

SURVEY OF COVID-19 IMPACT ON NATIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING UNITS



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GOALS

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Survey of COVID-19 Impact on National Education Planning Units



UNESCO

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Summary

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads, most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the disease. These nationwide closures are not only impacting hundreds of millions of students, they are also affecting the capacity of national education planning units to monitor education outcomes. During these trying times, when countries need data more urgently than ever before to plan and monitor emergency response efforts and prepare for medium- and long-term mitigation and recovery strategies, statistical operations and other office activities are being seriously disrupted or interrupted.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has therefore launched and conducted a survey of COVID-19 pandemic impacts on national education planning units. The questionnaire is designed for statistical planning units in charge of national education statistics. The survey is available in four languages (English, French, Spanish, and Russian) and can be submitted by email or through the online survey platform. Therefore, the greatest degree of survey participation, integrity, and confidence in the quality of the data are ensured.

In light of disruptive challenges due to the progression of the pandemic, the survey has been conducted and collected by education statistics planning units to ensure that the latest impact and responses are captured. The survey covers a variety of topics to capture the latest impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operation of education statistics planning units, their responses, and their needs for financial and technical support. It contains four sections: general information on the status of national planning units, statistical operations for school census, monitoring data on schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, frequency of collection, support needs, national COVID-19 pandemic responses, and additional information.

The questionnaire was carried out on 15 July 2020 and was completed on 1 October 2020. The survey data covers 129 countries across 9 regions. In terms of regional distribution, we recorded 2 countries from Northern Africa, 34 countries from sub-Saharan Africa, 10 countries from Central and Southern Asia, 11 countries from Eastern and South-eastern Asia, 13 countries from Western Asia, 15 countries from Europe, 32 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 country from North America and 11 countries from Oceania. In terms of income dispersion of the sample, 24.8% are from high income countries, 30.4% are from upper-middle income countries, 28.8% are from lower-middle income countries and 16% are from low income countries.



Key Findings

This section presents the key results of the survey. The results provide useful information for understanding disruptions in national education planning units, identifying priorities for allocating resources and establishing technical cooperation in the areas of greatest need.

- More than half of the countries' education statistics planning units were not closed at the time of the survey: About 61.7% percent of countries education statistics planning units were not closed, 32.8% of the countries Education statistics planning units were fully closed to all staff and 5.5% of countries Education statistics planning units were open only to essential staff;
- Around two thirds of the education statistics planning units must stop or postpone the data collection within the current year or next year;
- Around two thirds of education statistics planning units indicated in the survey that COVID-19 had either severely or moderately affected their ability to meet global, regional and national reporting requirements;
- Difficulties in getting timely data from school principals, low response rate from schools, and annual school census being delayed/postponed are the top three relevant challenges faced by the national education planning units;
- During the pandemic, over two-thirds of countries monitored, or plan to monitor, educational variables and less than half of countries have planned a survey on COVID-19 and its impact;
- Web surveys are the most commonly used new approach to analyse or monitor the impact of the pandemic on education;
- More than half of the countries that responded to the survey reported additional types of support are needed. Additional support for financial resources, equipment (computers, tablets, servers etc.) and technical assistance / capacity development are the top three types of support required.



The Functioning of Education Statistics Planning Units During the Pandemic

From the reopening of businesses to children returning to school across the world, many countries are cautiously and gradually lifting COVID-19 restrictions. The data also show that the proportion of countries in the sample whose education statistics planning units remain open increases along with countries' income level.

- As of 15 July 2020, while strict closures have been relatively more frequent in certain regions, around 61.7% of countries education statistics planning units in the sample were not closed and remained open as normal;
- About 47-55% of low income and lower-middle income countries in the sample did not close the education statistics planning units;
- For upper-middle-income and high-income countries, around 60-80% of education statistics planning units remain open.

However, the statistical operations and other office activities of education statistics planning units are still seriously disrupted or interrupted during the pandemic:

