THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

Co-sponsored by the Governance and Education Global Practices
ECA Region

EXPECT the UNEXPECTED

Using Scenario Planning for Reopening Schools in Romania

Alberto Leyton, Lead Public Sector Specialist, Governance Global Practice, ECA
Alina Sava, Education Specialist, Education Global Practice, ECA

TODAY'S PURPOSE

- How you can use scenario planning to help governments develop robust strategies for immediate responses or mid-term recovery in times of deep uncertainty?
- How Ministries of Education can effectively co-create solutions with stakeholders across the delivery chain, including frontline staff, students and parents to safely reopen and operate schools?

In June 2020, the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research (MER) was facing a challenging task: **how to bring children back to schools safely in September?**

- Schools had already been closed for 3 months due to Covid-19
- Economy was hit, parents needed to return to work
- … but, Covid-19 cases started to be on a rise again

Would the situation improve? Would kids start getting sick? Was it worth investing into containers? What plan to go for?

Decision-makers around the world: no right set of answers!

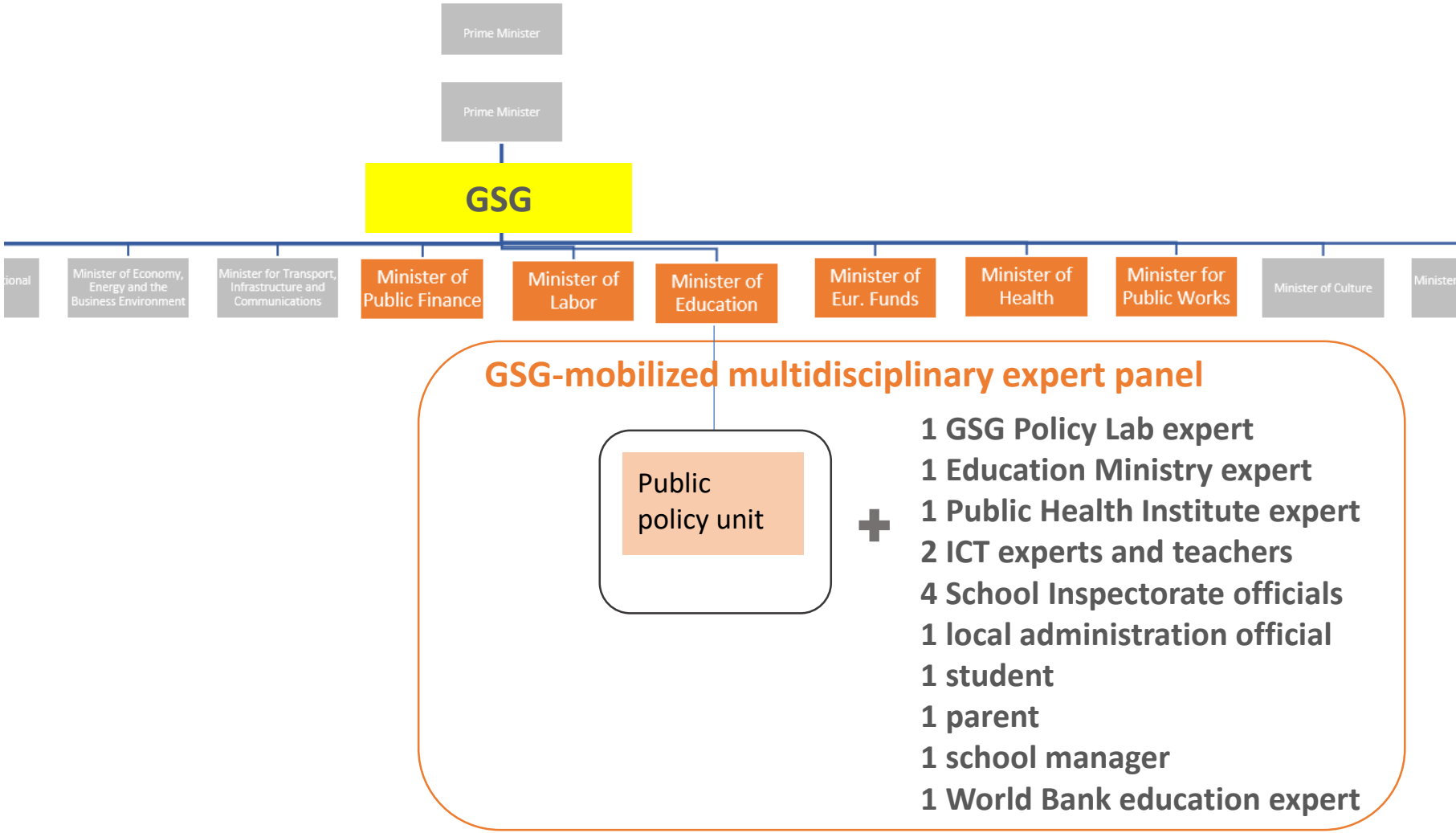
Trade-offs based on country situation

- **1 out of 4 teachers in Romania is not ICT literate**
- More than **900,000 kids do not have access** to a proper learning devices
- Kids and parents also suffer from lack of ICT literacy

