

# THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SHOCKS TO EDUCATION AND POLICY RESPONSES

MAY 2020



WORLD BANK GROUP  
Education



# How the crisis threatens education and human capital

Shocks to education

Even before COVID-19 hit,

**53%**

## Learning Poverty

Share of children worldwide who could not read for meaning by Age 10

With COVID-19,

**85%**

Share of children worldwide affected  
by school closures

1. Short run: Impacts from **school closures**
2. Short and medium run: Impacts from **economic shock**
3. Long run: **Permanent effects** on human capital

# Coping with school closures

## Impacts on **learning**

- Academic learning will largely stop
- Early childhood education and secondary education may suffer most
- Learning inequality will increase as rich families cope better
- Attachment to schooling will fall

**25%**

Of learning is usually lost during the summer (in normal times)

**47%**

Share of people in developing countries who have access to internet

# Coping with school closures

## Impacts on **health and safety**

- Student nutrition and health will be compromised
- Students' mental health will suffer
- Student vulnerability to violence and other threats may increase
- Increase in risky behaviors and adolescent fertility

**368M**

The number of children worldwide who ordinarily receive school meals

# Short-/Medium-run impacts of economic shock

## Impacts on **demand** for education

- Student dropout rates will rise, especially for the most disadvantaged
  - Child labor, child marriage, transactional sex will increase
- Dropout risk will be exacerbated in families hit by COVID
- Households will spend less on education inputs and school fees
- Demand may shift from private to public schools

**16pp**

Decline in the likelihood of girls being enrolled in school after school reopened following the Ebola outbreak

# Short-/Medium-run impacts of economic shock

## Impacts on **supply and quality** of education

- Cuts in education investments could worsen quality
- Teaching quality will suffer
- Supply may contract as private schools close

**4%**

The reduction in U.S. education spending, 2008-11

**28%**

Share of secondary students in low- and middle-income countries who go to private schools

# Long-run negative impacts

## Poorer **education** outcomes

- Learning Poverty will increase

## Lower **human capital**

- Dropout and learning decline will lead to a lifetime of lower productivity and earnings
- This will harm long-run growth and development

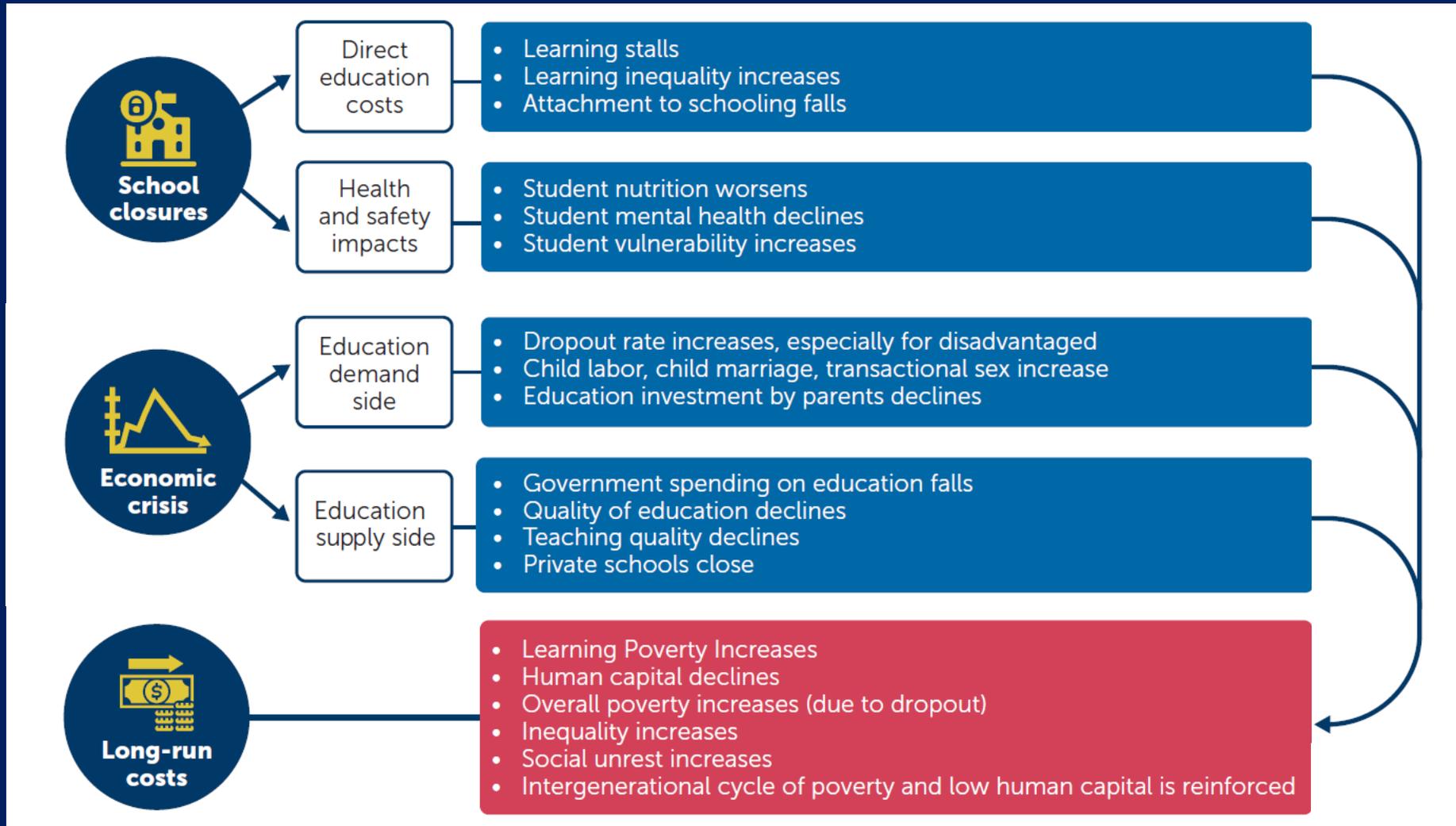
## Increased **inequality of opportunity**

