



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING LESOTHO**

# **Education Sector Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

**Kingdom of Lesotho  
Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)**

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## Background

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared by WHO as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) and on March 11, 2020 a pandemic. There are currently no licensed treatments or vaccines for the COVID-19 virus. Experimental treatments and vaccines are under development. The epidemiology of COVID-19 is dynamically evolving with confirmation of the disease in different countries. The most up to date information on COVID-19 can be accessed here <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has disrupted learning for over 89% of the world's student population. For more than 1.5 billion children in 188 countries, education has been interrupted. The gains in expanding access to education and improving the quality of education risks being permanently compromised. The loss of protection and other forms of support that schools provide including school-based health, nutrition and school-feeding are also compromising children's well-being. Vulnerable children, including the disabled, poor and other marginalized groups, are the most affected.

In Lesotho, the official number of confirmed cases in Lesotho is still zero. However, Lesotho is a landlocked country surrounded by South Africa which is the most affected country in Africa. Lesotho also has not yet fully developed its national testing capability, so it is possible, and indeed likely, that there are unidentified cases in the country. For these reasons, schools have been closed to prevent further contamination with the virus.

The government of Lesotho and partners through the education in emergencies working group and the Local Education Group, have developed a plan to respond to this humanitarian crisis in a timely and comprehensive manner. With schools closed until at least June, 2020, the below plan lists the governments' interventions to support educational activities for children of primary and secondary-school age in the immediate, medium, and longer term. The below response plan lists the strategies, activities, and estimated costs of ensuring education continues in times of the COVID-19 virus.

## Situation Analysis

Lesotho declared a national emergency on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 and all schools (and ECCD centers)

were closed. This affects approximately 511,318<sup>1</sup> learners. Most learners are in rural areas and on average of 4.3 per cent of the learners affected by the closure have a disability. Table 1 shows a breakdown of learners.

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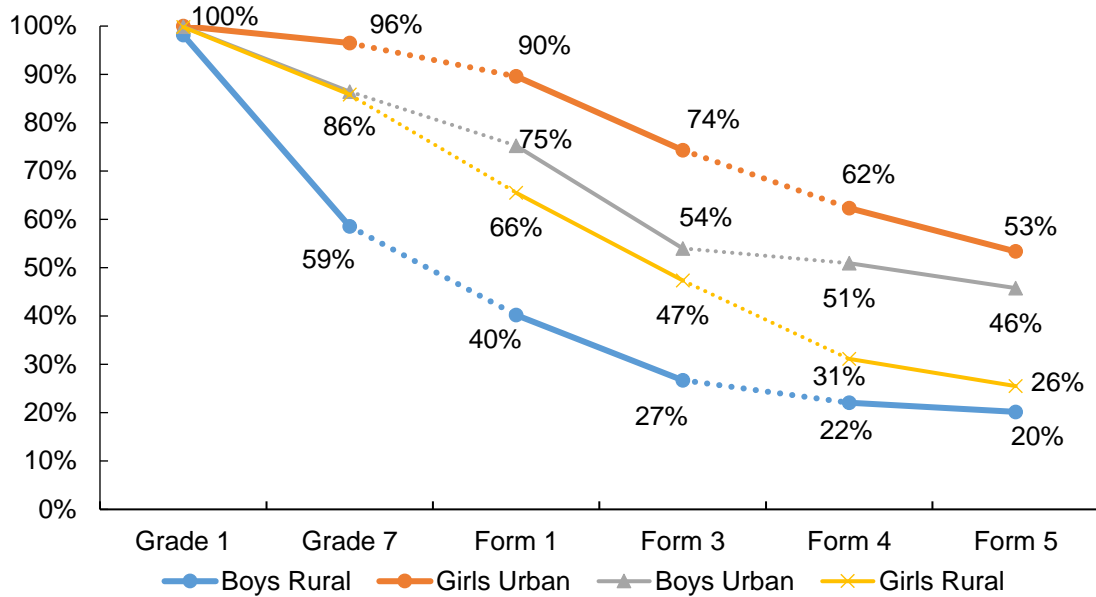
<sup>1</sup> Based on EMIS enrolment data from 2019 as 2020 data is not yet available.