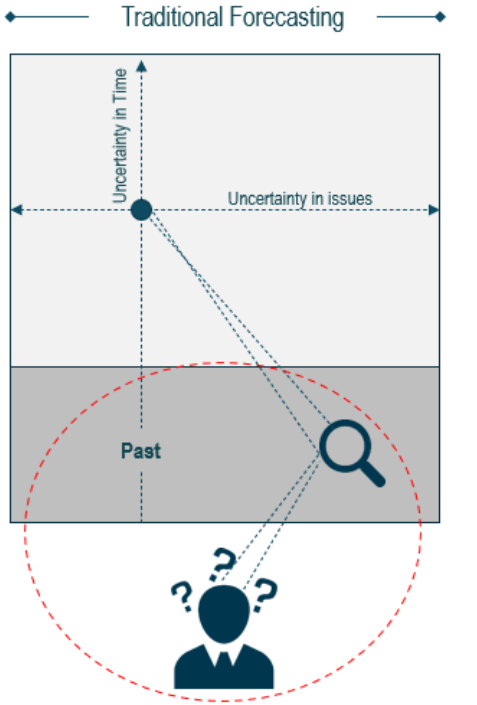
- **30% of schools operate in 2-3 shifts**. Many schools are overcrowded especially in Bucharest.
- **Around 14% of school buildings do not have sanitary authorization**, 22% do not have an adequate water source, and 30% do not have indoor toilets.

Role of the General Secretariat of the Government in responding to the health pandemic

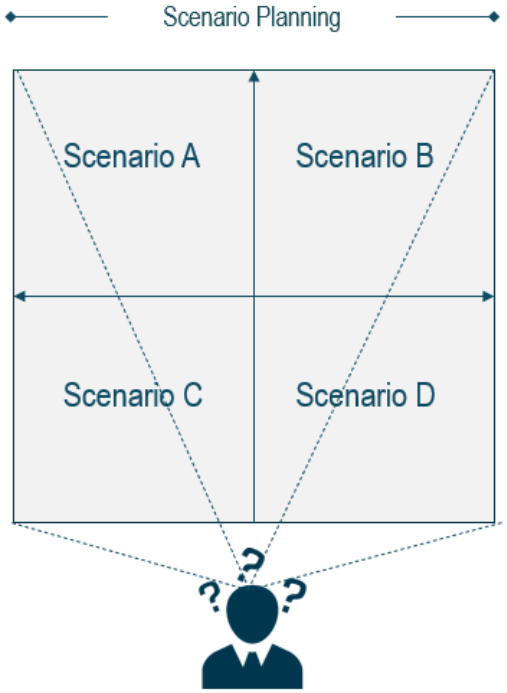
- **GSG: strategic management role**
- **GSG's Policy Lab – space for testing innovations**
- **Pro-active role in mobilizing cross-sectoral evidence into the decision-making of the Education Ministry**



What is scenario planning? How to use it to future-proof your policy?



Extrapolate **from the past** the most impactful trends and relying on the familiar



Identity the **critical uncertainties** and build memories of the future escaping the "official future"

What plan to put in place?

a. **you already have the plan/policy ready and you will be testing it in different scenarios**
b. **you want to use the scenarios to generate ideas for policy options**

Policy options	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Option 1	Robust	Robust	Modify	Robust
Option 2	Redundant	Modify	Redundant	Redundant
Option 3	Robust	Modify	Redundant	Redundant

