



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Education
Sector

COVID-19 Education Response Webinar

Back to school: Preparing and managing the reopening of schools

Friday, 24 April 2020
13:00 -14:30 (GMT+2)

AGENDA

Introduction

School closures, including universities, training centres and other education institutions, have been implemented in most countries worldwide as a preventive measure to curb the further spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, causing an unprecedented disruption of education and affecting more than 90% of the school population.

Ministries of Education (MOEs) are making efforts to ensure continuity of learning through alternative delivery modalities. In parallel, they need to anticipate and start preparing for school reopening as soon as possible. Key practical questions around school reopening concern the timing, conditions and processes, including preparedness of the teaching staff.

Planning the timing of reopening will depend on the status and evolution of the pandemic and will be determined in each context based on political decisions, with advice from experts and established sanitary monitoring mechanisms.

UNESCO has been monitoring the closures of schools globally and notes that most MOEs are planning for either partial reopening (e.g. China), differential re-opening (different grades on different days) or to remain closed until further notice (e.g. Italy). Countries which initially had fixed dates for school reopening had to postpone their decision in view of the evolving situation (e.g. Japan).

School reopening will not simply be about picking up from where things were left. While ensuring continuity of learning, meeting learning objectives, providing remedial courses and organizing examinations, MOEs will also need to anticipate additional challenges, resulting from the direct and indirect consequences of COVID-19 and social isolation on the education system as well as on the school population and the entire community. These may include new or exacerbated inequalities, increased risk of dropout and loss of education personnel.

As in past crises, education systems will also need to be prepared to deal with the potential health effects, both physical and mental, on the entire school community. Particular attention needs to be paid to students from vulnerable backgrounds, such as refugees, migrants, those living in poverty and in remote geographical areas or urban slums, people with disabilities, those affected by lack of nutrition, exposed to child labour, violence and other adverse conditions. The exacerbated vulnerability of females needs to be acknowledged, including the increased risk of gender-based violence, child marriage and early pregnancy.

Decision makers have a large set of issues to address, including prioritizing target groups (e.g. based on socio-economic background, education level, etc.), determining the school calendar, organizing the teaching and learning processes while maintaining social distancing, managing absenteeism and dropouts, responding to special needs groups, implementing sanitary measures, and others.

The effectiveness of the policy decisions and reopening strategies will depend on the level of preparedness of the education system across several factors:

1. **Infrastructure preparedness**, including health and sanitary measures, cleanliness and disinfection.
2. **Preparedness of teaching staff**, including preparedness to return to school and to help students return to the school and classroom routine.
3. **Pedagogical preparedness**, including pedagogical processes to assess progress during school closure, identifying learning loss and organizing remedial courses and assessment.
4. **Family and society preparedness**, including awareness of students and parents/caregivers on readiness to return to school.

For additional information please visit the webinar webpage:

<https://en.unesco.org/events/back-school-preparing-and-managing-reopening-schools-covid-19-education-webinar-6>

Objectives

The webinar aims to:

- Enable information sharing and dialogue around effective strategies for preparing and planning for school reopening;
- Highlight some of the common challenges to anticipate and ways to address them;
- Share lessons learnt from past crises, which can be useful in informing decisions in the current context.

Audience

The target audience for this webinar are primarily Ministry of Education officials engaged in planning for school reopening, following school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar will also be relevant to other interested representatives of the wider education community, including teachers, students, parents, academics, civil society and private sector representatives, private school providers, other government officials, including from Ministries of Health, Social Affairs, and others.

Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions, make comments and share relevant information and material on the online platform through the Q&A function.

Technical specifications

The Webinar will use Microsoft Teams Live as the technical platform. Participants do not require a Microsoft Teams account, but can connect as guests through this link, which will be activated at the time of the webinar: <http://www.unesco.org/covid19EDwebinar>

Language

The working language of the webinar is English with AI-powered translation in the 6 UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

Agenda

Friday, 24 April 2020	
13:00-13:05	Moderator Mr Gwang-Chol Chang Chief of Section of Education Policy, UNESCO
13:05-13:10	Welcoming remarks Mr Borhene Chakroun Director of the Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO
13:10-13:15	Intervention Mr Robert Jenkins Chief of Education and Associate Director, UNICEF
13:15-13:25	Keynote speaker: Planning now for effecting school reopening Ms Suzanne Grant Lewis Director of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
13:25-13:45	Reopening of schools and daycare in Denmark – Phase 1 Ms Louise Hvas Head of Section, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care Ministry of Children and Education, Denmark Ms Elsebeth Aller Leader of the Secretariat for Private School Sector, Department of Primary and Lower Secondary Education Ministry of Children and Education, Denmark Preparedness planning for school reopening Ms Soo-jin Choi Director of the International Education Cooperation Division Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea Catching up with the curriculum and learning loss Ms María Teresa Meléndez Irigoyen General Director of Curriculum Development Ministry of Public Education, Mexico Lessons learnt from the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone Mr Mohamed Sillah Sesay Director of the Inspectorate of Quality Assurance Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Sierra Leone
13:45-14:25	Q&A
14:25-14:30	Closing remarks Ms Vibeke Jensen Director of the Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, UNESCO

