano ang mga hadlang sa pagkatuto ng iyong anak sa mga panahon na nakasara ang paaralan?*

Lubos na hindi sang-ayon	Hindi sang-ayon	Sang-ayon	Lubos na sang-ayon
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Hindi makakonekta online
 Hindi pagkakaroon ng mga gamit pang-edukasyon para matuto (halimbawa: workbooks, worksheets, textbooks, notebook)
 Ang aking anak ay nakaramdam ng pagkabalisa noong lockdown
 Ang abilidad ng aking anak magpahiwatig ng mga humahadlang sa kanyang pagkatuto

 Kawalan ng suporta ng guro
 Kawalan ng kakayahang suportahan ang anak sa bahay
 Kinailangan tumulong ang aking anak sa pag hanapbuhay para kumita ng pera

SEKSIYON D: PANANAW UKOL SA SUPORTA

21) Gaano ka sumasang-ayon sa mga sumusunod na pahayag?

Sa panahon ng pandemya, ang paaralan ng aking anak ay...*

Lubos na hindi sang-ayon	Sang-ayon	Hindi sang-ayon	Lubos na sang-ayon
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Nagbigyan ako at ang aking aking anak ng sapat na mga kagamitan upang masuportahan ko siya sa pagkatuto
 Nagbigay sa akin at sa aking aking anak ng sapat na mga kagamitan upang matuto mag-isa kahit walang guro
 Ibinahagi sa akin ang mga pamamaraan sa pagtuturo at pagkatuto, bilang magulang /taga pangalaga
 Ibinahagi sa akin ang kalagayan ng aking anak sa kanyang pag-aaral
 Sinuportahan ang aking mental health at well-being bilang isang magulang

 Sinubaybayan ang mental health at well-being ng aking anak
 Baguhin ang mga inaasahan para sa pagkatuto ng aking anak
 Sumubok ng mga makabagong pamamaraan upang mahikayat ang aking anak na matuto

 Sinubaybayan ang pakikibahagi ng aking anak
 Sinuri ang pagkatuto ng aking anak

22) Kontento ako sa suporta na ibinigay ng paaralan *

Lubos na hindi sang-ayon
 Hindi sang-ayon
 Sang-ayon
 Lubos na sang-ayon

23) Papayag ka bang lumahok sa isang follow-up individual interview bilang bahagi ng pag-aaral na ito?

*

Oo, payag akong makipag-ugnayan para sa isang pagtutuloy na panayam (follow-up interview)
 Hindi, huwag na kayong makipag-ugnayan sa akin

24) Kung pinili mo ay "Oo" sa itaas, pakibigay ang inyong contact details (numero ng telepono / email address) sa taong kumokolekta ng iyong talatanungan.*

PASASALAMAT

C.2 Key Informant Interview Protocol

Format

The interview with key informants will last approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be conducted using videoconferencing software (where possible). If a live interview is not possible due to disruption, the interview questions will be administered over the phone or sent by email if phone interviews are not possible. Where there is a lack of internet connectivity or due to remoteness, interviews may be conducted face-to-face. The interviews will follow a semi-structured protocol, with key questions asked of all informants and scope to explore ideas/examples in more detail as they emerge in individual interviews.

Purpose of Interview

This interview seeks to explore the support provided to educational settings during the pandemic, the barriers, and enablers to responding to needs during and beyond the pandemic, and the system-level strategies for improving educational quality and equitable outcomes at different points in time. These interviews aim to capture the perspective of stakeholders at the system level (e.g., policymakers, supervisors, teacher educators), providing a point of comparison for the school-level interviews in the case studies. Asking informants about the key policies that are in place to support responsiveness and improvement provides an opportunity to connect with and compare the results of the desk review. The Key Informant Interview will consist of the following key questions:

1. What policies were designed to support educational settings during the COVID-19 pandemic? Can you describe examples of the support that was given to educational settings during the pandemic?
2. What do you see as the main needs that schools were attempting to respond to during the pandemic? Student needs? Needs of families? Needs within the community?
3. What do you see as the barriers or challenges that schools face when responding to these needs within their school community? (Student needs, needs of families, needs across the community)
4. What were some of the enablers or things that helped schools to respond to needs during the pandemic?
5. What strategies and/or policies are designed to improve educational quality within schools during the pandemic and moving beyond the pandemic in the future?

ANNEX D: KEY INFORMANTS

We would like to thank informants from the following organizations for their insights and expertise.

List of Key Informants

Role	Organization
Team Leader	Save the Children; Sustaining Education Reform Gains
Program Manager	NORFIL
Project Development Officer	Department of Education
Chief, Curriculum and Instruction	Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education
Education Program Supervisor	Department of Education
Director, Bureau of Learning Delivery	Department of Education
Schools Division Superintendent	Department of Education
Chief Education Supervisor	Department of Education
Portfolio Manager	Australian Embassy – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Senior Economist	World Bank
Senior Education Specialist	Asian Development Bank
Chief of Education	Unicef
Curriculum, Learn and Delivery Advisor	Palladium – Education Pathways to Peace in Mindanao
Director	National Economic and Development Authority
Undersecretary	Central Office