	Current enrolment	% in rural areas	% with disability
<b>Pre-primary</b>	47,447	55%	1%
<b>Primary</b>			
Grade 1	55,184	74%	3%
Grade 2	47,067	72%	4%
Grade 3	46,993	72%	4%
Grade 4	47,643	71%	5%
Grade 5	47,384	71%	5%
Grade 6	43,788	71%	5%
Grade 7	40,791	71%	5%
<b>Lower secondary</b>			
LS 1	42,939	63%	4%
LS2	35,321	63%	4%
LS 3	23,055	60%	5%
<b>Upper Secondary</b>			
US 1	19,370	55%	5%
US 2	14,399	54%	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>511,381</b>		

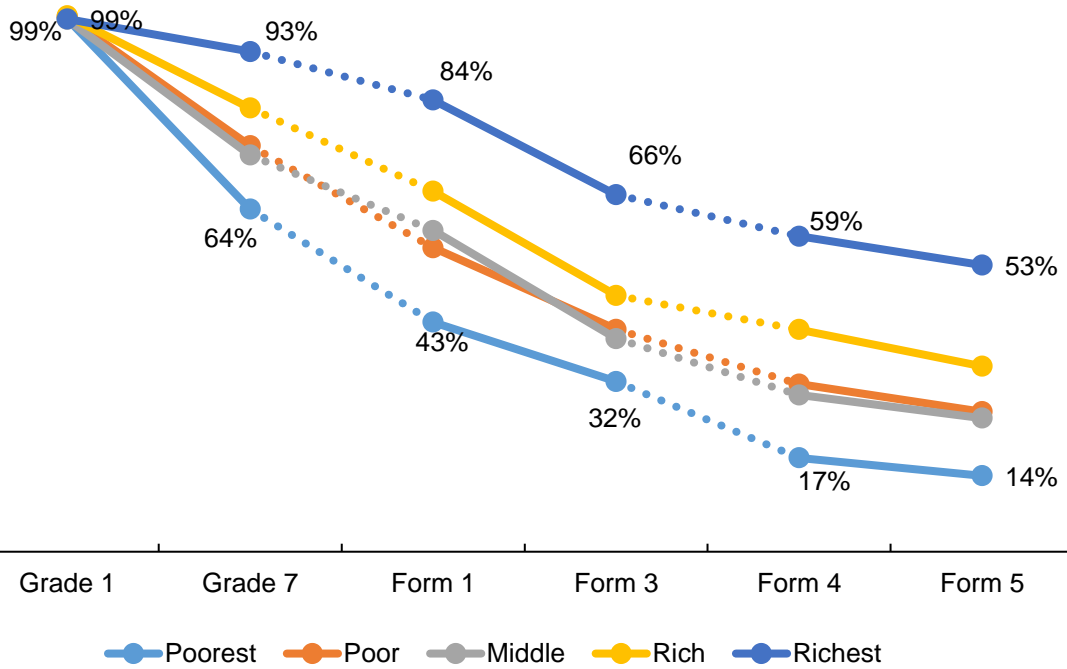
**Table 1. Enrolment in Lesotho based on 2019 EMIS data**

The population of Lesotho is mostly rural, and many families rely on herding cattle and farming for their survival and/or income. Participation of boys in education, particularly in rural mountain areas is the lowest of any group. It is expected that this negative trend may be exacerbated by COVID 19 given the higher opportunity cost of going to school following the economic shock as a result of the crisis.

Access by education level for girls and boys - ESA 2019



Access by education level and wealth index - ESA 2019



For these reasons it is important to ensure that the COVID 19 response places attention to the poorest and rural/remote areas first, with an emphasis on boys' participation in education.

The MOET, assisted by WFP, provides school feeding to 320 000 learners in public primary schools and 60 000 children in pre-schools (home based, reception classes and community centres) in the ten districts. Vulnerable children make up 19% of all children in pre-primary and primary schools. Initially when schools were closed feeding continued for a week, but when the country went into lockdown school feeding was discontinued and has only recently resumed though only for the most disadvantaged families and in the form of monthly take home rations.