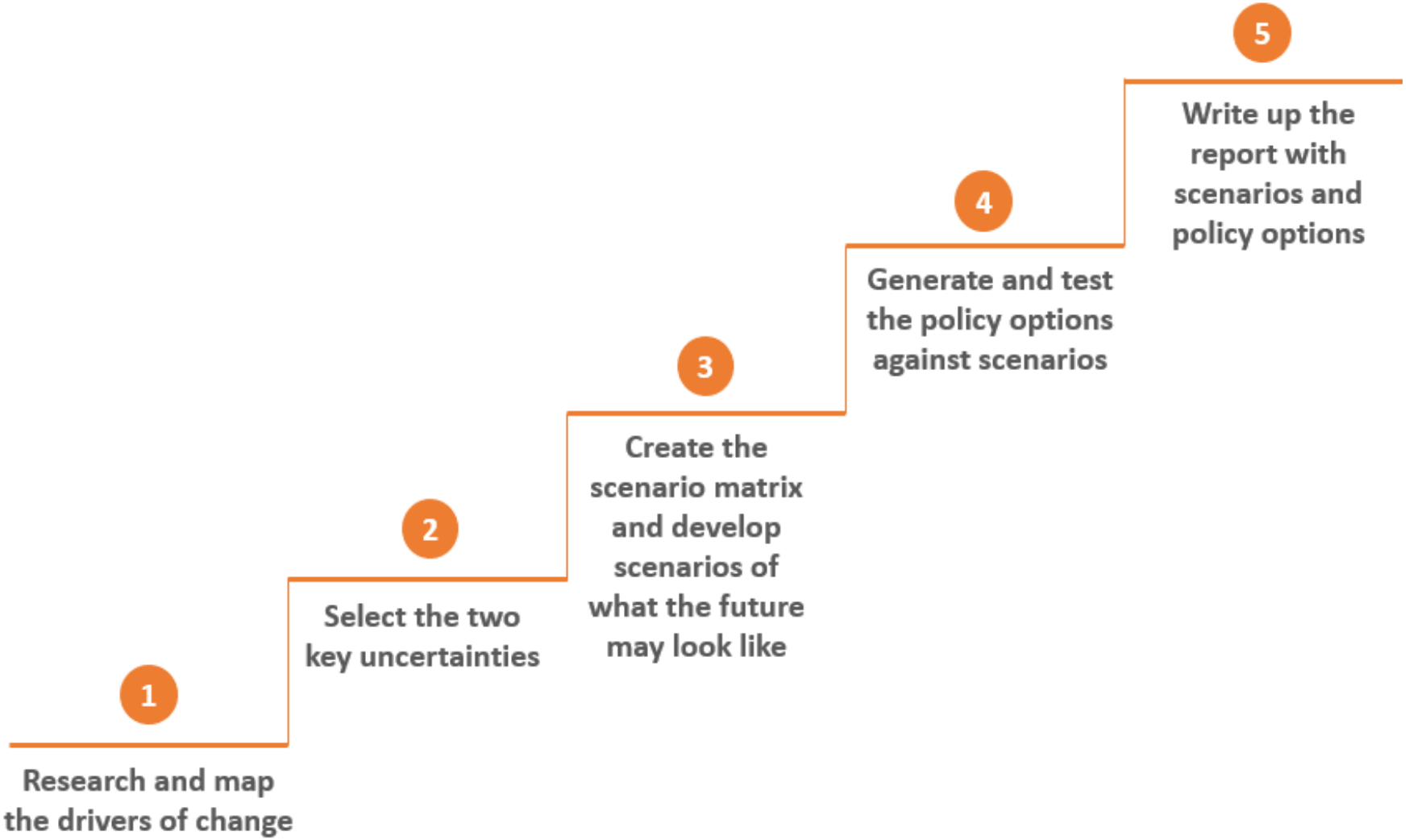
YOUR END PRODUCT

PRIMARY STRATEGY
Composed mainly of the no-regret options

+

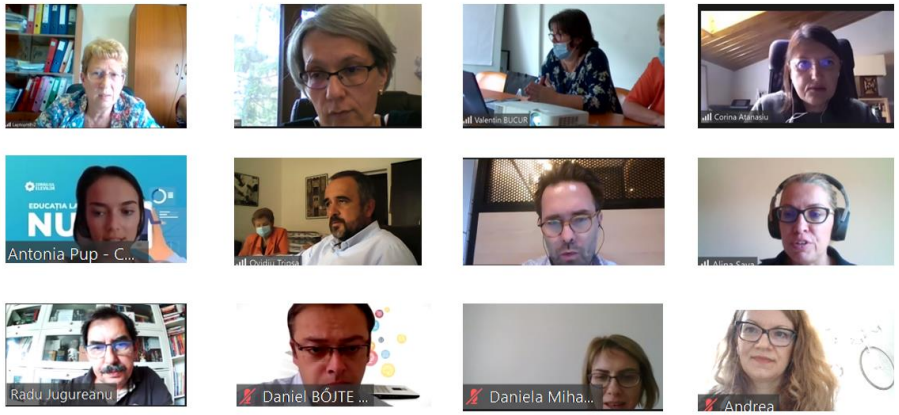
CONTINGENCY STRATEGY
Scenario-specific options that you activate when certain future starts to happen

How do you build the scenarios



We started the process:

expectations were high…



We need **a clear vision** of what needs to be done and the budget. The procurement cannot happen overnight." – *local administration*

" Students need **concrete solutions**, not only the superficial scenarios which were in the media." – *parents*

"We want to benefit from the experience of those who work in schools and inspectorates… to start building on the **alternatives** that we deem **feasible** and **useful**, **based on types of schools**." – *Ministry of Education*

" Romanian students need to feel **safe**. Many want to return to school. - *students*

Public pressure on the Education Ministry to have a plan was mounting

edupedu.ro/scenariile-pentru-redeschiderea-anului-scolar-in-septembrie-propuse-guvernului-de-federatia-parintilor-prezenta-normala-la-scoala-5...

Edupedu

ȘTIRI #SOLIDARITATECOVIDEDU ANALIZE EVALUARE NAȚIONALĂ 2021 BAC 2021 DIGITALTEACH 68K 130

EduPedu.ro este o organizație non-profit și depinde de tine DONEAZĂ

Știri

Anunț p
ministr
școlar!
Trebuie

Autor: Claudi

Ministru

Știri de ultima oră › Educatie › Iohannis: Școala sigur nu va începe în condiții normale

Iohannis: Școala sigur nu va înce

De **Mariana BUTNARIU**
29 iulie 2020

Like 1

Share

facebook.com/RalucaTurcan/photos/a.697643760299980/3195493910514940/?type=1&theater

Raluca Turcan
Like This Page · 25 June ·

Grup de lucru interministerial pentru redeschiderea școlilor în siguranță din septembrie!

La nivelul Guvernului am constituit un grup de lucru pentru a pregăti școlile și universitățile în vederea începerii activităților educaționale din toamnă. Pentru a aduce elevii, studenții și profesorii în siguranță în sălile de cursuri și cămine este nevoie de un efort comun, al mai multor ministere și inst...
See more

1.3K 240 comments 42 shares

Like Comment Share

Most relevant

Haralambie Baloi

Write a comment...

zf.ro/eveniment/ludovic-orban-da-asigurari-privind-noul-an-scolar-suntem-pregatiti-19447858

Ludovic Orban dă asigurări privind noul an școlar: Suntem pregătiți să asigurăm reluarea anului școlar, indiferent de situația epidemiologică

Îmi place Distribuie Tweet Share Print Mail

abonează-te la ZF e-paper

caută în site

Caută doar în titlu

Săptămâna trecută, premierul Ludovic Orban îi avertiza pe cei din domeniul educației să fie pregătiți să înceapă cursurile doar online.

Pe de altă parte, ministrul Sănătății, Nelu Tătaru, declara luni seara că decizia va fi luată în funcție de evaluările fiecărei etape. De asemenea, acesta a declarat că există un grup de lucru, o comisie mixtă la nivelul Ministerului Educaţiei, condusă de Raluca Turcan, care se ocupă cu gestionarea măsurilor de reîncepere a noului an școlar.