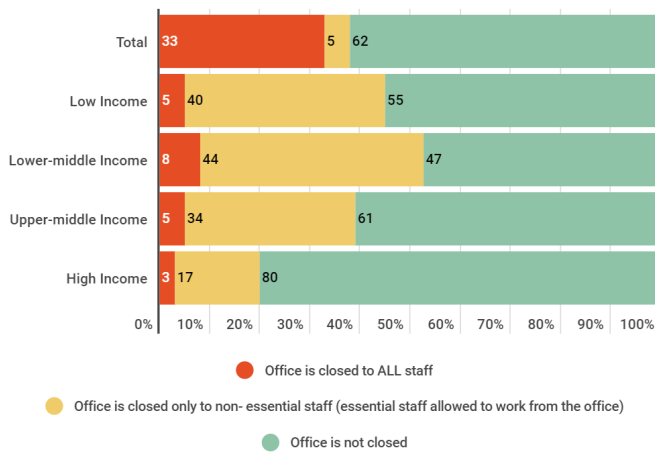
- Around 38.3% of countries education statistics planning units were closed to all staff or were closed to non-essential staff, of which:
 - 32.8% of the countries education statistics planning units were fully closed to all staff and,
 - 5.5% of countries education statistics planning units were open only to essential staff.
- For the countries whose education statistics planning units were closed or partially closed, more than 73% have been closed for 3 months or more;
- Regarding distance working, more than 90% of the education statistics planning units instructed some or all staff to work from home;
- The share of low income and lower-middle income countries who instructed some or all staff to work from home (85-89%) is significantly lower compared to upper-middle income and high-income countries (100%).



Figure 1.1: Closure of Main Offices and Distance Working of Education Statistics Planning Units

Due to the pandemic:

Is your main office closed?



Is staff working from home?

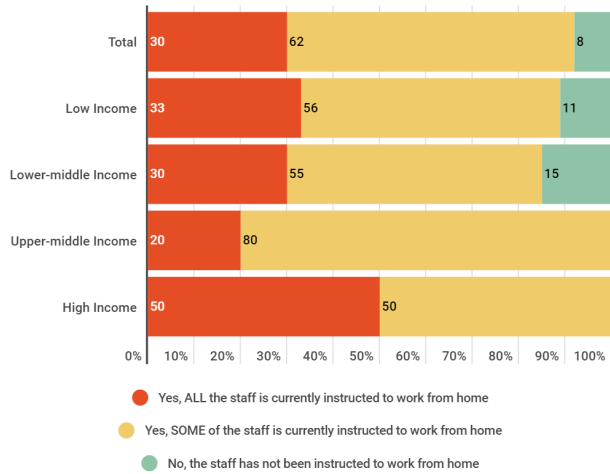
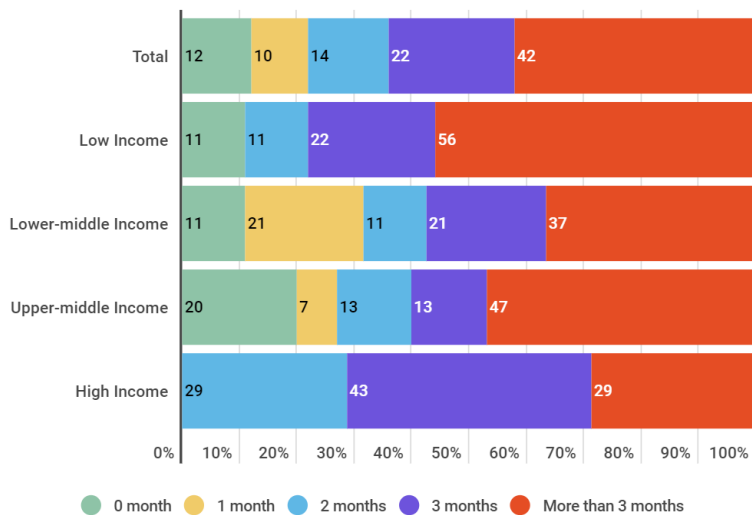


Figure 1.2: Duration of Office Closure of Education Statistics Planning Units

If closed, how many weeks has your main office been closed?





Interruptions and Challenges to Statistical Operations for School Census

Interruptions

The pandemic has greatly limited the ability of countries to compile basic statistical data and meet international reporting requirements. Countries with higher income levels are less affected by the pandemic and thus more likely to continue data collection and meet reporting requirements:

- More than 90% of education statistics planning units were in the process of producing school-level data at the beginning of the pandemic.
- Around one-third of education statistics planning units must stop or postpone the data collection within the current year or next year.
- Around two-thirds of education statistics planning units indicated in the survey that COVID-19 had either severely or moderately affected their ability to meet global, regional and national reporting requirements.
- Countries with lower income levels were more affected by the pandemic and were less likely to meet reporting requirements: only around 14% of low-income countries in the sample were not affected by the pandemic and able to meet national reporting requirements, while 45% of high-income countries in the sample were not affected by the pandemic and able to meet national reporting requirements.

Figure 2.1.1: Impact of the Pandemic on Data Production and Collection

In what moment of the production process for school-level data were you at the start of the pandemic? Did you have to stop or postpone the data collection?