In Lesotho, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in schools is a major issue. According to a survey undertaken by the MOET in April 2020, 769 schools do not have access to water. Of these schools 181 are classed as 'inaccessible' which means they are not easily reachable by road, and as such the challenge and cost of providing WASH in these schools is increased.

District	Primary	Post Primary	Inaccessible schools	Total
<b>Berea</b>	60	31	10	91
<b>Butha-Buthe</b>	51	16	4	67
<b>Leribe</b>	77	6	18	83
<b>Mafeteng</b>	86	15	11	101
<b>Maseru</b>	97	13	27	110
<b>Mohale's Hoek</b>	115	3	47	118
<b>Mokhotlong</b>	46	10	10	56
<b>Qacha's Nek</b>	32	5	19	37
<b>Quthing</b>	39	0	13	39
<b>Thaba-Tseka</b>	63	4	22	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>769</b>

**Table 2.** Number of schools in Lesotho without water, April 2020.

## Response

This unprecedented crisis calls for a response well beyond just the education sector as there is a need to ensure children's wellbeing and continuity of learning while schools are closed, but also to ensure that schools can ensure safe operations when they reopen. This education sector response plan was developed in recognition of the need for multi-sectoral planning, coordination and pooling of resources in response to this crisis and was developed in alignment to the national response plan and other sectoral response plans including health, water and social development.

The crisis is evolving and has no fixed timeline. For this reason the key interventions in this response plan have been divided into immediate, medium- and longer-term timelines outlined below.

In the **immediate or short term**, the MOET is focused on

- 1) Strengthen awareness on COVID-19 in all educational institutions
- 2) Radio and Television learning modules development and implementation
- 3) Development of learner packs for distribution
- 4) Development of ECD resources
- 5) Develop MOET COVID-19 guidelines and emergency protocol

- 6) Provision of WASH services in schools and promotion of water saving techniques, and safe hygiene practices
- 7) Restructuring school feeding to allow continuation during school closure

In the **medium-term**, the response will focus on

- 1) Provision of Take-Home Rations to vulnerable learners' households
- 2) Establishment of online platform for curriculum and learning modules
- 3) Provision of solar radios in hard to reach areas
- 4) Child Protection and Psychosocial Support
- 5) Back to school campaign

In the **longer-term**, the recovery will focus on

- 1) Identifying learning gaps
- 2) Implementation of accelerated learning programs
- 3) Monitoring of re-enrolment to identify and support children that have dropped out
- 4) Monitoring and evaluation of COVID-19 in educational institutions and overall response

### **Geographic Focus**

The COVID-19 Pandemic and related economic strains created on communities and children is fast-moving, has the potential to affect all regions with the country, and thus requires a rapid response at scale in affected areas. Priority geographic areas that will be focused on will include remote, rural and hard to reach areas.

### **Coordination and Implementation**

The response will be managed by the MOET in collaboration with UNICEF and other partners through the Local Education Group and the education in emergencies working group. Implementation of school feeding will be done in collaboration with WFP and the component on WASH in schools will be delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Water and department of rural water supply in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with expertise in this area.

Immediate Response (0-6 Months)							
Key Activities	Sub-Activities	Duration	Expected Results	Responsible	Estimated Cost (LSL)	Available Funds	Financial Gap
Strengthen awareness on COVID-19 in all educational institutions	Enroll all DEMs (10), Head Teachers, Principals, District Resource Teachers, NTTs and Teachers on U-Report	1 week	All enrolled on U-Report	MOET, UNICEF	60,000	60,000	0
	Develop and print IEC materials on COVID-19 awareness raising (factsheet, posters, leaflets 2100 copies of each)	2 weeks	2,100 factsheet, 2100 posters, 2100 leaflets printed	MOET, UNICEF	189,000	189,000	0
	Disseminate IEC materials on COVID-19 awareness raising through Education Regional structures, U-Report and multi-media.	1 week	all COVID-19 IEC material disseminated to DEMs, Head Teachers and Teachers	MOET, UNICEF	60,000	60,000	0
Radio and Television learning modules development and implementation	Develop multi-media modules for learners with relevant stakeholders (NCDC, LDTC, ECoL subject inspectors, subject advisors, subject specialist teachers, subject officers, media and tech-companies)	1 month	Subject specific (self-instructional) multi-media modules developed for grades 1-12 for radio and TV  TV programming with sign language interpretation and closed captioning	MOET, UNICEF	956,700	950,000	6,700