How we built scenarios for reopening schools

1

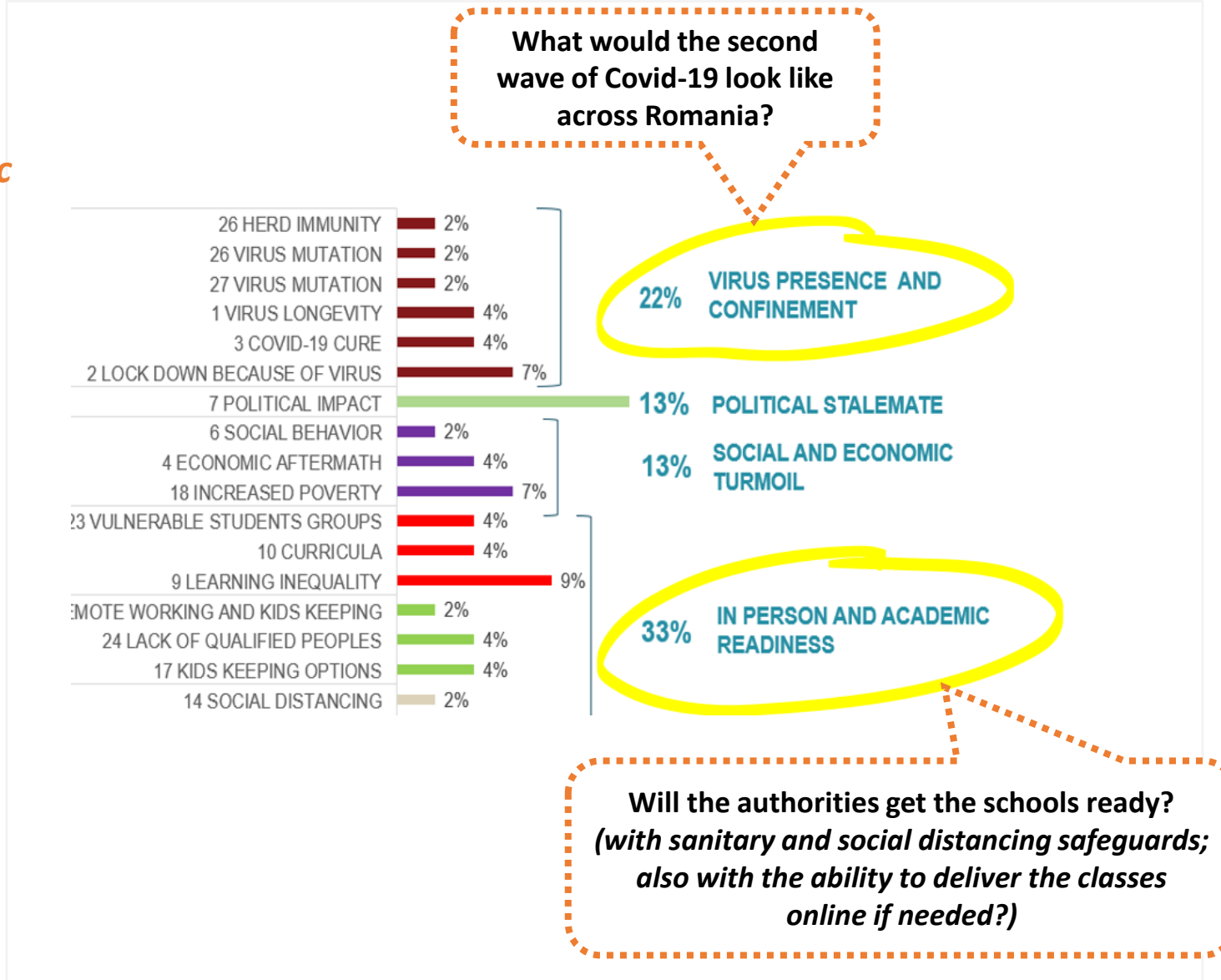
We started with the **assignment** from the MEC, to imagine

"What would the start of the academic year look like in September 2020 for primary and secondary students in urban and rural areas?"

The expert panel identified **27 trends impacting positively or negatively on school reopening.**

2

The expert panel voted on the **two key uncertainties**, as the most significant and at the same time uncertain trends in terms of how they would play out.



How we built scenarios for reopening schools

3

Scenario matrix: combinations of the alternatives of the two key uncertainties:

- *schools are ready/not ready;*
- *the second wave of Covid-19 is marked by its presence/the second wave is strong and leads to school/city/region or whole-country lockdowns).*

3

For each scenario, the experts created a catchy title, a picture, and a story depicting the future in fall 2020 if this scenario were to materialize.

Specific personas (a teacher, parent, student, and how their lives would be impacted in each of the scenarios) were included.

Maria, 50

Primary school teacher, Piatra Neamt

September 2020

I have 38 children in my class. It is not possible to bring them all to school, because the number of Covid-19 cases keeps rising here. I am trying to teach some classes online, but it is really hard with the small children. I feel that I am not giving them any skills, in particular in such an important time in their early development.

Even with some children staying at home, the school still feels overcrowded. There are no masks for teachers or students, there are no sanitary gels at the already poorly looking toilets.

I have a computer at home and can access digital materials, but preparing the online classes is such a burden. I am not very good with the computer or speaking on the camera. So I fear someone could record me and post it online.