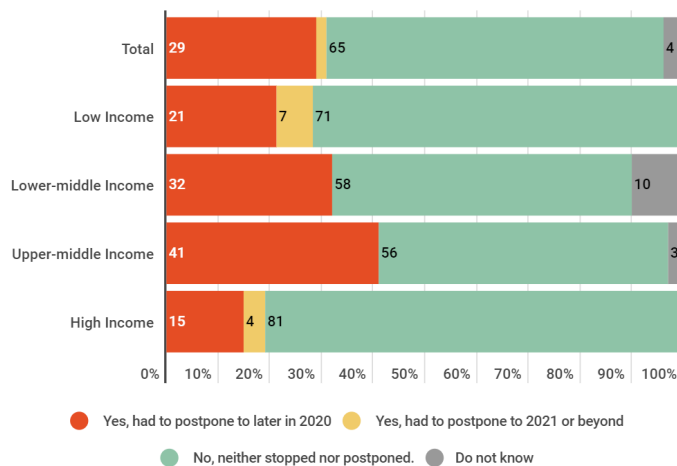
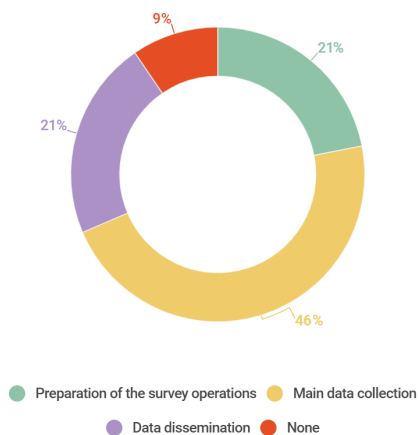
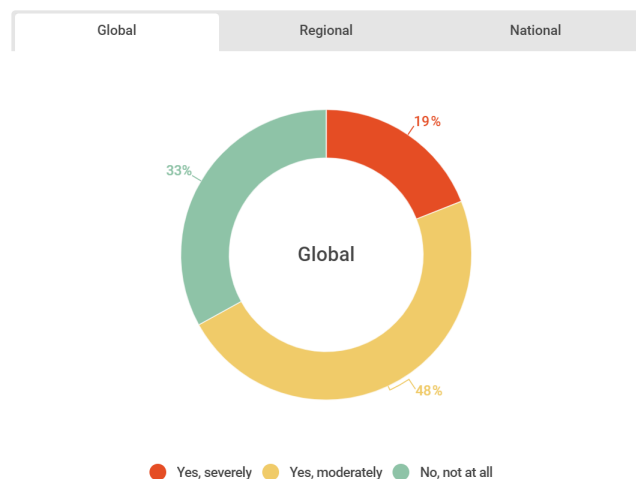


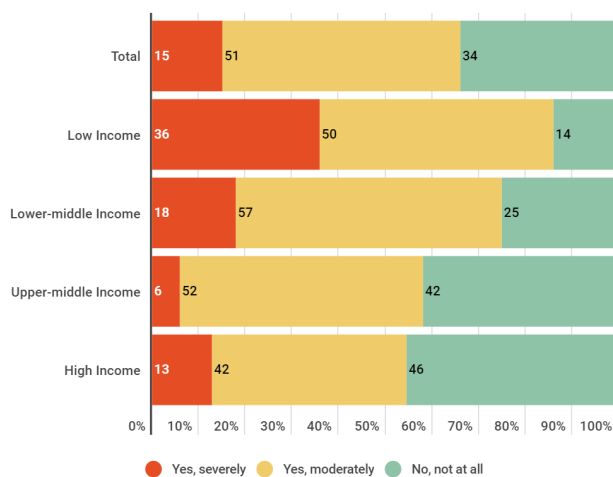


Figure 2.1.2: Impact of the Pandemic on Ability to Meet Reporting Requirements

Is the current COVID-19 pandemic affecting your ability to meet reporting requirements?



Is the current COVID-19 pandemic affecting your ability to meet national reporting requirements?



