



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORT
TIMOR-LESTE**

COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN



MAY 2020

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ACRONYMS

ACETL	Acção Conjunta da Educação em Timor-Leste
BEST	Basic Education Strengthening and Transformation Project
CMRT	COVID-19 Response Management Team
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DFAT	Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DP	Development Partner
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EMULI	Edukasaun Multilingue (Multi-Language Education)
ESP	Education Sector Plan
GoTL	Government of Timor-Leste
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HANDS	Halimar, Aprende No Descobre Suceso Pre-school Programme
IIEP	International Institute of Education Planning
INFORDEPE	Instituto Nacional de Formação de Docentes e Profissionais da Educação (<i>National Institute for Training of Teachers and Education Professionals</i>)
LEG	Local Education Group
LMS	Learning Management System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCRP	Ministry COVID 19 Response Plan
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
PHD	Partnership for Human Development
TA	Technical Assistance
TWG	Technical Working Group
UCN	National Curriculum Unit
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WinS	WASH in Schools



VIII GOVERNO CONSTITUCIONAL
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO, JUVENTUDE E DESPORTO
GABINETE MINISTRA DA EDUCAÇÃO JUVENTUDE E DESPORTO

FOREWORD

Across the globe the COVID -19 emergency caught many countries by surprise. Although by early March Timor-Leste had begun to implement a COVID prevention strategy, the sudden announcement of a positive case on the 20th of March, 2020, forced the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport to make some hard and swift decisions. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Timor-Leste education sector is now serious. All schools are closed, and most public servants, including teachers, are confined to their homes. Our Ministry has in ‘normal’ times been gradually improving the range and quality of services expected for a national education system. However, the current situation instigated by the threat of the virus is placing the Ministry under enormous pressure to provide continuous learning opportunities for students during the closure, especially for our most vulnerable children, as well as to prepare adequately for the safe re-opening of schools.

I am very proud of how our Ministry officials here in Dili and in the municipalities, our teachers and our students, are all working together to meet this challenge. We are a unified front against this national threat.

The Ministry of Education Youth and Sport has prepared this COVID-19 Response Plan to ensure that children are protected and safe during the emergency, are able to continue with their education during this period of school closure, and are successfully reintegrated and caught up once face-to-face learning resumes.

Though this plan was developed within a very short period of time, the Ministry still managed to prepare it through a participatory and consultative process involving core educational stakeholders, particularly members of our Local Education Group - *Ação Conjunta da Educação em Timor-Leste (ACETL)*. For their generous and tireless support we are always most grateful, but especially during this difficult time I, on behalf of the Ministry, would like to extend special thanks to the rapid and dedicated response from each and every one of them. We are truly blessed to have such a strong and committed group of development partners, and we are proud of the exemplary collaboration between all stakeholders to successfully and efficiently complete the elaboration of this Plan.

Working together we will survive these troubled times and be stronger in the future. We now have a Plan that will help us get there and a strong commitment from all involved to ensure its effective and coordinated implementation.


S.E Dulce de Jesus Soares
Minister of Education Youth and Sport

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This Ministry COVID 19 Response Plan outlines the necessary actions required for our country's education sector to respond appropriately to the threat from the Covid 19 pandemic.

The overall goal of the Response Plan is to ensure that children continue with their education during the period of school closure and are supported to successfully reintegrate and catch-up on learning once schools reopen. Wherever feasible, there should be continuity between their previous learning in school and their current learning at home, to better ensure a smooth transition when schools are eventually re-opened. Achievement of the goal is defined by three main outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** All children have access to continuing educational opportunities including those with disabilities and from marginalized communities.
- **Outcome 2:** Adequate preparedness measures are in place to allow schools to open safely both from a physical and a psychosocial point of view
- **Outcome 3:** The capacity for the education system to respond to emergencies is strengthened.



Response Plan is to ensure that children continue with their education during the period of school closure and are supported to successfully reintegrate and catch-up on learning once schools reopen.

The Output Areas and activities required to achieve these outcomes are explained later in this Ministry COVID 19 Response Plan and in more detail in a Costed Implementation Plan in Chapter Three.

While, across the globe, the COVID-19 emergency caught many countries by surprise. Timor-Leste moved swiftly in its reactions to the pandemic by announcing a state of emergency through a Presidential Decree Law on 27th March and the following day passing a Government decree law operationalizing the state of emergency Measures taken included restriction of movement, compulsory 14-day quarantine for those possibly exposed, and practicing good hygiene and social distancing at home or work. It also involved school closures, which meant that nearly 400,000 school children suddenly found themselves out of school. The same decree law stated that education should continue *através dos meios de informação e de comunicação*” (through modalities of information and communication). An Inter-Ministerial Commission was formed shortly after and is coordinating efforts and providing broadly-based guidance.



Prior to this, in anticipation of school closure, a Ministry of Education Contingency Plan for COVID-19 had been drafted on 23rd February (MEYS, 2020). It gives guidance on relevant precautionary behavior, including advice on personal hygiene, handwashing and social distancing and isolation. It also anticipated the need for flexible education delivery systems, such as distance learning. Work had already started on some of these activities. This Ministry COVID 19 Response Plan replaces the earlier Contingency Plan.

The budget available to MEYS is insufficient to fund the Ministry COVID 19 Response Plan to mitigate the current crisis and manage its aftermath. The GoTL has made requests to a number of development partners, including the governments of Australia, New Zealand and Cuba, for additional help and has re-allocated some of its own budget to help with activities related to the pandemic. The government is also making some

money available for ministries most likely to be seriously affected by the crisis. However, research tells us that the longer children (especially the most vulnerable) are out of school, the less likely they are to return. Therefore, timely action is critically important.

On 1st April, the Global Partnership for Education approved US 250 million dollars for 67 developing countries (including Timor-Leste) to assist them with the immediate and longer-term disruptions caused by the pandemic. A proposal to apply for \$5 million to support the activities of the Ministry COVID 19 Response Plan (hereafter, the Response Plan or Plan) will be submitted in early May 2020.

The first outline of the Response Plan and agreement to submit a proposal for GPE funding was discussed on 16th April at meeting between the Ministry and Development Partners at the Local Education Group (LEG): *Acção Conjunta da Educação em Timor-Leste* (ACETL) who endorsed the overall concept. UNICEF was approved as the Grant Agent for an GPE support. Partners were also asked to signal where they might be able to contribute to the Plan. At a further meeting of the ACETL the Response Plan outcomes, outputs and activities were discussed, and it was endorsed in principal that this would be the supporting document in a funding proposal to GPE.



CHAPTER 2: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The population of 1,321,929 is predominantly young, with over 40% aged 14 years and under (World Bank, 2018). The dependency ratio is therefore high at nearly 67% (ibid.). The country is divided administratively into 12 municipalities (formerly districts) and one autonomous administrative region.

Timor-Leste is primarily a cash economy with most of the population engaged in government work or agriculture. The private sector is expanding but still quite weak; providing only about 60,000 jobs. About 41% of the population live below the poverty line. Timor-Leste is highly dependent on its hydrocarbon sector. The petroleum fund, derived from the revenues of past petroleum projects, provides around 90 percent of Timor-Leste's yearly budget.

Education System

Timor-Leste's education system is made up of two to three years of pre-primary, nine years of compulsory basic education and three years of Secondary, divided into general secondary and secondary technical.

Pre-school education is divided into Group A for 4-year olds and Group B for 5-year olds, but children can enter nursery-level pre-school at the age of 3 years. (GoTL 2008, 2015). Basic Education has three cycles. Cycle 1 consists of 4 years, for pupils aged 6 to 9 on entry to Grades 1 through 4. Cycle 2 is for two years; Grades 5 and 6 for pupils aged 10 and 11 on entry. Cycle 3 is 3 years of schooling for pupils aged 12 to 14 on entry to Grades 7, 8 and 9 respectively.

		Type of Education		
Progression	Age	Grade	National Examinations	
	17	12	Secondary Education	
	16	11	General	Technical
	15	10		
			National Examinations	
	14	9	Basic Education (Compulsory)	
	13	8	3 rd Cycle	
	12	7		
	11	6		
	10	5	2 nd Cycle	
	9	4	Basic Education (Compulsory)	
	8	3	1 st Cycle	
	7	2		
	6	1		
	5	B	Pre-School Education	
4	A	Group A/B		

Figure 1. System of education in Timor-leste

Secondary education is divided into: Secondary General, in preparation for university; and, Secondary Technical, consisting of vocational preparation for the work force.