I feel truly abandoned during this period. I try to talk to my colleagues to get some emotional support, but there are days when I am also thinking of quitting my job. Some colleagues my age got sick, so why take the risk.

Alina, 17

Highschool student, Iasi

September 2020

I am a 11th grader in a central high school in Iași and I just stepped in this new learning journey: being a high school student in COVID-19 era. I have to tell you I was very scared at first, but now I see it as a challenge for me to rediscover the beauty of learning.

I wake up everyday at 7:00 - now I can sleep more because the municipality has put in place new means of transportation that are special for the school students. We now have free transportation and new buses that are clean. The buses are used only for our transportation to our schools. Everyone has its seat and the bus doors are covered with posters through which you can learn more about the measures for protection against COVID-19.

There are some downsides, of course. Our classes are now smaller, they became learning groups that are half the size they used to be. I miss having all my friends around, but at least we can all be together at the online lessons in the afternoon. In the morning, we are at school doing exercises and talking with the teacher about our needs and in the afternoon we learn what we were supposed to learn in springtime, when schools were closed. It is not boring at all because we use interactive videos and we debate a lot through media channels.

I love taking notes using my new laptop. Everyone in my class has one and we have new folders for every school subject. The teachers can review our homework and grade it directly through the platform.

The Plan…

4 Plan for reopening schools co-created in scenario workshops

GUIDING PRINCIPALS

1. Control of the infection spread in the community
2. Young children and children with special needs need face-to-face courses
3. Need to comply with Public Health institute recommendations
4. Compensate for learning loss and support vulnerable

STRATEGIC OPTIONS for learning approach

A. IN-PERSON

all children,
physical distancing (1.5 m)
one shift, staggered program
shorter time in school
1 student group = 1 classroom

B. HYBRID

secondary level students rotate at 1 or 2 weeks,
webcam in the class

C. ONLINE

connectivity, devices, affordability, education content, mode of delivery

PLAN

1. **Immediate steps for reopening**
2. **Recommendations for mid-term plan** *(resilient, fair, high-quality education system)*

4 One size does not fit all – flexibility of the approach

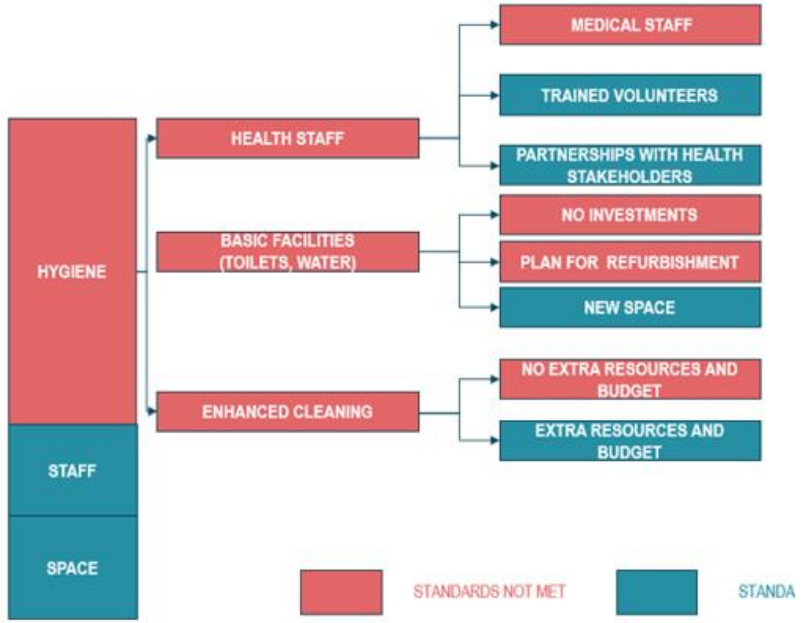
STANDARDS: IN-PERSON LEARNING

- ❑ Do your classrooms have a physical distance of 1.5m between students? (in classroom of 50 sqm up to 25 students (2.25 sqm for each child to ensure 1.5m spacing)
- ❑ Are the classes taught in 1 shift? (1 class of students = 1 classroom)
- ❑ Is the triage at school performed mainly by specialized medical staff or qualified volunteer replacements?
- ❑ Does your school have adequate toilets and dispensers with hand sanitizer: sufficient washbasins inside and outside the school building?
- ❑ Is the school attendance limited to 6 hours, with delayed schedule for coming to and leaving?
- ❑ Is at least one of the hours held outdoors?
- ❑ Do you ensure the classrooms are regularly aired (by opening windows)?
- ❑ Do your staff and students (except for preschoolers) wear a mask and do you ensure the rule is observed?

STANDARDS: DIGITAL LEARNING

- ❑ Do all children have adequate digital devices for a quality online educational process (chromebooks or laptops), with special attention to the vulnerable groups?
- ❑ Did all your teachers attend a digital skills course of at least 2-3 weeks before the reopening of schools and have a suitable digital device for use at home and in the classroom?
- ❑ Is adequate communication infrastructure (minimum 4G LTE) installed in all classrooms?
- ❑ Are all classrooms equipped with interactive display with webcam and the possibility of live
- ❑ Are e-learning platforms and tool Management System, Authoring t
- ❑ Is the digital content for all subjec language of national minorities, a medium term)?
- ❑ Is the digital content elaborated a curriculum and audited by the Mi
- ❑ Are all teachers and students trai and devises? Are parents instruct

"My school does not meet the **hygienic standards** to open. What should I do?"