	Engage LTV radio Lesotho stations on using their stations to facilitate teaching and learning during while schools are closed	3 months	Radio and television slots secured  Teaching and learning for specific levels of education implemented	MOET, UNICEF, LTV, Radio Lesotho	1,493,496	288,000	1,205,496
Development and distribution of learner packs	NCDC, subject teachers (primary and secondary) and LDTC to develop accessible printed learner packs for each grade including details of remote support available using SMS technology	3 months	Learner pack distributed to all learners via SSU  Learner packs include packs for learners with disabilities  Remote support established using mobile technology	MOET, UNICEF	38,741,900	923,166	37,818,734
Development and distribution of ECD resources to young children and their parents	Development/adaptation and dissemination of ECE resources for young children	1 month	Resources developed and delivered through radio/TV/internet/social media	MOET, NECDOL, UNICEF	233,000	0	233,000
	Support parents with coping, stress management and parenting strategies delivered via phones/radio/TV/internet/social media	3 months	Increased knowledge among parents on management strategies and	MOET, UNICEF	185,000	0	185,000



			wellbeing of children				
Develop MoET COVID-19 guidelines and emergency protocol	Draft comprehensive guidelines for safe childcare, pre-schools, school operations (e.g. promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene, screening and referral of suspected cases, as appropriate), and education about COVID-19 prevention	2 weeks	Draft of education COVID-19 protocol	MOET, MOH, WHO	9,000	9,000	0
	Validate with MoH officials and WHO	1 day	Emergency protocol in place	MOET, MOH, WHO, UNICEF	1,800	1,800	0
	Develop and implement guidelines for safe childcare, pre-schools, school operations	3 months	Guidelines in place and distributed to schools	MOET, MOH, WHO, UNICEF	20,800	20,800	0
Provision of WASH services in schools and promotion of water saving techniques, and safe hygiene practices	Conduct baseline survey on availability of water, soap and handwashing facilities in schools using SMS messaging	1 week	Statistics on availability of handwashing facility	MOET, UNICEF	60,000	60,000	0
	Provision of soap and/ or sanitizer, disinfectant and masks to 2,076 schools	12 months	Soap delivered to schools	MOET, UNICEF	9,202,000	0	9,202,000
	Preposition water harvesting facilities in schools prone to water shortage	3 months	Water harvesting facilities available (water tanks, gutters)	MOET, UNICEF	7,400,000	7,400,000	0

	Establish handwashing facilities in schools where none are available	6 months	Functional handwashing stations in all schools	MOET, UNICEF	30,000,000	0	30,000,000
	Create awareness on water saving techniques, hygiene promotion, safety (Head teachers and teachers on U-Report)	1 week	Teachers are aware, pass the techniques and practices to students.	MOET, UNICEF	94,000	94,000	0
Provision of take home rations to vulnerable learners	Use foodstuffs already at primary schools to cover short term needs of vulnerable learners identified in consultation with principals and school boards	During school closure	Children are able to access school meals	MOET, WFP	504,000	504,000	0
Estimated <b>Total Cost</b> for Immediate Response activities					89,150,696	10,559,766	78,650,930

Medium-Term Response (6 -12 months)							
Activities	Sub-Activities	Duration	Expected Results	Responsible	Estimated Cost	Available Funds	Financial Gap
Provision of Take-Home Rations to vulnerable learners' households	Increase monthly take home rations to provide for a household (4 people) and distribute through schools	6 months	Families have increased rations while schools are closed – reducing economic burden	MOET, WFP	158,390,237	158,390,237	0
Establishment of online platform for curriculum and learning modules	Set up online platform with curriculum and learning modules, including radio and TV materials	3 months	Online platform with curriculum and related learning materials available online	MOET, UNICEF, Camara Lesotho	940,000	940,000	0
	Train key MOET staff on use and management of the platform	1 month	MOET has the capacity to manage online platform	MOET, UNICEF	4,500	4,500	0
	Engagement of Econet and Vodacom in zero rating the platform and promoting it among their subscribers	3 months	Platform is available at minimum cost to learners, teachers and parents with access to internet	MOET, Vodacom, Econet	0	0	0
Provision of solar radios in hard to reach areas	Mapping of areas where radio coverage is low and identification of disadvantaged learners	2 weeks	List of disadvantaged learners by district	MOET, LNFOD	0	0	0