Basic education accounts for 78% of the entire system in terms of both student and teacher numbers and is the area where public sector investment has been concentrated. (GoTL, 2020d). However, high repetition rates remain a problem even in the early grades, where progression is supposed to be based entirely on age; not performance evaluation. Timor-Leste is committed to the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, wherein Article 28 guarantees the right to education for all children (United Nations, 1989).

Teacher Workforce

Teacher quality is variable. Pre-service education is provided through the national university, but the curriculum is highly theoretical. A large number of teachers received their Bacharelato, the minimum qualification to allow them to teach in the schools of Timor, through equivalence programs. Although there are plans for cluster-based professional development, in-service teacher training currently uses a face-to-face model. Anecdotally, the style of teaching is very teacher-centered, and teachers are generally unfamiliar with open, distance and flexible modalities in either child learning or teacher training. There is, however, little in the way of evidence for what is happening in the classroom or related to the characteristics of those teaching in schools. The only systematic testing that has been done of teachers was in Portuguese language proficiency. The comprehensive results were discouraging; in 2019, of 13,232 teachers tested, 79% were graded at an elementary level. (ESP, 2020)



Language

The language of instruction is Tetun supported by mother tongue in the pre-school years. The first years of Cycle 1 are also in Tetun with a gradual move to Portuguese by the end of Year 3. Scripted lesson plans are used to help teachers who have difficulties with the language.

Edukasaun Multilinge (EMULI) or Multilingual Education is a program which sits under Inclusive Education within the MEYS. EMULI started as a pilot program in 2012 in three languages, Baikeno, Fataluku and Galolen allowing for children in these speech communities to begin their learning in their mother tongue. End-line testing in November 2015 compared the results on EGRA and Classroom Based Assessments between this program, the standard classes (Tetun and Portuguese) and the CAFÉ (Portuguese) schools. The results indicated that the pilot program was very successful in helping children to acquire literacy, numeracy and other key skills. EMULI has continued in these three languages and MEYS is now committed to extending it into other schools in the same municipalities, with future plans to include other languages and thereby guarantee quality Education for ALL.

Potential Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

With relatively few cases reported so far, the trajectory of the pandemic in Timor-Leste is not yet calculable. However, the Health sector is already known to be seriously under-resourced with only 59 hospital beds for 10,000 people (World Health Organization) and it is sure to be overwhelmed if the virus takes hold. Similarly, the economy will very likely be hit hard by a drop in oil prices, reduction in visitors and a shrinking private sector.

As is the case everywhere, the social costs of the declaration of the state of emergency also come at a price with the poor particularly disadvantaged. Social distancing may also put women at girls at greater risk of violence in the home. (Chen, 2020)

However, the government has given each household \$15 in electricity credits. In addition, each household will get \$100 per month.



Mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Education

Timor-Leste's MEYS reacted swiftly to the COVID-19 virus. In mid-March 2020, a rapid assessment of the preparedness of pre-schools to deal with the virus was undertaken for all pre-schools in Timor-Leste (HANDS/MEYS, 2020). The assessment covered WASH facilities, pre-school cleanliness, knowledge of both teachers and communities about the symptoms of the virus, how to prevent its spread, as well as their attitudes toward the virus generally.

The original intention to conduct similar assessments for the other sub-sectors was forestalled on 27th March 2020, when the state of emergency was announced (GoTL, 2020a). This announcement was followed the next day by Governmental Decree Law no.3 2020 (2020b), which suspended face-to-face schooling. The Decree Law stipulated that the teaching-learning process was to continue through the modalities of information and communication technology (*deve promover-se a continuação do processo de Ensino-aprendizagem através dos meios de informação e de comunicação*). Consequently, schools were duly closed on 29th March.

MEYS had in place a Contingency Plan for COVID-19 confirming that all levels of schooling should continue through distance learning and included other measures for the period when schools were still open. Distance learning activities began on April 10th with daily programs on radio and television as described below, under Output Area 1.

Subsequent to declaration of a State of Emergency, the Ministry commenced development of its Ministry COVID 19 Response Plan.



Systemic Constraints in Managing the COVID-19 Response

Capacity Constraints

The Ministry faces unprecedented challenges as a result of its responsibilities for managing COVID-19 pandemic awareness and responses to it; starting with the concurrent challenges of closing schools, providing continuity of education, including management of the teaching workforce, as well as engaging with parents and communities to gain their support for planned distance learning activities during this period. No less daunting is the eventual challenge of reopening schools; the responsibility of ensuring safe and healthy teaching-learning environments to avoid the risk of a second wave of infection. The Ministry is aware that it does not have the capacity required to meet all these challenges effectively. Therefore, it is re-orienting some of the capacity development resources it currently has available, while also seeking to engage additional technical assistance from Development Partners.

UNESCO's International Institute of Education Planning (IIEP) recommends that education sector planning should include disaster preparedness plans. In its education sector planning, prior to the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, MEYS had identified many issues that impact adversely on its capacity to perform core functions. Accordingly, a series of relevant activities and expected results were outlined in the Education Sector Plan (ESP) to improve education access and quality. However, the ESP offers little specific guidance on how to improve responsiveness to emergency situations. Consequently, existing plans and related activities to improve management functions need to be adapted to the current emergency situation and fast-tracked to provide MEYS with the kind of support that it now so urgently needs.



Other Constraints

Lack of procedures and processes

There is no Emergency Policy or procedures to be followed in the case of an emergency. There have been some attempts to introduce School Health Guidelines, but these have not been particularly successful.

Lack of COVID-19 awareness

The rapid assessment of pre-schools showed weak capacity to prevent, respond to, or mitigate the effects of the virus. There was a general lack of knowledge about COVID-19, what it is, how it is spread and its symptoms. There was some awareness of the importance of handwashing but not necessarily the need to use soap.

Lack of WASH facilities in schools

A significant number of pre-schools did not have the WASH facilities required to ensure a safe environment for children. Where basic facilities did exist, they were not always used. There was also some evidence of attitudinal issues, where fear of the virus could spill into negative personal and social behaviours.

Poorly prepared teachers

One lesson learned since schools have closed is that teachers are poorly prepared to support children in the current situation. They are generally only familiar with face-to-face direct instruction and unfamiliar with the new technologies being proposed for interactive distance learning. The model of teaching training used has always been large-scale and centralized, providing face-to-face training to teachers who then provide face-to-face teaching to pupils. This system provides no opportunity for INFORDEPE (the National teacher training institution) to provide professional development for teachers so that they are able to help children in the current emergency situation.

Political uncertainty led to a lack of an agreed budget for 2020

As a result of political instability in late 2019, the Eighth Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste was unable to achieve the parliamentary majority required to pass its 2020 government program and budget. Consequently, Ministry contributions will be limited by the duodecimal funding arrangement, which means government will operate on monthly instalments of one twelfth of the previous 2019 budget. This provides funding to cover core costs such as teacher salaries, but not the funding of new activities proposed for 2020 in the Ministry's 2019 planning process.

Lack of Adequate Technical Assistance

There has been considerable technical assistance for capacity development and capacity substitution in MEYS, funded by the Ministry and Development Partners. However, there are no longer sufficient numbers of technical advisors available with the relevant skill sets required to adequately support the implementation of the Response Plan.

Conclusions

At the time of writing, there has been no community spread of COVID-19 in Timor-Leste. With the closure of schools from 23 March 2020, declaration of the State of Emergency, enforcement of social isolation requirements, quarantine of arrivals into the country and then border closure, Timor-Leste has taken decisive steps and bought time to make further preparations to prevent or mitigate the spread of the virus. These actions will almost certainly reduce the numbers of its citizens who are infected and die.



CHAPTER 3: OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNED MEYS RESPONSE

This chapter contains an overview of MEYS's planned response.

Process of Drafting the Response Plan

The Plan was drafted jointly by Ministry officials and advisers with support from UNICEF. The LEG in principle approved an outline of the Plan on 14th April and the content of the full Plan and the costed work plan was shared both with the LEG and MEYS on 29th April.