4 Plan for reopening schools co-created in scenario workshops

SHORT-TEM MEASURES (in-person/hybrid/digital)

[excerpt]

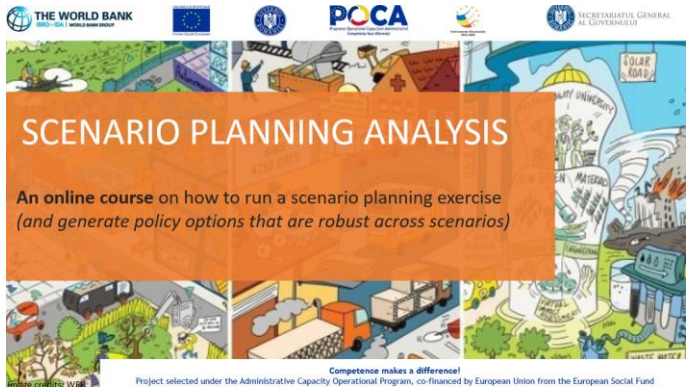
Actions	In-person	Hybrid	Online
• Assess school readiness to reopen using the updated SIIIR data (next school year) on enrollments, school infrastructure, utilities and facilities (school capacity, room area, sanitary conditions, etc.)	X	X	X
• Adapt the school program for one shift only	X	X	
• Organize corridors, signal and mark spaces for physical distancing	X	X	
• Organize the space to ensure triage and hygienic-sanitary measures	X	X	
• Arrange the furniture, determine the place of each student	X	X	
• Inform parents about the new rules and ask for agreement to bring children to school	X	X	
• Purchase temporary solutions located in the school yard or rent spaces in appropriate buildings with adequate furniture to accommodate additional classrooms	X	X	
• Provide each school with specialized staff and equipped medical offices, adequate triage spaces and sanitary and additional spaces where appropriate, including for children with disabilities;	X	X	
• Recruit additional teaching staff (fixed-term employment) to ensure traditional and online teaching, and support and administrative staff (cleaning, maintenance, mediators, counselors, caregivers)	X	X	
• Monitor teaching activities in the classroom, student and teacher attendance	X	X	
• Monitor, through SIIIR, all COVID cases for both students and teachers	X	X	

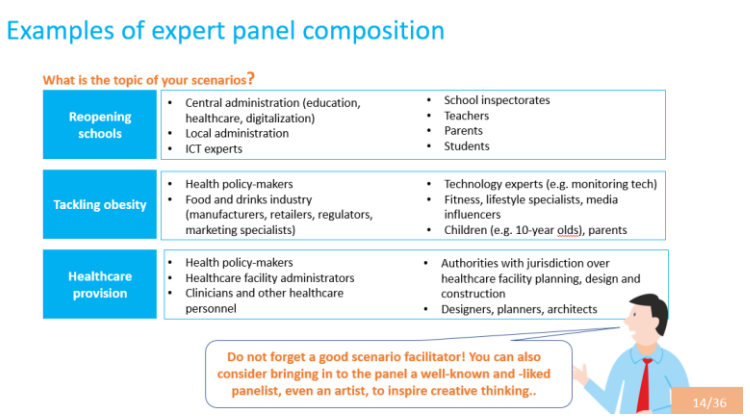
MEDIUM-TERM MEASURES

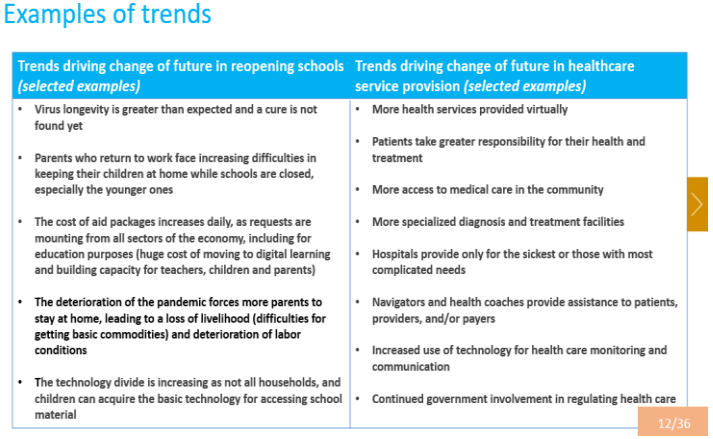
- Increase education budget
- Greater autonomy to principals in the use of resources
- Retrofit school buildings at seismic risk
- Use modular space where needed
- Modernize school buildings
- Foster positive school climate

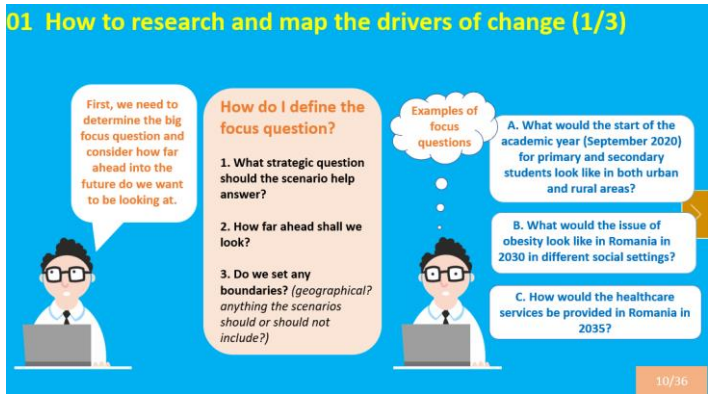
GSG and Education Ministry experts got certified in running a scenario planning exercise