	through district education structures and National Information Structure for Social Assistance (NISSA) with special attention to learners with disabilities						
Child Protection and Psychosocial Support	Strengthen teacher and education personnel knowledge related to GBV risk mitigation, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), child safeguarding, and safe referral practices	6 months	All teachers reached with messaging on GBV, PSEA and referrals	MOET, MOSD, UNICEF	90,861	0	90,861
	Development and roll-out of child-friendly complaints and feedback mechanisms through child helpline	18 months	Strengthened mechanisms for complaints in schools	MOET, MOSD, UNICEF	1,331,000	0	1,331,000
	Develop, disseminate or display messages in schools about child protection and available services	3 months	All schools have IEC materials on child protection	MOET, MOSD, UNICEF	1,075,000	0	1,075,000
	Develop guidance for parents on stress, supporting children whose routines have been disrupted, strategies for managing behavior, and work with	3 months	Guidance distributed through radio/TV/social media Teachers	MOET, MOSD, UNICEF	182,400	0	182,400

	schools to support messaging		sensitized on materials				
Subsidize school fees for disadvantaged secondary learners for remaining academic year	Work with MOSD to identify vulnerable learners and those at risk of dropping out and subsidize their fees for term 2 and 3	8 months	Fees subsidized reducing dropouts when schools re-open	MOET, MOSD	9,600,000	0	9,600,000
Back to school campaign	Development and roll out of back to school campaign messages targeting learners in different levels of education; The messages should target learners, parents/ caregivers and community leaders as well as the teachers	3 months	Messages disseminated to community leaders, parents, learners through various media: TV, Radio, Print (fliers) bulk SMS social media	MOET, UNICEF	370,000	0	370,000
<b>Estimated Total Cost for Medium-Term Response activities</b>					<b>171,983,998</b>	<b>159,334,737</b>	<b>12,649,261</b>

Long Term Recovery (> 12 months)							
Activities	Sub-Activities	Duration	Expected Results	Responsible	Estimated Cost	Available Funds	Financial Gap
Identify learning gaps	Develop assessment to identify learning gaps	2 weeks	Assessment tool	MOET	0	0	0
	Support schools to undertake assessments on re-opening of schools to identify learning gaps	1 month	Report on learning gaps	MOET	0	0	0
Implementation of accelerated learning programming	Develop accelerated learning guidelines and support program targeting disadvantaged learners, particularly primary school learners with numeracy and literacy and adolescents transitioning from primary to secondary education with an emphasis on rural boys	6 months	Accelerated learning program developed	MOET, UNICEF	5,082,000	0	5,082,000
Monitoring of re-enrollment to identify children that may have dropped out	Undertake rapid enrolment survey to compare enrolment figures with start of 2020	2 weeks	Dropout rate identified	MOET, UNICEF	189,000	189,000	0
	Identify learners that have dropped out and work with district level colleagues to re-enrol or provide alternative pathways	6 months		MOET, MOSD, UNICEF	0	0	0
Monitoring and Evaluation of COVID-19 in	Continued risk assessment of COVID-19 led by the MoH	12 months	COVID-19 free environment in schools	MOET, MOH	0	0	0

educational institutions and overall response	Continued awareness of sanitation and hygiene to Head teachers and teachers using U-Report	1 month	Teachers are aware, pass the techniques and practices to students.	MOET, UNICEF	189,000	189,000	0
	Evaluation of COVID-19 Response	2 months	Evaluation report for the COVID-19 Response	MOET, UNICEF	1,294,000	0	1,294,000
<b>Estimated cost for Long-term Recovery activities</b>					<b>6,754,000</b>	<b>378,000</b>	<b>6,376,000</b>

<b>Summary of Education Sector Response: Estimated Cost of Activities</b>			
	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Available Funds LSL</b>	<b>Financial Gap</b>
Short term - Immediate	89,150,696	10,559,766	78,650,930
Medium term -Response	171,983,998	159,334,737	12,649,261
Long Term - Recovery Stage	6,754,000	378,000	6,376,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>267,888,694</b>	<b>170,272,503</b>	<b>97,676,191</b>

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The monitoring of the programme will utilize the existing sector dialogue structure. Direction and high level decision making will be made through the LEG and the EiEWG will regularly review the activity progress against the results framework, identifying issues and bottlenecks for the attention of the LEG. MOET senior management will review progress indicators, challenges and mitigations on a quarterly basis.