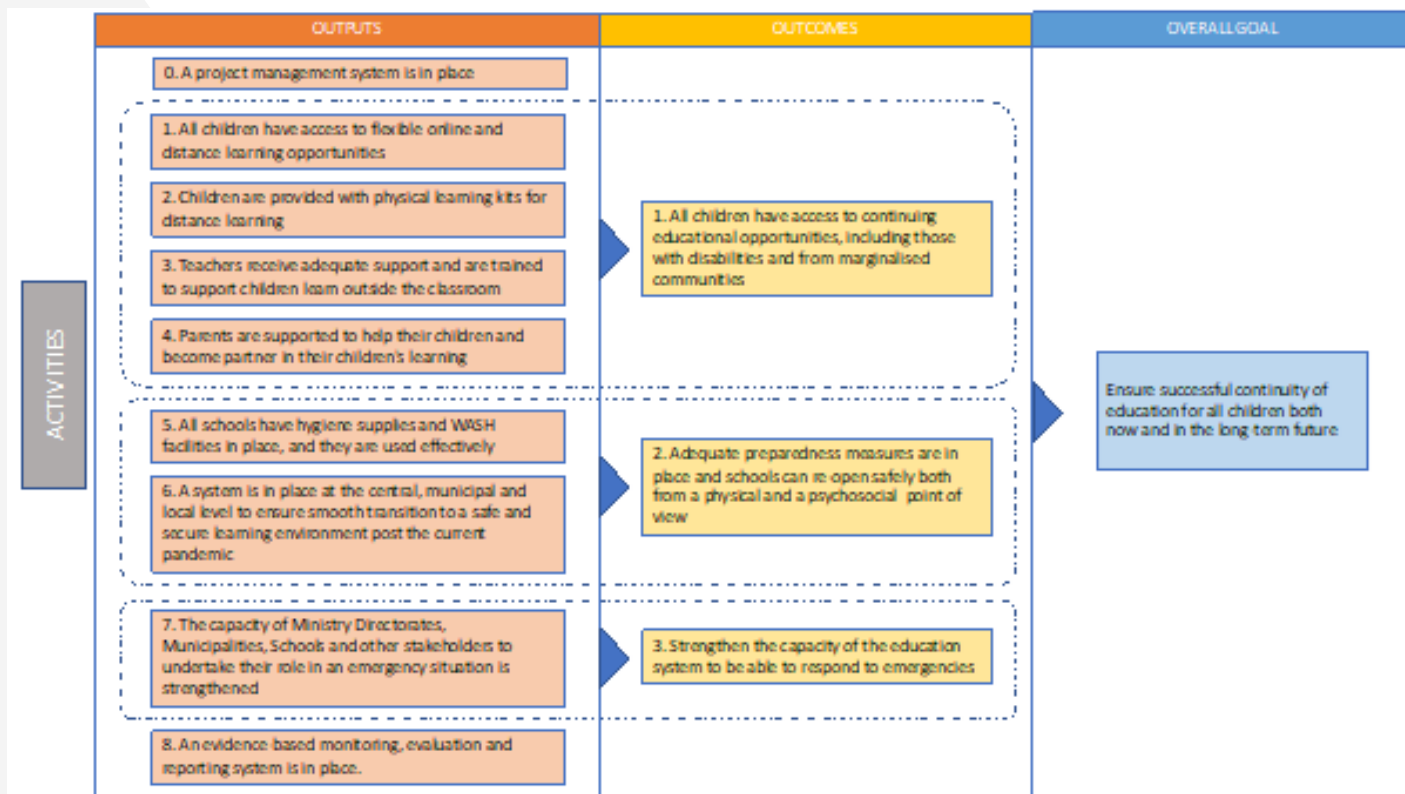
Key Principles

The key principles of the Response Plan are that it:

- strives for equality of opportunity during the current emergency for all children; regardless of gender, location, socio-economic status, disability or linguistic background
- addresses the issue of parental education, both in terms of assisting them to help their children's learning and anticipating related psycho-social issues they or their children may encounter
- also covers the recovery period, after the current emergency and beyond with activities trialed during the mitigation period flowing into the recovery period
- is realistic given the current condition of state administration in Timor-Leste



Theory of Change



Key Assumptions

Under-pinning the theory of change above, are the following key assumptions about what needs to be in place, if the goals and outcomes are to be achieved.

- The time period covered by the plan will be from April 2020 to June 2021
- Teachers' current and future employment is protected
- Priority is given to the health and well-being of children and educators
- The combined funding from MEYS and Development Partners will be sufficient to carry out all activities as planned
- The monitoring and evaluation component underlies and informs all other components
- There will be capacity in MEYS, with support from Development Partners, to manage a program of this complexity

Overall Goal of the COVID-19 Response Plan

The overall goal of the Response Plan is to ensure that children continue with their education despite being out of school. Wherever feasible, there should be continuity between their previous learning in school and their current learning at home, to better ensure a smooth transition when schools are eventually re-opened. It also covers the longer term so that in future, having learned from the current situation, policy and practice will be in place to provide for continuity of education in any future emergency. There is a clear relationship between the current emergency situation, recovery and ongoing development.

While middle-class parents in the capital, Dili, tend to be able to find suitable educational activities for their children at home, this is not the case for all parents. A very different situation may exist in poorer urban areas and especially in rural communities, where girls are typically expected to help with household chores when they are at home. The goal, therefore, is for all children to have access to suitable educational opportunities; regardless of gender, socio-economic status, location, disability or linguistic background. This should remain the goal beyond the current pandemic, so that in future emergencies, the country will be better prepared to ensure that children's education proceeds with as little interruption as possible. This will be best achieved by actively learning from the current situation.

Achievement of the goal is defined by three main outcomes:

Outcome 1: All children have access to continuing educational opportunities including those with disabilities and from marginalized communities.

This outcome is concerned with ensuring provision for children in the current pandemic while schools are closed.

Outcome 2: Adequate preparedness measures are in place to allow schools to open safely both from a physical and a psychosocial point of view

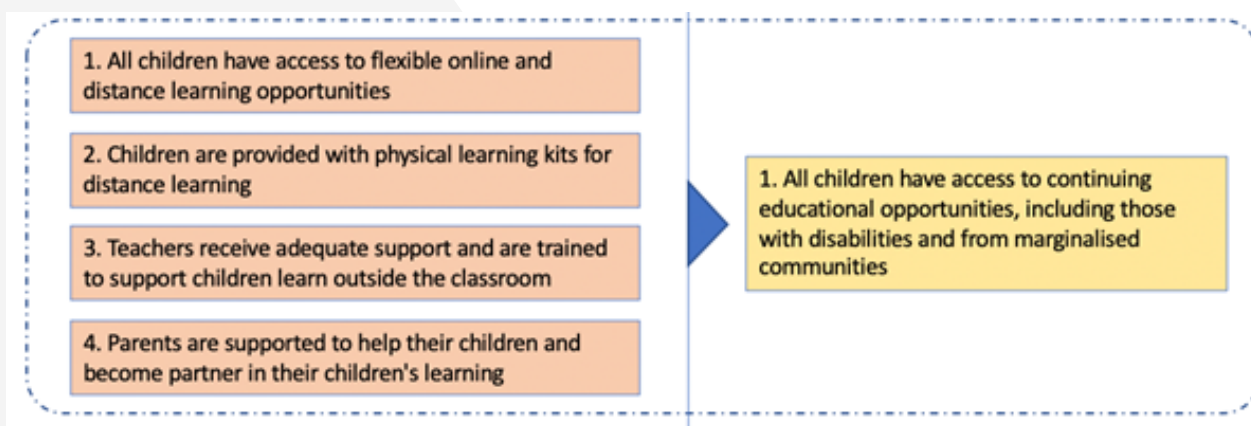
This is concerned with the recovery system in the future in the period when schools re-open.

Outcome 3: The capacity for the education system to respond to emergencies is strengthened.

This is concerned with the longer-term future and aims to ensure that the education system can cope with emergencies including pandemics, conflict or natural disasters in the future.

These outcomes are supported by seven output areas which feed directly into the outcomes above. Two output areas are cross-cutting: Output Area 0 that of program management and Output Area 8: Monitoring and Evaluation.

Outcome 1 spans four output areas. The first two consist of materials and modalities used for distance learning, while 3 and 4 relate to key stakeholders who will support those responsible for the care and learning of children while out of school: teachers and parents. Materials on their own have been shown to be of little use in ensuring access unless supported by adults.



Output Areas 1 and 2 are informed by data from the most recent household survey which shows that TV and radio penetration is still quite low in rural areas. Therefore, both media-based distance-learning opportunities as well as physical learning kits will be provided.