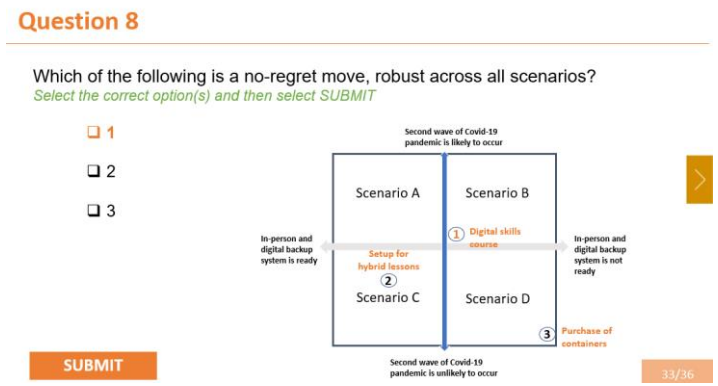
Online course and experiential learning











So, which of the futures took place?

Were the authorities ready?

Education and health authorities issued guidelines for reopening

- The recommendations of the scenario panel were taken into consideration, further expanded with details for operationalization at different levels of schools *(few exceptions, e.g. social distancing for 1m vs. the 1.5 recommended; or using plexiglass vs. reducing the number of shifts or pupils per class).*

Epidemiological triggers:

Risk level	Number of new Covid-19 cases in locality	Learning approach
GREEN	Less than 1 case per 1000 inhabitants in 14 days	**IN-PERSON** for all students - *physical distancing (1 m between desks)* - *splitting classes, staggered program,* - *shorter time at schools* - *assigned seats*
YELLOW	1-3 cases per 1000 inhabitants in 14 days	**HYBRID** - kindergarten/primary: open - 8th and 12th grade will go to school - Secondary students rotate 1-3 weeks - Webcam in class
RED	More than 3 cases per 1000 inhabitants in 14 days	**ONLINE** only. Schools will be closed.

Governance of application of the guidelines

Ministry of Education and Research (MER) and Ministry of Health (MH) guidelines

↓

School Boards in consultation with Association of Parents propose the learning approach

→

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- ❑ Number of shifts at school
- ❑ Number of students in class
- ❑ Hygiene and sanitary conditions
- ❑ School transportation
- ❑ Number of Covid-19 cases in community
- ❑ Medical cabinet at school
- ❑ Students' access to IT equipment, connectivity
- ❑ Teachers' access to IT equipment, connectivity
- ❑ Additional spaces provided by local authorities and others
- ❑ IT specialist at school
- ❑ Online teaching resources

↓

MER endorses

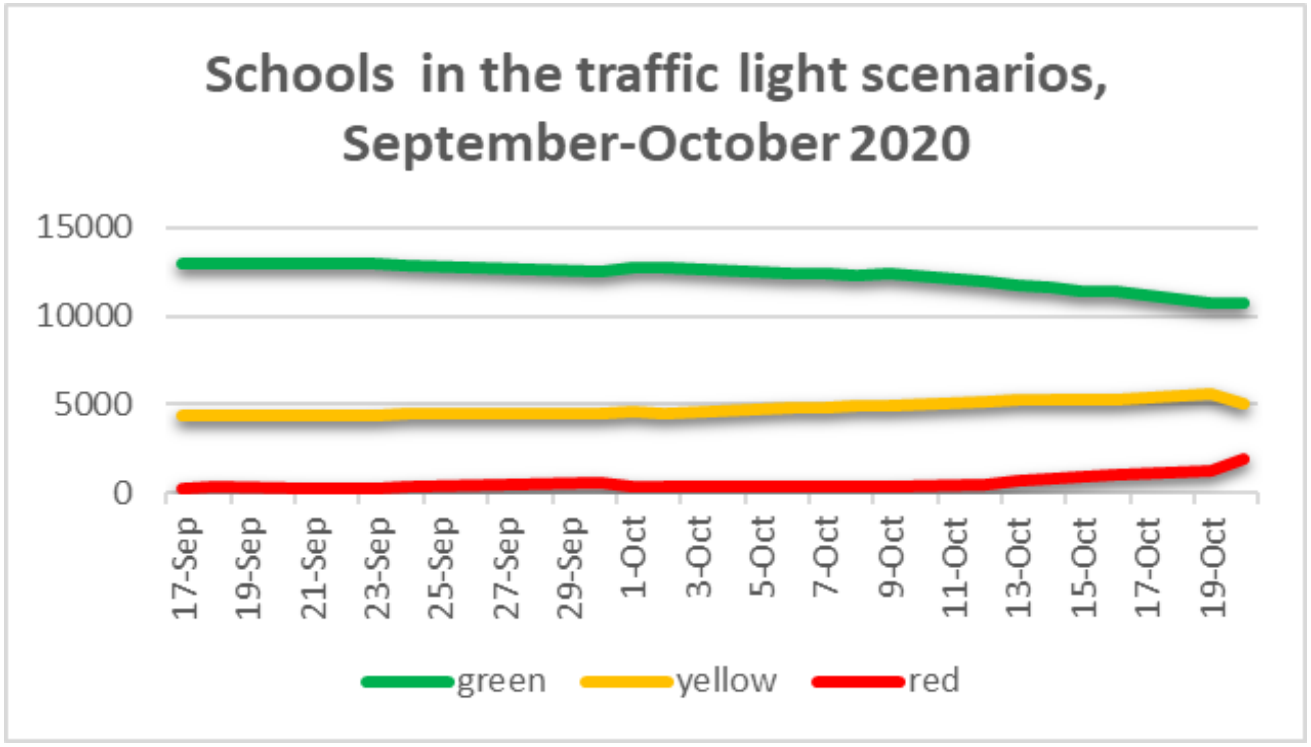
↓

County Committee for Emergencies approves

Other standards:

