



VI. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND INVESTMENTS

Decisions to reopen largely depend on the capacity of schools to obtain or mobilize **budgets and acquire resources** needed to activate hygiene and sanitation protocols to ensure health and safety, as well as build the capacity of teachers to provide inclusive, quality learning. Creating **budgets earmarked for the COVID-19 response** should be a joint process between schools, which understand the needs on the ground, and the competent education authorities, which may be able to provide access to additional financing. In cases where schools have limited budgets and resources at their disposal, creative problem solving can help to mitigate shortages and facilitate resource acquisition.

Guiding questions for school leaders

Budgeting

Have you considered:

- identifying the school’s priorities based on social dialogue, teachers’ concerns, learners and the community which are achievable to inform budgeting decisions?
- costing the measures required to prepare for an inclusive, safe and healthy school reopening that offers quality teaching and learning?
- reviewing your budget to determine whether or not you can cover the following essential areas:
 - compliance with hygiene and sanitation protocols – i.e. costs needed to reconfigure classrooms, purchase essential supplies (PPE, soap, gel, toilet paper), and upgrade toilet and sanitation facilities?
 - staff salaries?
 - additional staff time and additional personnel to cover the teaching workload during the return to school?
 - psychological and socio-emotional support, training and preparation for staff?

- additional support and resources for the most vulnerable and at-risk learners?

- In the event of a budget shortfall in any of these essential areas, securing additional funding from local and central authorities, non-governmental organisations, the community, and family members; reprioritizing your spending plans; or accessing savings from utilities, transportation and supplies during lockdown?

- If no, are you expected to channel your existing funds to public health measures?

- If no, does your school have savings from utilities, transportation and supplies during the school closures that can be reallocated to priority areas including PPE, extra staffing costs and training?

- If no, will families be expected to contribute?

- reviewing school supply chains to ensure these can operate safely following reopening?

Collective resource mobilization

Have you considered:

- speaking with local, district or central authorities about your budgeting needs?

- consulting with local associations, health clinics, NGOs and potential partners in the business community to assess how they could support the return-to-school effort through monetary donations; the supply of sanitation materials and PPE; teaching and learning or other resources?

- exploring possibilities for the school to cooperate with local counselling networks and organizations to provide psychological and socio-emotional support for teachers and learners? **(see also Section III)**

- exploring possibilities for cooperation with local organizations to ensure that social safety nets are in place for vulnerable learners returning to the classroom (e.g., through food voucher schemes, access to food pantries, take-home rations)? (see also Section III)

- exploring possibilities for partnering with local CSOs, NGOs, and the business community to lessen the burden on households with students continuing to learn remotely (e.g. free Internet vouchers, computer grants/ loans)?

- where insufficient internet connectivity and devices exist, preparing an emergency plan to ensure continued access for distance learning in the case of future school closures and learning disruptions.



Tips

Business and financial management. Explore different ways of managing school finances as schools reopen. See the checklist in this [Opportunity International handbook](#).

Identify priorities. The COVID-19 crisis and return to school could provide opportunities to put into action a number of highly relevant and desired projects to improve the school's context and resources. However, it is necessary to ensure that priorities (in particular health and safety issues) are covered first before issues that are not considered essential to the COVID-19 response.

Engage stakeholders. Engage stakeholders in assessing additional financial needs. Communicate the financial needs of the school transparently to key stakeholders and potential partners to collectively assess and prioritize the needs. Then engage them in financial planning. The earlier they are engaged in the process, the more likely that they will support the resource mobilization efforts.

Focus on efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. Facing the unprecedented challenge, speed may be prioritized. But efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are critically important to ensure sustainability of the interventions.



Resources & further reading

- [COVID-19 and the world of work: Impact and policy responses](#), International Labour Organization, 2020
- [Pathways to reopening](#), Opportunity International
- [Anticipated impact of COVID-19 on public expenditures on education and implication for UNESCO work](#), Issue note 7.2, UNESCO, 2020
- [The impact of the crisis on public expenditure on education: findings from the UNESCO quick survey](#), UNESCO, 2009
- [Mobilizing resources for education and improving spending effectiveness](#), World Bank Group, 2019
- [The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education financing](#), World Bank Group, 2020
- [The COVID-19 pandemic: Shocks to education and policy responses](#), World Bank Group, 2020