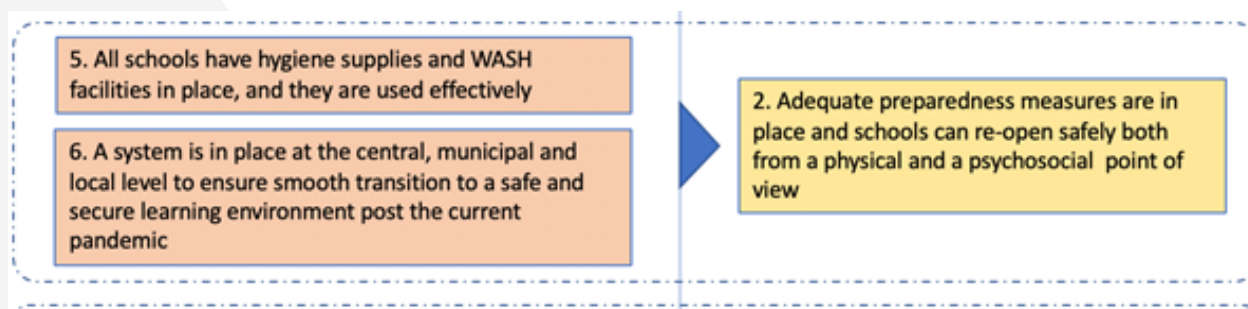
Output 3 deals with the training of teachers in four key areas:

1. Training to prepare them to help children in the current pandemic including familiarity with all the distance learning materials and how best to support parents, children and communities
2. Ongoing professional development which should continue while schools are closed
3. Preparation for school re-opening
4. Resilience to deal with future emergencies.

Output 4, Parental Education, is made up of three key components:

1. Safe practices parents need to adhere to while their children are at home
2. How to help children learn
3. Preparation to mitigate future emergencies.

Outcome 2 consists of two components:

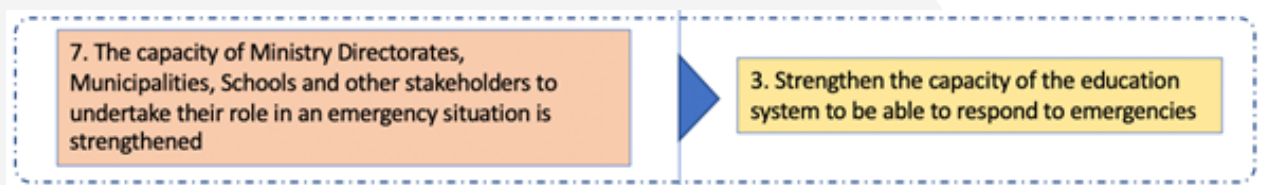


Output Area 5 involves

1. Access to hygiene facilities, water supply and handwashing facilities which are consistently used
2. Promotion of behaviour change in terms of promotion of regular handwashing, dealing with sick students and routine disinfection of school utilities and surroundings.

Output Area 6 involves systems to ensure a smooth transition back to education including implementation of a Back to School campaign, assessing children's learning, providing for catch up classes and ensuring teachers are in place to teach those classes. It is intended not merely to restore education services, but to reform education to be prepared for future emergency situations.

Outcome 3 is made up of one output area:



With the following sub-components

1. Provision of technical support where needed
2. Creation of Municipal Response Teams
3. Improved Information and Communication Technology, Systems and Practices in Emergencies

Output 0 focuses on overall program management and is described further in Chapter 5.

Output 8 focuses on an evidence-based monitoring and evaluation system. This will be developed as part of the proposal for funding to GPE.

The outputs are described in more detail below:

Output Area 0: Program Management

The activities under each of the outputs described below are complex and far-reaching. If it is followed carefully, the Response Plan is detailed enough to minimize the risk of overlap and duplication of interdependent activities, even when implemented with assistance from various Development Partners.

However, currently MEYS does not have the capacity to manage a program of this complexity. While the ACETL and the coordinating agency for any GPE funded support can facilitate communication and provide higher level coordination, there is a need for strengthened technical management of the program at the level of implementation, including monitoring at activity level. In emergency situations such as this, there is a need to react quickly to ongoing changes on the ground and a related flexibility in planning so that if a certain initiative is not working, it is possible to change the pathway to the agreed objective quickly.

Currently Ministry advisors and officers, UNICEF, representatives for Development Partners and the Local Education Group (LEG) are working in an ad hoc arrangement while the Response Plan is being finalized, amidst urgent activities to provide continuity of education since school closure. The Ministry is increasingly in a position where it can take a more systematic approach to managing this emergency situation.

An appropriate capacity development plan will ensure that key individuals, departments and directorates in the Ministry are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform a range of roles in the current pandemic. An oversight committee will nominate an individual to be responsible for day-to-day coordination of activities, and another individual to coordinate monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Outcome 1: All children, including those with disabilities or from marginalized communities, have continuing access to educational opportunities

Outcome 1 spans four output areas. The first two consist of materials and methods for distance learning, while the other two assist those responsible for the care and learning of children while out of school: teachers and parents. Materials on their own are of little use to children without adult supervision.

Output Areas 1 and 2 are informed by the results of the Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey (DHS 2016), which show that TV and radio penetration is still quite low in rural areas.

Although the penetration rate of mobile phone technology is high in both urban (96%) and rural (80%), this does not necessarily indicate widespread use of Smart Phones.

Communication Signal Type	Coverage / Penetration Area		
	Total	Urban	Rural
Television	40%	80 %	28 %
Radio	25 %	34 %	22 %
Mobile phone	84%	96%	80%

Source: DHS 2016

While these figures may have increased since 2016 and mobile phone penetration does present a promising opportunity, the existing data shows that using only one type of communication signal would be inadequate to reach all students. Consequently, the best response would be to use radio, TV, mobile and online platforms as well as printed material. Accordingly, MEYS has decided to vary its response by providing high tech-based learning support in Output Area 1; and, traditional print-based learning support in Output Area 2.

Output Area 1: All children have access to flexible online and/or distance learning opportunities through ICT, where feasible

This strategy will build upon the ongoing '*Eskola ba Uma*' initiative of MEYS, which began in anticipation of schools being closed for an extended period of time. *Eskola ba Uma* literally means 'School Goes Home'. The initiative uses an Open, Distance and Flexible Learning Approach through a variety of ICT modalities, as described below.

“Eskola ba Uma” (School Goes Home) TV and radio programmes

This is the first pillar of support for Output 1; the distance learning initiative through ICT *Eskola ba Uma* programmes are already running on a small scale with the help of a talented media producer and a dedicated team of public-school teachers. They comprise a series of lively school lessons, based on the national curriculum for children from pre-school to primary school. The TV programmes started airing on March 30th and are broadcast on three different local TV channels. So far 28 episodes have been aired.

The 30-minute *Eskola ba Uma* radio broadcasts are adapted from the TV programmes and target children from preschool to 6th grade. Currently the radio programmes are broadcast every day on RTTL, the main National radio station, and on 22 local community stations. The value of both the TV and radio programmes will be enhanced through appropriate training of teachers and partnerships between the national telecom providers and municipalities to mobilize parental support for the initiative.

Online learning platform

The second pillar of Output 1 is the online learning platform, available at <http://timor-leste.learningplatform.org/>. Shortly after the *Eskola ba Uma* initiative began, an online learning platform, called the Learning Passport, was launched. Learning Passport is a global initiative developed by UNICEF HQ through a partnership with Microsoft. It offers a Virtual Library with all the national curriculum-based textbooks and supporting materials, including songs and videos. Soon the TV “*Eskola ba Uma*” lessons will be available on this platform.

UNICEF is currently negotiating with Telecom providers to offer free access to Learning Passport for all users. To sustain this initiative, partnerships need to be established and maintained with the local telecom companies to host, maintain and provide zero rated access (free to the user) to the website locally.