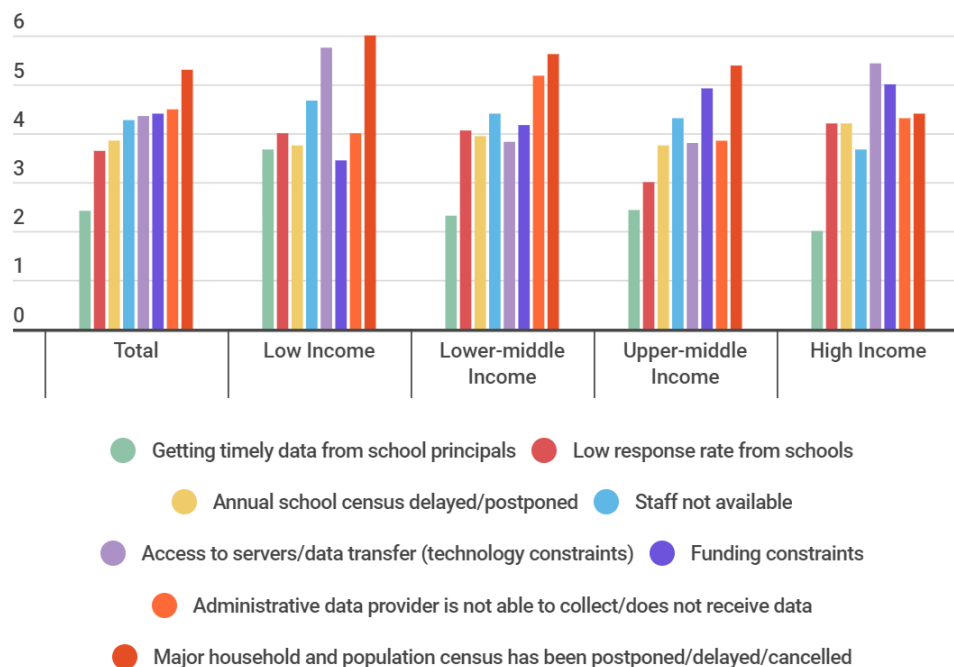
Challenges

- In terms of overall challenges in producing statistical data during the pandemic, countries in the survey have ranked getting timely data from school principals as the most pressing challenge. This is followed by low response rate from schools, annual school census being delayed/postponed, access to servers/data transfer (technology constraints), staff not available, administrative data provider not able to collect/does not receive data, and funding constraints.
- The challenges varied by income group. Compared to other income groups, lower-middle income countries are more likely to be challenged by funding constraints, getting timely data from school principals and annual school census being delayed/postponed.
- High income countries are more likely to rank getting timely data from school principals or lack of staff, as challenging issues.



Figure 2.2.1: Ranking of Data Production Challenges

Overall, what is the main challenge in producing statistical data due to the pandemic? Please rank according to relevance (1 = most relevant, then 2, etc.)



Adapting Statistical Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic

School Statistical Variables

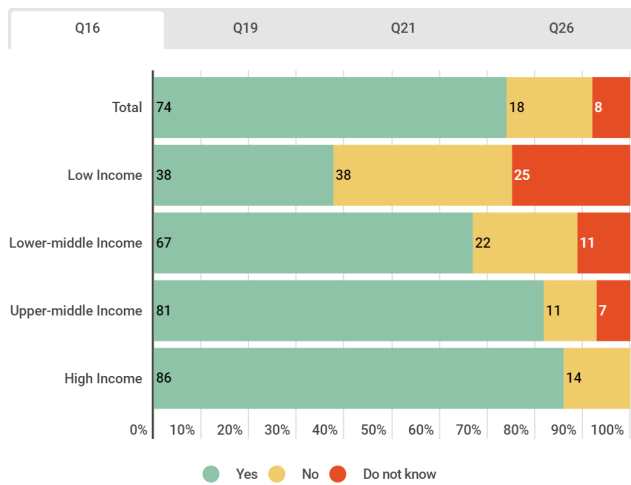
- During the pandemic, over two-thirds of countries monitored or plan to monitor educational variables.
- The percentage of countries that monitored or plan to monitor educational variables increases with the level of income: Over 80% of upper-middle income and high income countries monitored or plan to monitor educational variables, while only 37.5% of low income countries monitored or plan to monitor educational variables.
- Over one-third of Education statistics planning units in the sample are adapting some definitions or adding new school statistical variables. The use of the adaptation of variables varied only slightly by income levels.



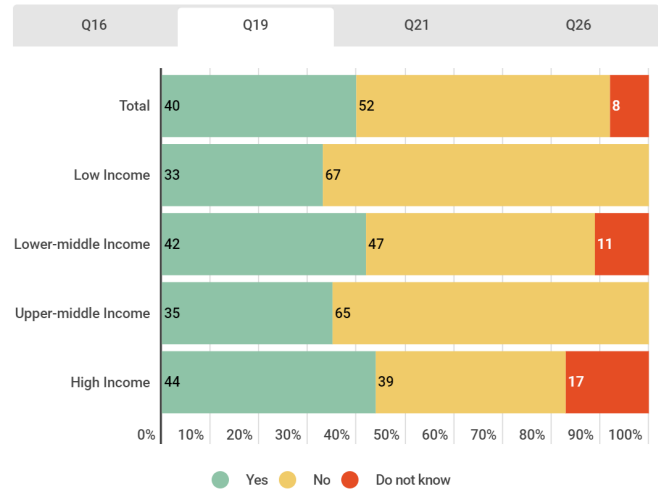
Figure 3.1.1: Impact of the Pandemic on Data Monitoring and Adaptation

During the Covid-19 pandemic:

Have you monitored or will you monitor educational variables?