- wearing masks (not for preschoolers)
- uniflow on halls
- staggered program
- assigned seats
- bubble groups
- 1 meter rule
- cleaning between shifts
- hand-sanitizers
- free testing is provided for teachers and students in Bucharest

While most school reopened with in-person attendance, the number of those closing is rising

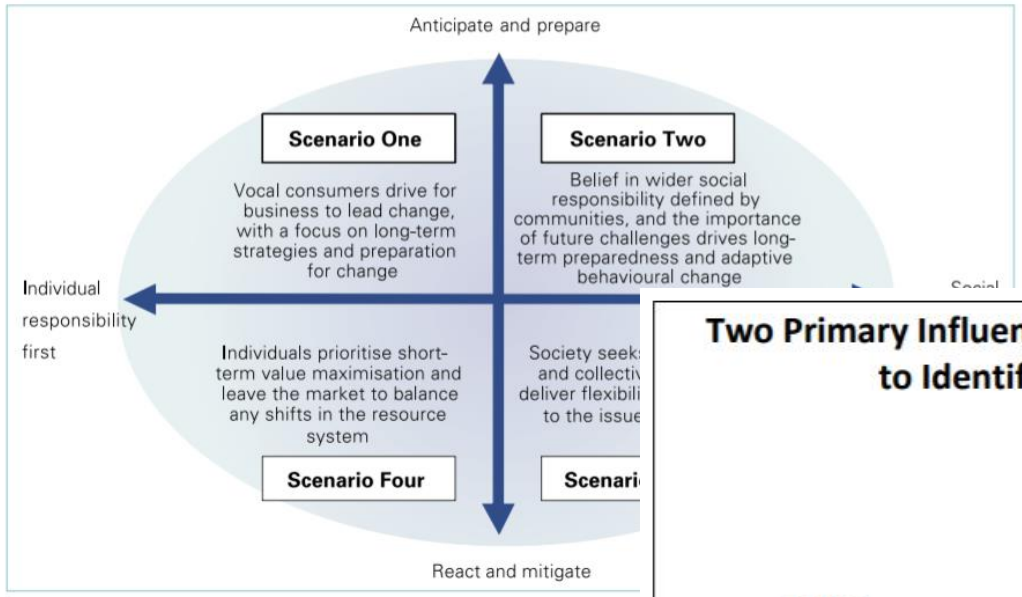


Scenario/ schools	17-Sep	1-Oct	20-Oct
green	**12981**	**12704**	**10736**
yellow	**4375**	**4608**	**5031**
red	**300**	**344**	**1889**
Standards not met in schools	300	151	284
Due to the rate of infection in localities	0	193	1605

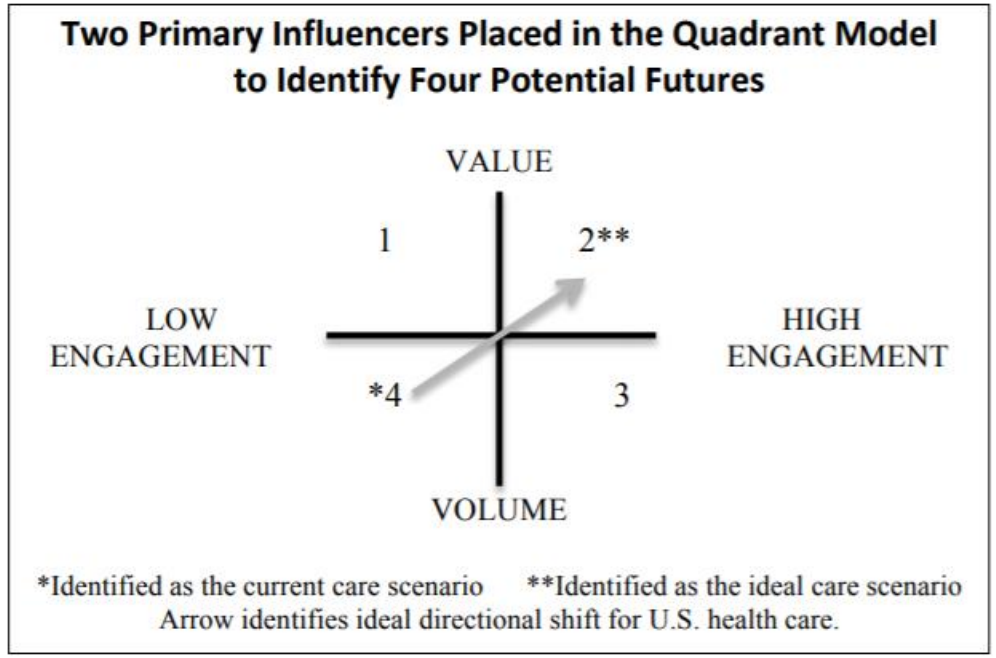
Conclusion: What this means moving forward?

Going forward: Recovery plans – using scenario planning to navigate future opportunities for reform in times of deep uncertainty

- Scenario planning typically used for planning 10+ years ahead
- Replicability in various sectors
- Scenario planning – short-term horizon: **1 month** to produce
- Scenario planning – mid/long-term time horizon: **4 months** to produce
- Doable fully online



Source: UK Tackling obesity - future choices, 2007.



Source: Future of healthcare using scenario planning, FGI, 2018.

Thank you for your attention!