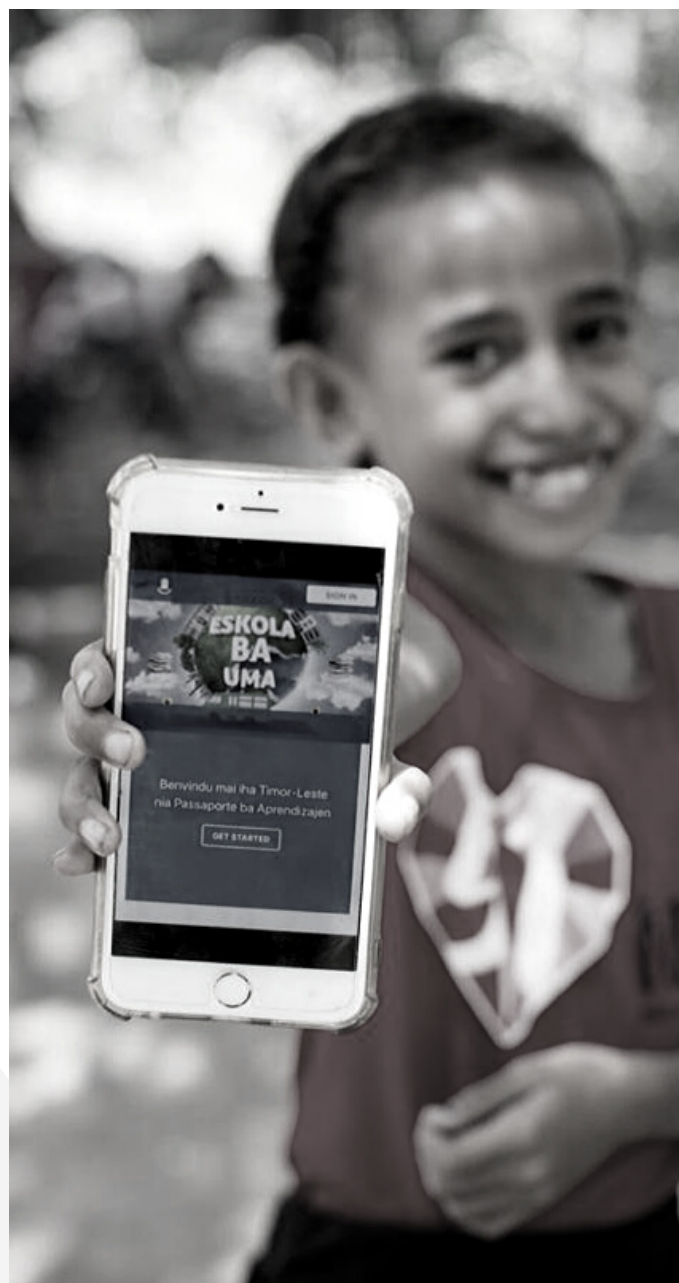
Benvindu mai iha Timor-Leste nia Passaporte ba Aprendizajen

GET STARTED



The Online Learning Program will also cater for adolescents by offering training courses in such subjects as financial and project management, advocacy courses to promote greater awareness of gender equality and environmental issues, as well as interpersonal communication skills training. The platform can also be used to help teachers and parents to support children with special needs (see Outputs 3 and 4). Similarly, a YouTube Channel for online lessons will also be set up to meet the education and training needs of adolescents.

In order to expand the use of the online learning platform, a **Mobile App** has already been developed. The app allows families to download materials so that children can read the textbooks offline. This means that students can study without regular access to Internet. The App is owned by the Ministry and will be available on their Play Store account. Similar use of mobile technology to develop and implement a bulk-SMS system has also been proposed to help parents support their children's learning at home. Since Timor-Leste has little expertise in this area, Technical Assistance (TA) will be needed.



Lafaek

Lafaek magazines (produced by CARE and the Ministry) will be available in households. Since the magazines are normally distributed to each child, who take them home, they are a resource already available in households, which could be specifically referenced in online learning activities.

Additionally, parents/youth could receive targeted guidance on how to use *Lafaek* content to practice literacy and numeracy with children at home (this could be done through pre-recorded voice messaging, for instance).

Output Area 2: Children are provided with learning kits for distance learning

Not all children have access to technology, and it is children in remote regions, with a poorer socio-economic background and/or those who come from minority speech communities that will benefit least from Output Area 1. Output Area 2 aims to provide distance education for these children using five low-tech solutions or pillars, as described below.

Learning kits for preschoolers

A basic learning kit will be provided to each household which has children enrolled at pre-school. The kit will include colouring and activity books, crayons and play materials.

Learning materials for Cycles 1 and 2

Story Books

There will be a stock-take of story books already available in Tetun, and books that can be readily translated. Based on a set of selection criteria, a core mini-library of titles will be established. The MEYS printing press will reproduce these books for use by Cycle 1 and 2 pupils under the supervision of teachers and parents, who will be given guidelines on their respective roles in developing and assessing the children's reading skills using these books.

Mini-lending-libraries will be established in the school community and will encourage circulation of books. Teachers or other designated adults will record the children's reading activities to facilitate an assessment of their reading skills prior to the re-opening of schools.

Textbooks

As children and parents in Timor-Leste typically equate learning with textbooks, textbooks for Cycles 1 and 2 have already been ordered from Vietnam. Once they arrive, all materials will need to be packed and distributed. This is a key example of where project management is critical to ensure a fair distribution of learning resources, as the areas of the country which do not have access to technology have yet to be identified.



Learning materials for Cycle 3

The situation in Cycle 3 is more problematic because it has a new curriculum which is still in development. Guidelines for using the old curriculum will need to be developed and rather than printing the textbooks for this level, MEYS will print only the existing activity book with additional guidance on their optimal use. There are currently 90,000 Cycle 3 students and priority will be given to the estimated 40,000 who live in the most remote areas.

Learning materials for secondary education

MEYS is responsible for ensuring that all children in the system are able to continue their education. All secondary children currently have textbooks, but additional resource may need to be provided to those children who cannot access the online learning opportunities. However, current information shows that most secondary school children will be able to access resources.

Learning materials to children with special needs

Children with disabilities

This aspect of the program will be planned by PHD. Based on their assessment, learning materials applicable to the child e.g. audio, tactile, games etc. will be developed or procured and distributed.

Children from minority speech communities

Sustainable Development Goal No 4 cannot be achieved without a commitment to Multilingual Education (UN, 2018). To ensure equity and quality education for all (SDG indicator 4.5.2), there is a need to recognize Timor-Leste's local languages in formal education, alongside the two official languages, Tetun and Portuguese. Some of the most disadvantaged children in Timor-Leste are from minority speech communities.

According to the Population Census of 2015, 70% of the children enter schools speaking a language other than Tetun and Portuguese, the languages of the school system. A Classroom Language Mapping study (Owen, 2015) lists 26 languages spoken in the country. It gives an extensive listing of each classroom in the country along with the first language of that school and community. The Timor-Leste Constitution requires that the state protect and develop the country's local languages. MEYS is looking at how to develop materials in other languages.



Three vernacular languages have been piloted in the school system; Baikeno, Fataluku, and Galolen. However, titles in these languages are limited. Simple story books will be translated and mini libraries consisting of 7 titles for each language will be produced. Support to speakers of Makasae, Mambae, Tetun Therik, Bunak and Kemak will also be explored.

Output Area 3: Adequate training to support learning outside the classroom

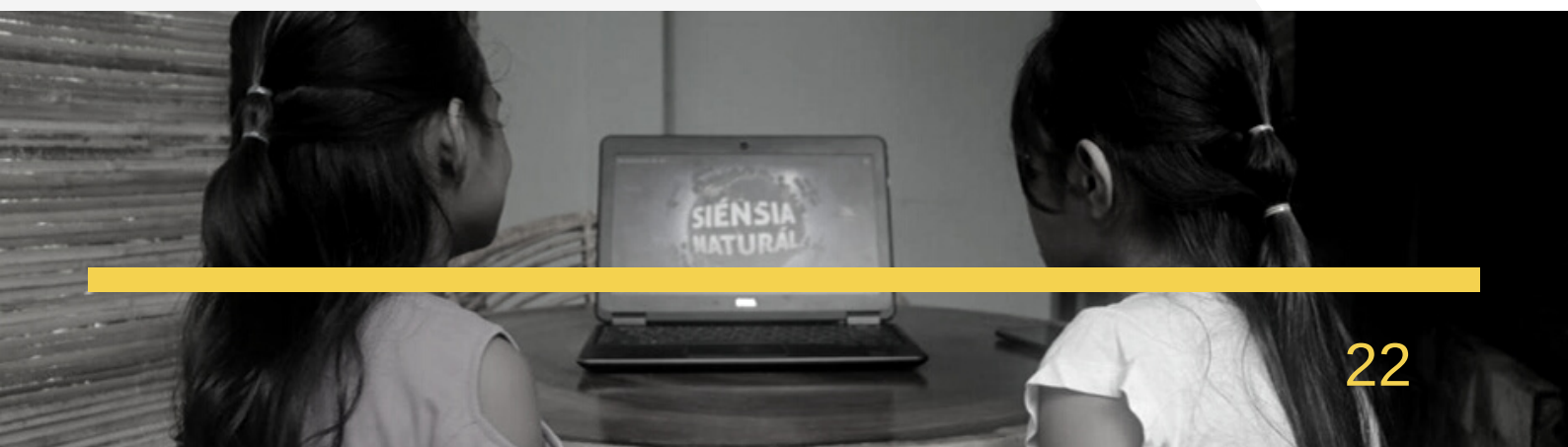
Teacher training in Timor-Leste has been limited and focused mainly on content knowledge. School- or cluster-based training is still in its infancy, and to date there is no provision for distance training of teachers. The concept of children learning at a distance is quite new but there is an awareness that the role of teachers is critical to children's learning, even where ICT solutions are proposed (Dahya, 2016).