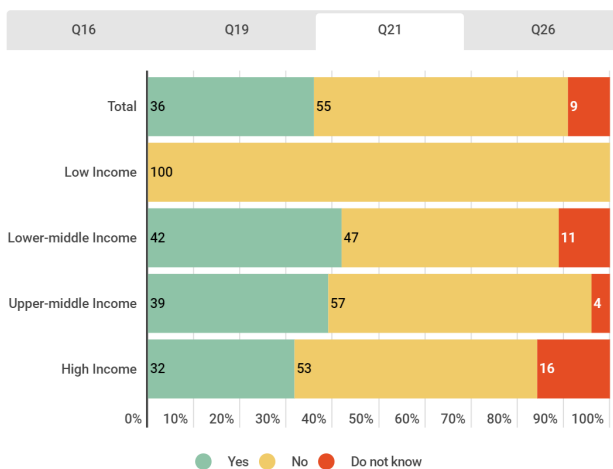
Are you adapting the definition or adding new school statistical variables?



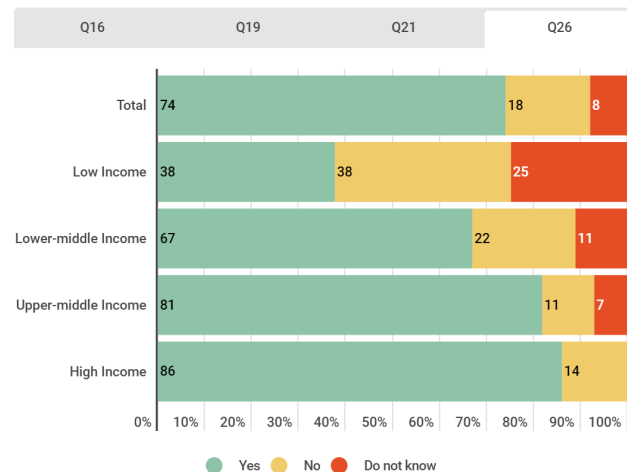
- More than 35% of countries in the sample collected data more frequently than usual due to the pandemic. Except for low income countries, the figure only varies slightly in income levels;
- More than half of countries in the sample have planned a survey on COVID-19 and its impact on education. Notably, more than 80% of high income and upper-middle income countries have planned a survey on COVID-19 and its impact, while the figure is much less for low income and lower-middle income countries.

Figure 3.1.2: Impact of the Pandemic on Frequency of Data Collection and Additional Survey

Are you collecting data more frequently than usual?



Has your country planned any surveys on COVID-19 and its impact?





Modes of Data Collection

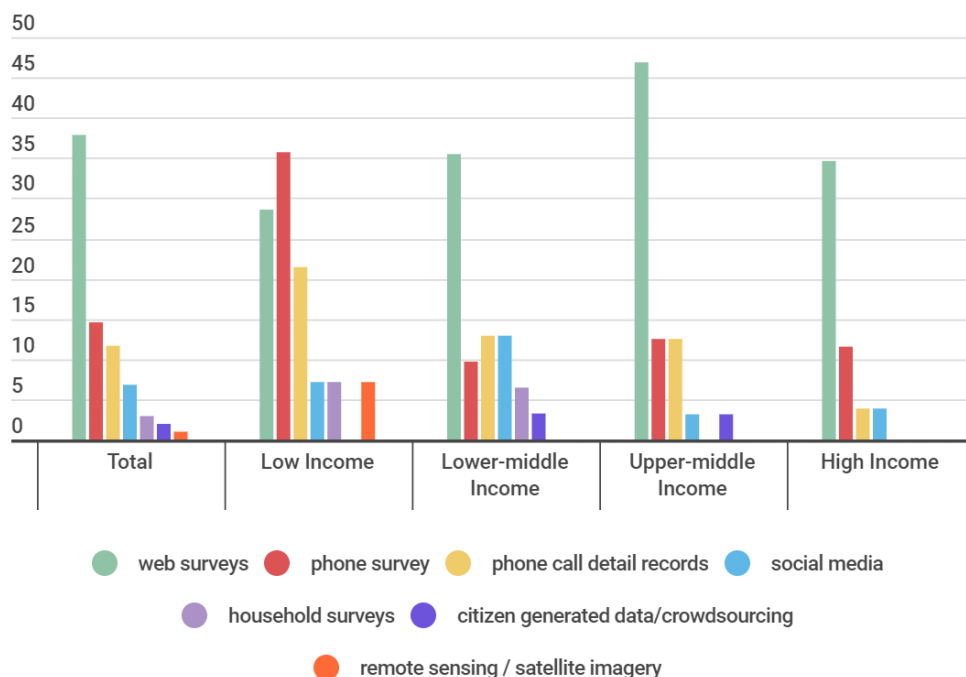
New data collection modes have also been introduced to complete annual school census.