- Impacts will be greatest for poor and marginalized students

## Greater **instability**

- Crime and violence could increase
- Rise in unemployed, out-of-school youth could lead to social unrest

# Shocks to education-related outcomes





# How to protect and accelerate learning

Moving from school closure to new opportunity

# How to respond: Three overlapping phases

**GOAL:** Seize opportunities to make education more inclusive, effective, and resilient than it was before the crisis

## Coping

### While schools are closed:

- Protect health, safety, and nutrition
- Prevent learning loss through remote learning
- Draw on tertiary education

## Managing continuity

### As schools reopen:

- Prevent increase in dropout
- Protect health and safety at school
- Prepare for staggered and partial reopenings
- Prepare teachers to assess learning losses and close learning gaps
- Provide adequate financing for recovery needs, especially for disadvantaged students

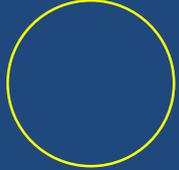
## Improving and accelerating

### Throughout, seize opportunities to improve the system for the long term:

- Scale up effective COVID-response approaches (e.g. incorporate remote learning, teach at the right level, track at-risk students to prevent dropout)
- Focus on creating build-back-better education systems
- Protect and enhance education financing

Recover, but don't replicate  
the pre-COVID status quo

# Coping policies



# Protect health and safety

- **Hygiene** campaigns
- **Maintain school feeding** programs or replace by cash transfers, or direct distribution
- **Outreach** to parents and students
- **Deployment of teachers and use of closed schools** to support these community activities

**Vietnam's National Institute of Occupational and Environmental Health** released a popular PSA to teach people how to wash their hands during the COVID-19 outbreak.



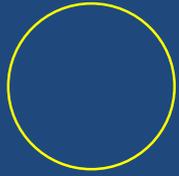
# Prevent learning loss and dropout

- **Communication** campaigns to **prevent dropout** after closures
- Emergency **remote-learning** programs, using multi-platform approaches to ensure equity and inclusion
- Support to **parents and teachers** so they can help children stay engaged
- Keep paying **teachers**, for continuity and fiscal stimulus

**Kenya's remote-learning approach** includes TV, radio, livestream and on-demand content on YouTube, electronic textbooks, and a major effort to expand internet access

# *Example: A day of multiplatform remote learning under the EdoBest program in Edo State (Nigeria)*

8:00 - 8:20	Math Practice using activity pack (distributed via <a href="#">WhatsApp/web</a> )
8:20 - 8:45	Literacy practice using activity pack (distributed via <a href="#">WhatsApp/web</a> )
8:45 - 9:00	Break
9:00 - 11:00	Core interactive <a href="#">radio</a> lesson
11:00 - 11:15	Break
11:15 - 12:00	Lesson directed by family member using <a href="#">digitally distributed lesson guide</a>
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:30	Virtual classroom (student interacting with teacher over <a href="#">WhatsApp</a> )
1:30 - 2:00	Interactive mobile quizzes through <a href="#">WhatsApp</a>
2:00 - 2:30	Independent reading through <a href="#">storybooks</a>

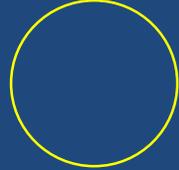
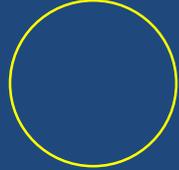
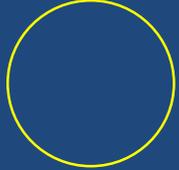