Output Area 3 has four main pillars, as described below.

Specific training relating to the current pandemic

Teachers need special training to support children during the current COVID-19 pandemic. First, they need training related specifically to *Eskola ba Uma*, *Halimar ba Uma*, and *Learning Passport*. The current plan is to pilot such training by using a facilitator working with a group of teachers via the medium of Zoom. Other more innovative modalities may be trialed later as capacity to develop new kinds of training materials increases. The ICT requirements of teachers will, of course, need to be assessed prior to any interventions. A key role for them during this initial stage will be to monitor the learning of their students using mobile phone technology and physical follow-up.

Other Professional Development (PD) needs of teachers to be met at this time include training in how to support school children's parents at home. Apart from helping parents to support their children's learning, teachers will also need to be trained in how to deal with their own psycho-social issues and those of parents, where they or their families are suffering directly from viral infection or the indirect social or economic effects of the virus.



Ongoing Professional Development

The second pillar involves ongoing PD through ZOOM and Learning Management Systems (LMS). Some materials have already been written and the current period of school closure is an ideal opportunity for them to improve their Portuguese language proficiency via distance learning.

Preparation for School Re-Opening

The third pillar of support consists of preparing teachers for the time when schools re-open. As well as managing accelerated or catch-up classes, teachers may also need to be introduced to changes in the curriculum and related implications for teaching styles and classroom management. Training in new ways to assess student learning more holistically will also be conducted under this third pillar.

Resilience to deal with future emergencies

The last part of this output area involves preparing teachers for emergencies which may arise in the future. Accordingly, training modules in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as well as Disaster Risk Management (DRM) will need to be developed and delivered to teachers.

Output Area 4: Parents participation in their children's learning is supported

This output area consists of three main pillars.

Parents engage in safe practices with their children while they are at home

The rapid assessment of pre-schools revealed that many communities know little about how to recognize COVID-19 and how to prevent or limit its spread. Parental awareness will be increased using a range of modalities including TV, social media, SMS push messages, printed pamphlets, as well as community meetings to demonstrate the basic principles of relevant personal hygiene, such as the correct way to wash hands practice social distancing.



Domestic violence, including violence against children, is prevalent in Timor-Leste and lessons from other countries show it is likely to increase during lockdown. Therefore, parental education will be concerned not only with supporting their children's learning, but also with appropriate parental behavior in the care of children, including the use of non-violent behaviour management techniques, and ways to deal with anxiety and other psychosocial issues that children and parents may be experiencing.

Helping children to learn during the current pandemic

Parents in Timor-Leste, as elsewhere in the world, want the best for their children and often make significant sacrifices to send their children to school. While some parents in the capital and those from higher socio-economic groups elsewhere may already be aware of ways to help their children learn, many parents feel unable to contribute to their children's education. Such feelings of inadequacy are most likely in the parents who have had little or no formal education themselves. General guidance for these parents will be provided through social media where there is access to mobile phones and through community awareness programs on radio and television.

In a study on the uses of ICT in emergencies, the World Bank (2016) found that the involvement of adults is crucial to the success of ICT-based education in emergencies. Therefore, parents will be encouraged to listen / watch the media-based programmes with their children, and all physical learning materials will have guidelines for parents.

Preparedness for future emergencies

The final pillar under this output area concerns disaster preparedness for the future. As well as being prepared at central and municipal level, many countries have school and community-level committees to prepare for disasters. PTAs will be maintained or revived, and other parent-caregiver networks will be identified for support.



Outcome 2: Adequate measures are taken to ensure that it is safe, both physically and psychologically, to re-open schools

Output Area 5: All schools have and use WASH facilities and supplies

Schools are currently closed for an indefinite period due to the current situation. The decision to reopen schools will be taken by MEYS in close collaboration with other relevant authorities.

When schools eventually reopen there are a number of important precautions that need to be taken, including arrangements for the protection of children, teachers and staff to prevent a second wave of COVID-19. To meet required hygiene standards, all schools must have access to a regular supply of clean water and adequate handwashing facilities. Concurrent precautionary measures will be needed to prevent the entry and spread of COVID-19 by students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus. Care must also be taken to avoid stigmatizing students as well as staff who test positive for the virus.

There are two main components under this output:

Improved access to water supply and handwashing facilities

Data from EMIS (2019) show that 94% of all schools, have a water supply system. However, this may be an overestimate and a rapid assessment of schools will need to take place before re-opening. To provide water to schools, which do not have it, will require close cooperation with municipalities and local communities at *suco* (sub-municipality) level. Where a functional water supply is available, it is necessary to ensure availability of appropriate hand washing facilities and a steady supply of soap.



The WASH in Schools Technical Working Group (WinS TWG), coordinated by the National Directorate of School Social Action in the MEYS will cooperate with relevant state and non-state agencies at the national level and with the WinS focal points at the municipal level to implement the activities outlined under this strategy.

Promotion of safe behaviours

Parents should not send their children back to school until appropriate arrangements are made to ensure a safe learning environment. Before reopening, it is therefore important that schools circulate guidelines regarding sick students, teachers and other staff. Schools must enforce and promote regular handwashing with clean water and soap, before entering and leaving the school. Classroom seating arrangements must facilitate social distancing if still required, and disinfection of the classroom environment and utilities (classrooms, desks, chairs, toilets) must be a mandatory daily routine.

Output 6: Central, Municipal and local level systems to ensure a smooth and responsible transition to safe learning environments after the pandemic

As well as WASH facilities, a number of other initiatives will need to be taken to ensure that children can return to education safely. There are four components under this output area. The first two concern the assessment of children.

1. Develop / modify a tool to assess children's learning

All children will not have learned at the same pace during school closure. Learning loss particularly in key skills such as reading / learning gain. The assessment tools in existence will be modified to provide an assessment of learning of children. Additional items will also be included to focus on children's sense of well-being and other attitudinal issues such as perceptions they hold about their future.

2. Assign children to groups according to their test results

Test results will identify children who need remedial / catch up classes. While most children will have likely suffered learning loss, there may also be learning gains especially for children who are based in urban areas. Priority should be given to classes approaching national examination and the timing of examinations will almost certainly need to be revised. Key decisions about timetabling and the school calendar will need to be taken. If social distancing is still required, some classes will need to be reduced in size and the need for accelerated or remedial classes may require staggered hours of learning for children and longer working days for teachers. The curriculum may need to be amended.

3. Ensure a sufficient supply of teachers

Additional temporary teachers may be required and the *Quadro Pessoal* adjusted accordingly to ensure that under-staffed schools receive teachers by the time schools re-open. If existing teachers are required to work overtime (more than the maximum 24 class contact hours per week), they will need to be compensated so that they focus on teaching rather than other income-generating activities. Therefore, financial incentives in excess of normal salaries should be anticipated.

4. Implement a “back to school” campaign

Helping schools to re-open is a task that requires cooperative efforts. Parents will need assurance that there are safety standards in place. Such assurance can be best effected by encouraging parents to help ready the schools for re-opening. Guidelines will be needed to identify the readiness of schools to re-open. They will have to address safety requirements of physical environment and children’s psychosocial readiness. Efforts to help children, particularly young children, transition from home-based schooling back to formal education may encounter psycho-social challenges with implications for the resumption of the classroom-based teaching-learning process.