- Over 36% of countries that responded to the survey were conducting web surveys, 14% used phone surveys, 11% used phone call detail records, and more than 6% conducted surveys using social media;
- The adoption of new data collection modes differed based on country income level: the share of lower-middle income countries adopting multiple new data collection modes (web survey/phone survey) was particularly high compared to other income group countries.

Figure 3.2.1: Impact of the Pandemic on Mode of Data Collection

During the Covid-19 pandemic:

Which new education data collection mode was introduced to complete the annual school census?





Variables That Are Collected More Frequently

- Over 37% of countries were collecting data more frequently than usual;
- Data on student attendance at school or online, functional electricity and access to the internet, and water and sanitation are the top three types of data that were collected more frequently than usual. This was followed by data on student enrolment and number of learners per class (class size) to observe the recommended social distancing measures in class.
- Around 15% of countries reported more frequent data collection for teacher's attendance at school/online and sanitary bloc/functional toilets for girls and boys.

Figure 3.3.1: Impact of the Pandemic on the Frequency of Data Collection

During the Covid-19 pandemic:

Which data are being collected more frequently than usual?

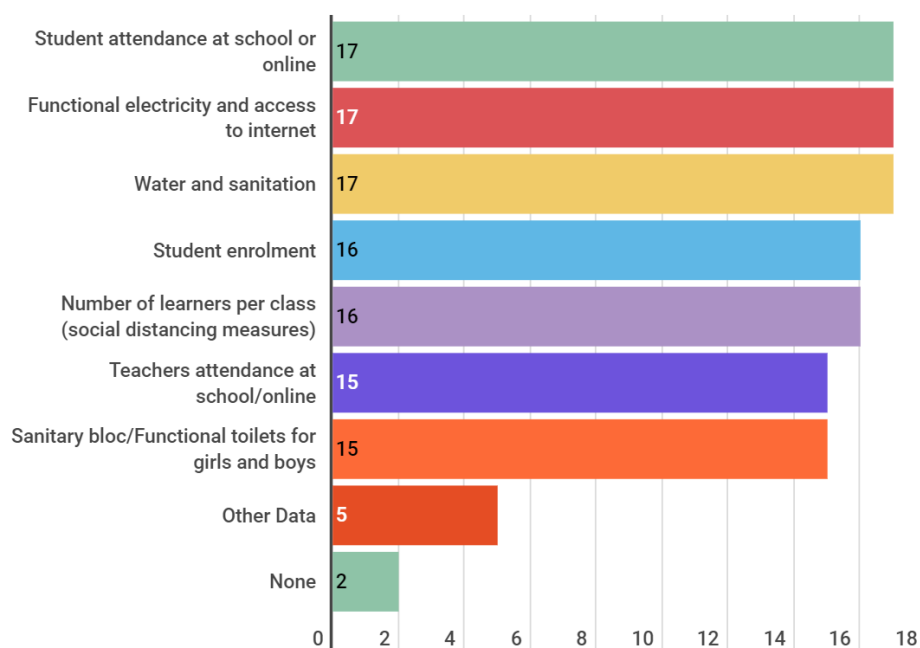
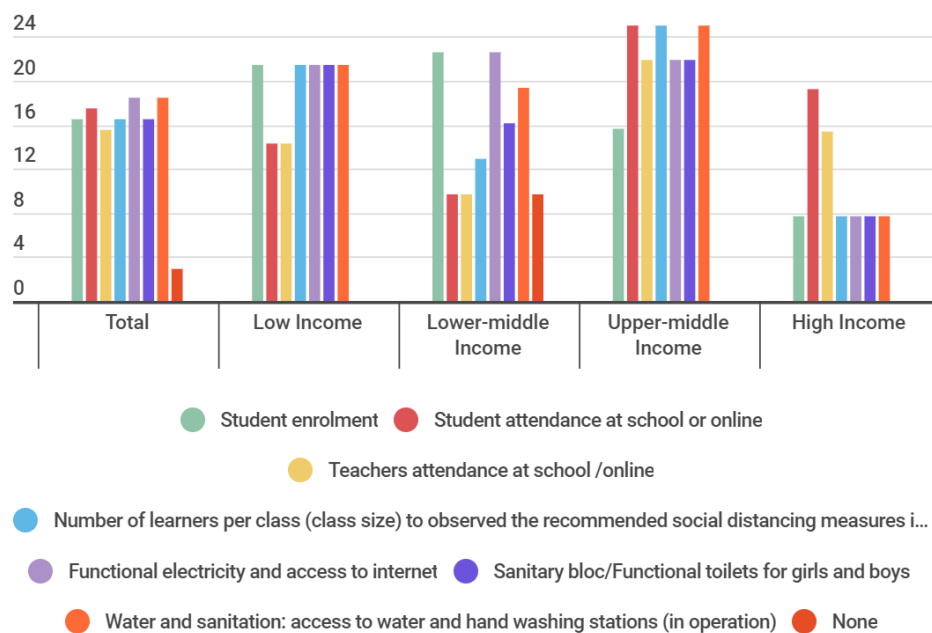