## Draw on tertiary education systems

- 220M **post-secondary students** affected
- Most issues & solutions related to school education will also apply to tertiary
- Tertiary education can also play a major role in **coping and recovery**

In **South Africa**, researchers, professors, and students are coming together to design simple, cost-effective, and scalable solutions to PPE shortages in the continent

# Managing Continuity

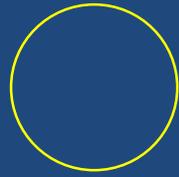
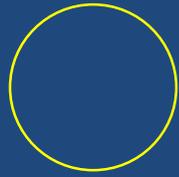
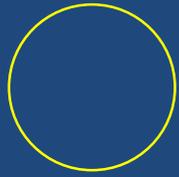
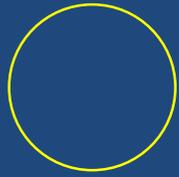


# Prepared learners

## Bring students **back to school** and prepare them

- **Re-enrollment** drives/campaigns
- Tracking and support of **at-risk students**
- **Tuition support, scholarships,** or subsidies (with special focus on at-risk students)
- Ramped-up **school feeding** programs
- **Career guidance** for higher education / TVET school leavers

**Sierra Leone's post-Ebola approach to reenrollment** included the waiving of school fees for two years, plus books, uniforms, and school supplies provided by CSO/NGOs



## Safe & inclusive schools

### Keep all students and the community **safe**

- Enhanced school **sanitation and health** protocols
- Measures to **reduce contact**
- Enhanced **counseling** for students and families dealing with COVID-driven adversity

**Norway's staggered process to reopen schools** includes putting in place stricter sanitation protocols and social distancing practices within schools, more outdoor classes, creation of different school shifts, and reduced number of school days per week



Classrooms equipped for learning

## Teach students at the **right (post-COVID) level**

- Formative **assessments** to assess learning lags
- Pedagogical focus on **learning recovery** and narrowing gaps, esp. in core areas
- Adjustment of **academic calendar** to allow make-up learning time
- Relevant skills: Prioritize training in **skills** needed in post-COVID recovery

**China (provinces of Sichuan and Hainan)** is already preparing post-COVID individualized remedial plans for students with disadvantaged backgrounds

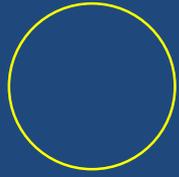
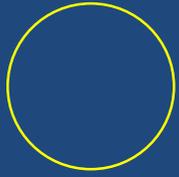


Effective, valued teachers

## Support teachers in **learning recovery**

- Train teachers to **assess** learning lags
- Train teachers to “**teach at the right (post-COVID) level**”
- Guide teachers on **curriculum prioritization**
- Train teachers to identify and support **at-risk students**

**India and Ghana** have successfully implemented TaRL interventions in which government teachers were trained on TaRL methods, resulting in significant learning gains



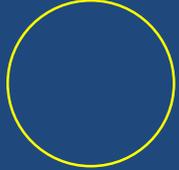
# Well-managed systems

## Manage reentry to lay the foundations for **greater equity and better outcomes**

- Use **data and monitoring** to track reintegration, learning, and health of all students
- Support, promote, and learn from rapid, localized **innovations**
- Provide adequate **financing** to support new recovery needs, especially for disadvantaged students

**In Guinea during the Ebola epidemic**, community watch committees, which included teachers, led both contact tracing and support for affected families

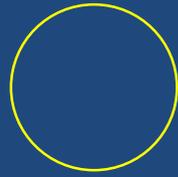
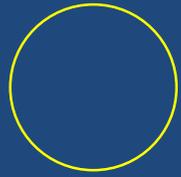
# Improving and Accelerating



# Improve and scale up effective policies

## Sustain, adapt, and improve COVID-response initiatives that worked

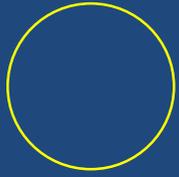
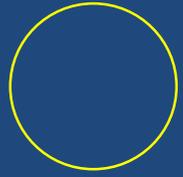
- Teaching at the **right level**
- **Effective uses of technology** in remote-learning systems
- **Early-warning** systems to prevent dropout
- Better **support for parents, teachers, and students**, including socioemotional



# Build-back-better education systems

Reinforce these innovations with **system reforms** for sustained success

- **Assessment and curriculum**
  - Adjustments to high-stakes examinations
  - Curriculum simplification
- Effective **data systems** (e.g. unique student IDs, better use of technology for system management)
- Investments in long-term **resilience** of system, schools, and students



# Protect and enhance education financing

## Provide the **financing** necessary to solidify these improvements

- Ramped-up financing for **front lines** and **areas of greatest need**
- Financing focused on programs that have proven **most effective** during school reentry
- **Safeguarding of overall education spending** to protect and boost human capital

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THANK YOU!

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