Outcome 3: Sustainable Capacity Strengthening of Ministry Directorates, Municipalities and Schools

Outcome 3 envisions the strengthened capacity of the education system to respond to emergencies. The Ministry's currently limited capacity to do this were signaled in the previous chapter. In this emergency situation the Ministry is required to design, fund, implement, monitor, evaluate and report on its COVID-19 Response Plan. It clearly does not have the internal capacity or external support to do this efficiently and effectively. The Response Plan is, however, not overly ambitious with the services that it aims to provide students, teachers and school communities. Internationally, most response plans will have similar expected outcomes, outputs and activities.

In its COVID-19 Response Plan, the Ministry has: openly identified its capacity constraints; recognized that the timeframes in the ESP for strengthening the Ministry's management capacity are too long; and, agreed to take radical action to deliver services required by children, parents and teachers during a pandemic unprecedented in their lifetimes.

Outcome 3 has 2 output areas. Output 7 focuses on the sector-wide capacity strengthening necessary to respond to an emergency of this scale at the Ministry, municipality and school levels. Output 8 focuses on setting up the monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems for providing reliable and timely information to decision-makers so that they can know if the Response Plan is being implemented successfully and respond appropriately to emerging needs and issues.

Output Area 7: Strengthened Capacity of Ministry Directorates and Units, Municipal Education Offices, Schools and other Stakeholders to Perform their Roles in Emergency Situations

The current focus of attention on improving the emergency response capacity of the education sector is without precedence in both scale and urgency. The school communities are the front line of this civil defense effort. Sound planning and clear direction at the early stages will save lives, provide continuity of learning opportunities to children and build community resilience. Getting big things wrong cannot be an option. Already there is a sense that the people of Timor will rise to the challenge but need practical support to succeed. Having a Ministry COVID-19 Response Plan is important, but making the plan succeed is even more important.

The ability to implement the Response Plan is only as strong as its weakest organizational link. Therefore, an effective response to the threat of the Covid 19 pandemic requires the Ministry, municipalities, schools and other stakeholders to understand their roles and responsibilities and have the required systems and support necessary to successfully undertake their delegated activities on time. When this emergency ends, the education sector should be more resilient, with greater capacity than it had before the State of Emergency was declared.

The most significant challenges that must be addressed to improve organizational performance are identified as follows:

- Having only broad definitions of competences in the Ministry's Organic Law and other Decree Laws, and limited documentation of standard operating procedures at all levels (Ministry, Municipality and schools), discourages rapid decision-making at the right level in an emergency.
- There are very few formal policies or systems for managing emergency situations.
- Lack of legal clarity and/or adequate common understanding about the respective roles of the Ministry's national and municipal offices as a result of decentralization.
- The many new Ministry managers who started on 1 April 2020 are not yet familiar with their duties and unable to communicate effectively with their staff who, like themselves, are now based in their respective homes.
- Limited resources for on-site visits and poor communication systems with schools
- Low levels of parental and community engagement in many public schools

To address these challenges, it is necessary to identify the essential roles and tasks of each organization in emergency management. Support systems and structures must be relevant and positioned appropriately, as indicated by a systematic assessment of existing capacity and identification of capacity gaps and/or overlaps of responsibility. Recommendations based on the results of the assessment must explain how capacity can be built and/or augmented rapidly so that essential tasks are performed effectively to the required standard.



Importantly, staff must be particularly well managed and well led throughout the emergency. While there should be low tolerance of staff who are not prepared to give their best effort in this time of national emergency, leaders and managers should be strongly encouraged to motivate their staff positively, by appealing to the sense of patriotism reflected in their national anthem, and official oaths they swore to their country when they joined the public service. However, to maintain motivation staff will also need to feel that their efforts are appreciated and that they are properly supported as they learn to adapt to new ways of working.

However, even with the best motivation, it is too risky to assume that all organizational units already have the capacity, or will be able to develop it quickly enough, to ensure successful implementation of the Response Plan. Such circumstances will necessitate the use temporary capacity substitution approaches, such as engaging external contractors to expedite work or outsourcing some tasks to a business or an NGO.

Many capacity building activities were anticipated in the BEST Programme supported by GPE funding. Some Development Partners also support management strengthening. The Ministry also has advisors that it employs directly. There is, however, a need now to accelerate development efforts by using a more specifically targeted approach to ensure that the Ministry, municipalities, schools and stakeholders are better prepared to manage this emergency.

The new senior managers in the Ministry and Municipal Directors must take the lead in this matter, with support and coordination by the COVID-19 Response Management Team (CRMT). The first management objective should be to expedite the identification and prioritization of what needs to happen based on the best data available. The next objective is to facilitate the design of relevant activities in logical sequences. Insofar as they do their best to ensure that such decisions are based on the best technical advice available, even new managers should feel confident that they have facilitated the best approaches possible in an emergency situation.



There are key Ministry directorates and work units that require priority support due to their crucial and urgent tasks in leading the Covid 19 Response. These include:

- **The Minister's Office**, needs to have a strengthened team to provide specialist support to the Minister as leader of the education sector COVID-19 response
- **The National Directorate of Planning and Inclusive Education (DNPEI)** - support evidence-based policy decisions for the emergency
- **The National Directorate of Electronic Education and Libraries (DNEEB)** leads continuation of the delivery of student learning programs via TV, radio and on-line modalities
- **National Directorate for Social Actions (DNASE)** to strengthen its capacity to lead promotion of health and hygiene at the school level
- **The National Institute for Teacher Professional Development (INFORDEPE)** needs increased capacity to support teachers' adoption of new approaches to student learning and their own professional development
- **Municipal Education Offices** –will need support to play a greater role in directly supporting schools because of their knowledge of local conditions and as a result of travel constraints that will occur during the emergency.

The key approaches to building and mobilizing capacity are described overleaf.

Providing Technical Support Where it is Most Needed

A key feature of rapid capacity development is effective use of technical support. Already, there has been a realignment of the work of many existing advisors to provide technical assistance for the Ministry's initial COVID-19 Response. As mentioned above, an assessment will be made of the technical assistance currently funded through the Ministry and Development Partners, to help determine which should be reallocated to support implementation of the Response Plan. Identification of where any additional technical assistance is required will also be necessary, as will information about how it can be procured in a timely manner. This technical assistance should not only address immediate needs, but also strengthen the Ministry's capacity to manage future emergency situations.

A key feature of this output area is engagement of a specialist advisor/s who can support institutional capacity building in a time of emergency. There may be some delay in achieving this, particularly with international travel restrictions. The Ministry and Development Partners are expected to be able and willing to work collaboratively to meet this challenge.

Municipalities as the Gateways to Schools

The municipal level roles are important. Therefore, the key focus of attention at the Ministry's National Office in Dili is on the empowerment of Municipal Education Offices and other agencies, such as the Church, NGOs and community organisations working at the municipal, suco and aldeia levels to provide services to schools, because schools will be the front line of the COVID-19 Response. This will require improvements in the quality and speed of support provided from the centre: Dili to Municipality and Municipality to School.

The Response Plan promotes the concept of a Municipal Response Team that leads and coordinates support for schools and engagement with the school communities. This Team will have adequate resources to help empower school communities to identify and implement local solutions to prevent the spread of the virus in their communities, and to help facilitate the continuation of education programs while schools are closed, and then assist with preparations for re-opening schools.

An essential contribution to the Municipal Response Team will come from school inspectors. There are over 90 school inspectors based in the municipalities who have good knowledge of the schools for which they are responsible. They also have access to transport so can visit even the most remote schools. Ensuring that they are well trained, have clear tasks, are effectively managed and that the data they collect is well used will contribute significantly to the success of the Municipal Response Team initiative.

Good Information and Communication Technology, Systems and Practices

There is a heavy reliance on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems and practices to achieve the expected Response Plan outcomes, namely: 1) Ensuring continuity of learning for all children, 2) preparedness for reopening of schools, and 3) strengthening the capacity of the education system to respond to emergencies.

The current situation where schools are closed, but learning must continue demonstrates both the strengths and weaknesses in the case for introducing ICT in support of teaching and learning in Timor-Leste.