MODERATOR

Gwang-Chol Chang: Gwang-Chol is the Chief of Section of Education Policy in the Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO. Since joining UNESCO in 1996, he has held various positions at the Education Sector in Paris, supporting diverse programmes such as policy analysis, planning and management, including in post-conflict and post disaster situations (PCPD). He also served as Senior Programme Specialist in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and led the Education Section of the UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa-Sahel until 2019.

SPEAKERS

Borhene Chakroun: Borhene is the Director of the Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO. His work focuses on global trends in reforming education and training systems for skills development in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. He has conducted a range of policy reviews and skills systems diagnosis and authored various articles and books on skills development and lifelong learning. Previously he worked as a consultant for the EU, the World Bank and other international organizations and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

Robert Jenkins: Robert is the Chief of Education and Associate Director in the Programme Division at UNICEF Headquarters. He joined UNICEF in 1995. He brings over 20 years of experience in international development and humanitarian programming in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Prior to his current appointment, he served as the UNICEF Representative, Jordan, from 2014-2019, and Deputy Director, Division of Policy and Strategy at UNICEF Headquarters from 2009-2014.

Suzanne Grant Lewis: Suzanne is the Director of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) since 2014, providing strategic vision and leadership. She has over 25 years of experience in improving educational opportunities in the developing world, particularly in education policy and planning in Africa. She helped launch the International Education Funders Group, which played a catalytic role in advancing Education for All and directed the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa. As a Harvard University faculty member, she co-developed and directed a Master's degree International Educational Policy Programme. She has taught postgraduate courses on gender inequalities in education and education planning and policymaking in international settings.

Louise Hvas: Louise is Head of section in the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the Ministry for Children and Education in Denmark. She is an expert in ECEC and participated in the EU Working group in this area and undertook other international tasks within the ministry's capacity. She previously worked in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the National Representation of Denmark to the Council of Europe as well as the Political Science department at the University of Copenhagen.

Elsebeth Aller: Elsebeth is the Leader of the Secretariat for the Private School Sector in the Department of Primary and Lower Secondary Schools (GRUND) in the Ministry of Children and Education in Denmark. She has 20 years of experience in these fields and she is also responsible for handling related international policy assignments. She has also represented Denmark in the PISA Governing Board, the TALIS Board of Participating Countries and other international advisory boards.

Soo-jin Choi: Soo-jin is the Director of the International Education Cooperation Division in the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea. She has been working for the Ministry of Education for over 20 years, focusing on higher education and education statistics. Currently, she is in charge of the International Cooperation Division of the Ministry. She has Mphil in Educational Research from Cambridge University, UK.

María Teresa Meléndez Irigoyen: María Teresa is the General Director of Curriculum Development in the Ministry of Public Education in Mexico. Previously she worked as the Deputy Director of the Initial non-scholarized Education Programme for children under 3 years of age at the National Council for Educational Development (CONAFE); as an advisor to the SEP Undersecretary for Planning and Evaluation of Educational Policies; as the Deputy Director of Evaluation and Diversity at the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (INEE) and the Director of its Governing Board. She has been a teacher at the Intercontinental University and an international lecturer on citizenship and interculturality and contributed to several publications and specialized articles.

Mohamed Sillah Sesay: Mohamed is the Director of the Inspectorate of Quality Assurance in the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education in Sierra Leone. He has been devoted to education throughout his life. His career reflects thirty-eight years of unbroken service as a teacher, lecturer and education administrator.

Vibeke Jensen: Vibeke is the incumbent Director of the Division for Peace and Sustainable Development at UNESCO. Since joining UNESCO in 1989, she has held various positions including that of the Director of the New York Office and Head of the Secretariat of the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) at the United Nations, the Director of the UNESCO Office in Islamabad and UNESCO Representative to Pakistan, the Director of UNESCO Office in Dar-es-Salaam and Head of the UNESCO Office in Hanoi.

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UNESCO's COVID-19 Education Response



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