Figure 3.3.2: Impact of the Pandemic on the Frequency of Data Collection, by Income Group

Which data is being collected more frequently than usual?



Support Needs

- More than half of countries that responded to the survey reported additional types of support are needed. Additional support for financial resources, equipment (computers, tablets, servers etc.) and technical assistance / capacity development were the top three types of support needed during the pandemic.

This figure varied by income group. Compared to other income groups,

- Lower income countries were more likely to need financial support, and equipment (computers, tablets, servers etc.);
- High income countries were more likely to need equipment (computers, tablets, servers etc.) and technical assistance / capacity development support.



Figure 4.1: Ranking of Types of Support Needed

What type of support do you need? (1 = most important, then 2, etc.).

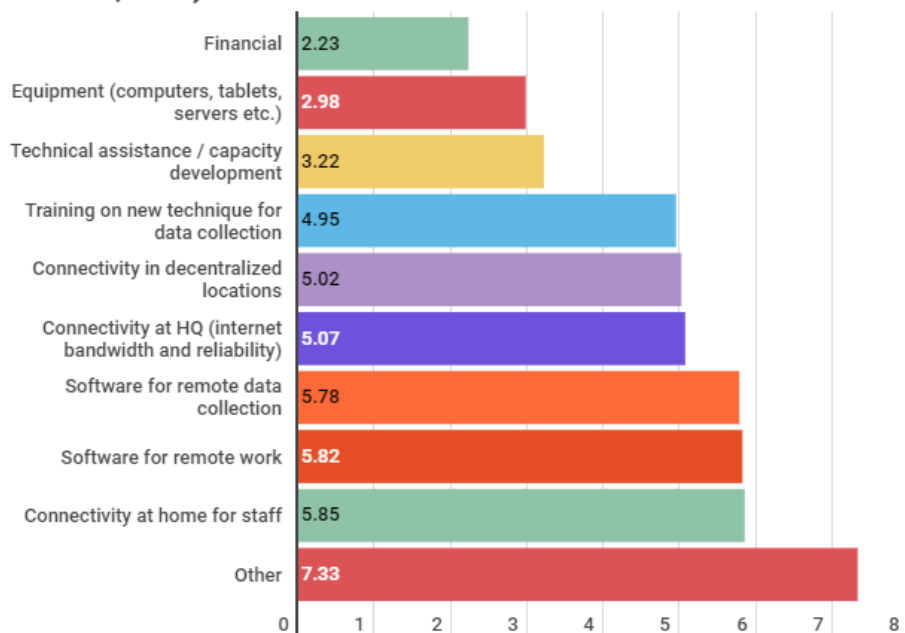
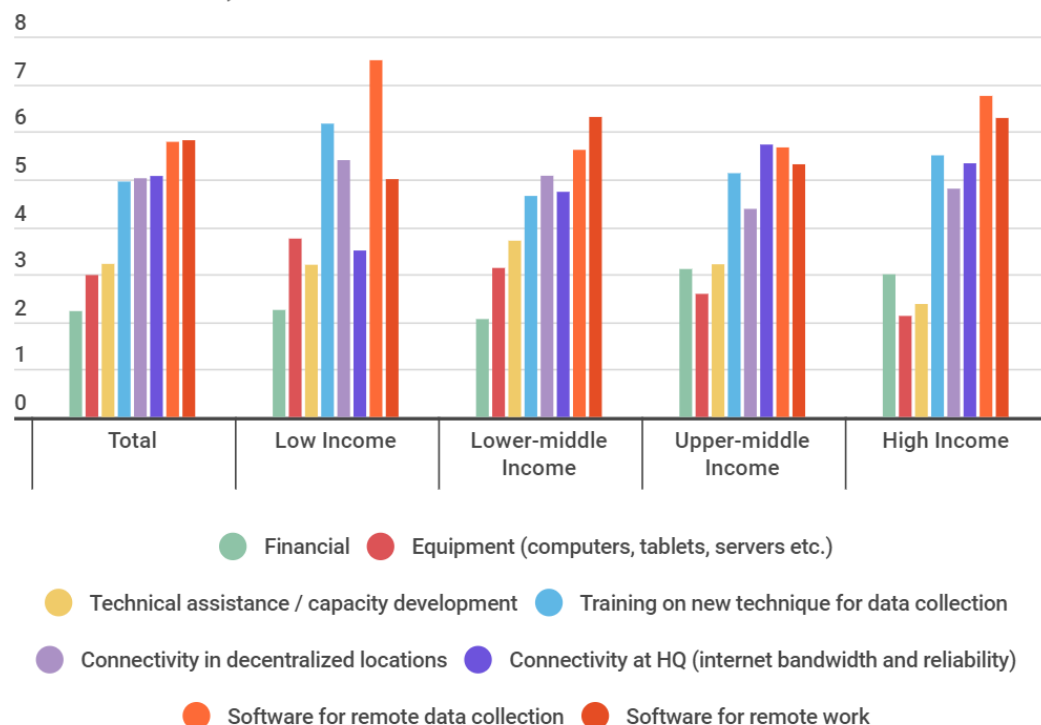