Most positively, there has been a remarkably rapid response wherever good quality learning opportunities have been made available online. This was possible because of a shared understanding a hard-working group of people that the task was important. They collaborated closely, using their respective networks, creativity and

problem-solving skills and produced very good results through learning by doing. However, the lack of comprehensive and integrated ICT policies and systems, as well as problems with equipment, software, connectivity and limited professional knowledge of teachers means that, for the foreseeable future, a significant number of children cannot access multimedia and on-line learning opportunities or receive adequate support to take advantage of the opportunity where it is available. This situation was recognized when Ministry reviewed its ICT needs in 2019, as the basis for an ICT Plan in 2020 but the current emergency has placed approval and implementation on hold.

MEYS faces a number of challenges in the use of ICT to support the expansion of student learning, teacher professional development, preparation for school re-opening and strengthening of the education system's capacity to respond to this and future emergencies. It must make decisions now about what to do to respond to the emergency but there is a risk that this current sense of urgency may hinder more systematic planning and implementation of ICT policy, systems, procurement and professional development in the future.

Consequently, in this component of Output 7 central planning and coordination of ICT initiatives is acknowledged as necessary to inform urgent decisions about purchasing and rapid implementation to address immediate needs, but it also acknowledges the subsequent need to revert to the vision for the future as set out in the draft ICT Plan.

Output Area 8: Evidence-based monitoring and evaluation is in place and used to inform program activities

This output is overarching and covers all outcomes. This will be developed further with the funding proposal to GPE.



FUNDING OPTIONS FOR THE RESPONSE PLAN

The Response Plan Budget seeks to identify funding sources under the following categories:

1. Reallocation of existing Ministry funding
2. The Covid-19 Inter-ministerial Commission of the Government of Timor-Leste
3. Reallocation of resources from existing Development Partner programs
4. New Development Partners funding allocated as to support the Covid 19 response
5. GPE Funding

The two tables below show the estimated costs of the Response Plan by Output and by activity

Summary by Output		
	Output	Total USD
0	Project management	234,500
1	eLearning	768,500
2	Learning materials	2,956,850
3	Teacher professional development	937,000
4	Parent support	513,500
5	WaSH and hygiene	450,000
6	Safety and security	3,692,770
7	Capacity development	2,423,000
8	Monitoring and evaluation	364,100
	TOTAL	12,340,220

	Summary by Activity	USD
0	Project management	
	Cross cutting	234,500
1	eLearning	
1.1	Develop and deliver lessons for pre-school, cycles 1, 2 and 3 of basic education as well as secondary education through radio and TV	603,500
1.2	Use of the online learning platform (Learning Passport) in support of learning for children	165,000
1.3	Publish a YouTube Channel for all online lessons	-
2	Learning materials	
2.1	Learning materials are supplied to all pre-school	400,000
2.2	Provide books and learning materials to basic education Cycle 1 and 2	1,701,000
2.3	Provide books and learning materials for Basic Education Cycle 3	456,000
2.4	Learning materials, developed, produced and distributed to all secondary schools	150,000
2.5	Provide learning materials to children with special needs and marginalized groups	249,850

3	Teacher professional development	
3.1	Provide specific training to teachers to support children and communities engage in Covid Response initiatives	112,000
3.2	Provide ongoing PD to teachers of pre-school and basic education online with Zoom and LMS	100,000
3.3	Prepare teachers to support students for school re-opening	554,000
3.4	Increase resilience of teachers in future emergencies	171,000
4	Parent support	
4.1	Ensure parents engage in safe practices while children are at home	55,000
4.2	Help parents to support children's learning	67,000
4.3	Strengthen school and community associations in support of preparedness for and response to emergencies	281,500
4.4	Support communities, parents and caregivers to facilitate children's learning at home	110,000
5	WaSH and hygiene	
5.1	Improved access to water supply and handwashing facilities.	420,000
5.2	Back to school campaign and promotion of behavior change	30,000
6	Safety and security	
6.1	Conduct baseline assessments of state of schools	5,000
6.2	Develop assessment tool to assess children's learning during time spent out of school	20,500
6.3	Administer test, collate results and assign children to groups according to learning needs	282,000
6.4	Make decisions on organization of timetabling and school calendar	1,614,320
6.5	Ensure sufficient number of teachers	1,613,000
6.6	Back to school campaign implemented.	157,950
7	Capacity development	
7.1	Capacity Assessment, Planning & Funding	353,500
7.2	Municipal and School Level Capacity Development	219,500
7.3	Good Information and Communication Technology, Systems and Practices in an Emergency	1,850,000
8	Monitoring and evaluation	
	Cross cutting	364,100
	TOTAL	12,340,220

CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS – GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Background

Currently, Ministry staff and advisors, UNICEF, Development Partner representatives and the Local Education Group (LEG) are working in an ad hoc arrangement to manage the Timor-Leste education sector COVID-19 response activities. This is occurring while the Response Plan is being finalised and is focused on urgent activities to provide continuity of education programmes during school closure. The Ministry is now in a position needs take a more systematic approach to management of this emergency situation.

The Ministry intends to have an integrated project management approach that coordinates the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the activities that it is funding along with those facilitated by additional funding from the GoTL (as via the COVID-19 Inter-ministerial Commission) and from Development Partners. This would include funding from the GPE, managed through UNICEF as the Grant agent. The sequence of activities required to establish and undertake effective project management is outlined as Output 0 in the Ministry COVID-19 Response Costed Work Plan and Budget.

Governance

The Minister of Education, Youth and Sport has the ultimate authority over project management of the COVID-19 response for the education sector. How this is delegated needs to be described in legal instruments. The Minister's Legal Office (*Gabinete Juridico*) is required to give priority to development of these instruments. The Minister will continue to set the policy direction and will receive regular progress reports about implementation of the Response Plan. In practice this will be provided to her through an Oversight Group. Membership of this group consists of senior Ministry officials and representatives of key stakeholders such as Municipal Directorates, the Church, Development Partners and NGOs. The Group will lead coordination of COVID-19 Response activities (including harmonisation of Development Partner support), monitor the results of implementation via regular progress reports and guide future planning. If required, it will resolve any blockages to the achievement of the expected Response Plan outcomes.

Management

Day-to-day implementation will be managed by a COVID-19 Response Management Team (CRMT), which will have clear terms of reference and be led by capable staff (including non-public servants). It will work under the requirements of UNICEF as the Grant Agent for possible GPE funding. It will also work with other Development Partners to ensure resources are used transparently, effectively and efficiently.

The CRMT has a mandate to operationalise and support activities specified in the Implementation Plan. Development of the Implementation Plan, based on the requirements of the Response Plan, will be one of the first CRMT activities.

Key functions of the CRMT are to:

- ensure there is effective coordination between Ministry work units, with Development Partners and NGOs, and with municipalities, schools and communities
- support effective communication with key stakeholders so their voices are heard and that key messages are clear
- ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are addressed; and
- set up monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems to make up-to-date information readily available to support good decision-making.

To support these functions, there are three key features of the CRMT operations:

- efficient administrative and financial management systems
- ability to fast-track urgent procurement and logistics
- robust accountability systems

It is important to recognise that currently the Ministry does not have the full requisite capacity to successfully plan and implement all the components of its Response Plan. The capacity constraints, the areas that are most affected by this and the approaches to build capacity are outlined in the Response Plan but are specifically addressed in Output Area 7. The CMRT will have specific responsibility for management of the technical support required, development of the Ministry and municipality capacity development plans, align of this support for implementation of the other output area activities and coordination with stakeholders including Development Partners;

The CMRT Project Manager will need to have exceptional skills and, ideally, an understanding of the operating environment of the Ministry and the Timor-Leste education sector. Consequently, this position is best suited for a Timorese national with existing education management experience. If this person can be identified, then she/he will need to be well supported by other technical advisors who are available. However, although a consensus management style is desirable, there should be no doubt that the CMRT Project Manager is the person in authority and other technical advisors should be willing to take direction from him / her.

The CMRT is not intended to act as a substitute for the functions that are demarcated as the legal competence of the organisational units of the Ministry in normal times. However, the current emergency situation dictates that significant implementation processes will need to occur outside MEYS systems. This is necessary to expedite the Ministry's response to the current pandemic. The CRMT, as stated earlier, has an important role to play in identifying the Ministry's capacity development needs and supporting capacity development activities. However, its priority is to facilitate the completion of the tasks specified in the implementation plan, on time and to a high standard.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of the proposal to the GPE a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and costed implementation plan will be developed.