The program will be monitored at different levels to collect triangulated evidence where possible in order to assure that the program is not only delivering on the planned outcomes and outputs, but that the outcomes can be sustained. Monitoring and evaluation will serve three principal functions. The first will be the accountability function to various stakeholders including the funders, the target beneficiaries, and the government. The second will be to assess performance, whether the planned results are being realized and in tandem with the set objectives and goals. The third will be monitoring for learning that is to document and share all lessons right from the formative phases of the program to the end, to inform sustainability and good practice.

Learning from evidence approach is planned and embedded into the programme, to generate knowledge and evidence particularly on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. An evaluation study is planned towards the end of the programme to assess and draw lessons from the response and recovery efforts of the sector. While the focus of the evaluation will be determined by the education sector partners through the LEG, the evaluation would give special attention to relevance and effectiveness of education interventions and teaching-learning strategies in the context the crisis and equitable programme reach. The evaluation findings are expected to inform further strengthening of the distance learning and alternative learning system in the country and to draw lessons for future emergency preparedness, readiness and contingency planning in the sector.



Theme	Indicator	Indicator definition	Indicator type	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Responsible
<b>Immediate Response (0-6 Months)</b>							
<b>Continuity of Learning</b>	# children supported with distance/home-based learning - at pre-primary level - at primary level - at secondary level	Number of children who have access to either radio or TV lessons or have received learner packs for continuity of learning during school closures	Output	0	511,381	Radio and television reach reports; Beneficiary lists from distribution of learner packs; Feedback from adolescents using U-Report	MoET – LDTC, Planning Unit; UNICEF
<b>School feeding</b>	# children provided access to school meals during school closures - at pre-primary level - at primary level	Number of children who receive take-home rations distributed through schools during school closures	Output	0	72,200	Beneficiary lists from distribution of take-home rations	MoET – District Education Managers

<b>WASH</b>	# schools equipped with minimum hygiene standards for prevention of COVID-19 (water, soap, handwashing stations)	Number of schools where permanent handwashing stations have been installed, soap provided, and water made available either through construction of water systems, piping or provision of water trucking	Output	0	2,076 schools provided with soap and permanent handwashing stations; 769 schools provided with water; 1,300 schools provided with tanks for water harvesting	Monitoring reports	MoET; Ministry of Water; Ministry of Health; UNICEF
<b>Medium-Term Response (6 -12 months)</b>							
<b>Continuity of Learning</b>	% adolescents who feel the distance/home-based learning meets their needs	Percentage of adolescents who confirm that the distance/home-based learning meets their needs out of all adolescents who gave feedback on U-Report	Outcome	0	90%	Feedback from adolescents using U-Report; Evaluation reports on the effectiveness of distance/home-based learning	MoET- Planning Unit; UNICEF

<b>School feeding</b>	# vulnerable learner households provided with food packages	Number of vulnerable learner households that received food packages during COVID-19 emergency	Output	0	72,200	Beneficiary lists from distribution of food packages	MoSD; WFP
<b>Child protection</b>	# schools reached with messaging on GBV, PSEA and referrals	Number of schools reached with messaging on GBV risk mitigation, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), child safeguarding, and safe referral practices	Output	0	2,076	MoSD monitoring reports	MoET; MoSD; UNICEF
<b>Long Term Recovery (&gt; 12 months)</b>							
<b>Continuity of Learning</b>	# and % children previously enrolled who return to school once the schools are reopened	Number and percentage of children who were previously enrolled and return to school after schools are reopened	Outcome	0	100%	Enrolment records; Attendance register	MoET – Planning Unit; District Education Mangers