Figure 4.2: Ranking of Types of Support Needed, by Income Group

What type of support do you need? (1 = most important, then 2, etc.).





Annex

Survey of COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts on National Education Planning Units

Dear Colleagues,

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads across the globe, our statistical community is facing new challenges. During these trying times, when countries need data more urgently than ever before to plan and monitor emergency response efforts, and prepare for medium- and long-term mitigation and recovery strategies, statistical operations and other office activities are seriously disrupted or interrupted.

Please take a few minutes to respond to this survey. Your response will allow us and donor agencies prepare for the disruption and design assistance strategies that will benefit your office.

Identification

Country :	
-----------	--

Respondent information:

First name	
Las name	
Organization:	
Organization unit:	
Function:	
Email address:	

General

1. **Is your main office currently closed as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning access to the building is completely restricted or allowed to only key staff?**
 - Office is closed to ALL staff
 - Office is closed only to non- essential staff (essential staff allowed to work from the office)
 - Office is not closed

If total or partially closed, continue to next question. Otherwise, go to question 4.



- 2. For how many weeks has been your main office closed?** (round to the nearest number of months)
- 0 month
 - 1 month
 - 2 months
 - 3 months
 - More than 3 months
- 3. Is staff working from home?**
- Yes, ALL staff is currently instructed to work from home
 - Yes, SOME staff is currently instructed to work from home
 - No, staff has not been instructed to work from home at this time
- 4. Are schools currently closed as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic?**
- Yes. *Continue to next question.*
 - No. *Go to question 9.*
- 5. Indicate the current situation that best describe the closure of schools in your country?**
(select all that apply)
- Nation Wide
 - Partial closure (some regions/territories)
 - Phasing students back to school (progressing scheduling according to grade/age)
 - Do not know
- 6. Does school closure depend on educational level?**
- Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
- 7. If schools are currently closed, for how many months have schools been closed?** (round to the nearest number)
- 0 month
 - 1 month
 - 2 months
 - 3 months
 - More than 3 months
- 8. When do you estimate schools are going to resume operations?**
Note: Re-opening refers to the end of country-wide school closures, even if not all students have returned to school.
Month/Year
Do not know



Statistical Operations for School Census

9. Do you have annual school census?

- Yes. *Continue to next question.*
- No. *Go to question 14.*
- Do not know. *Go to question 14.*

10. When is the administration of the next annual school census?

- Month: _____ Year: _____
- Do not know

11. In what moment of the production process for school-level data were you at the start of the pandemic?

- Preparation of the survey operations
- Main data collection
- Data dissemination
- None
- Do not know

12. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, did you have to stop or postpone the data collection?

- Yes, had to postpone to later **in 2020**
- Yes, had to postpone **to 2021 or beyond**
- No, neither stopped nor postponed.
- Do not know

13. Please specify, which new data collection mode or alternative/non-traditional data source/approach to collect education data was introduced to complete annual schools census?

- phone survey
- web surveys
- phone call detail records
- remote sensing / satellite imagery
- social media
- citizen generated data/crowdsourcing
- household surveys
- None
- Do not know
- other, please specify: _____



14. Is the current COVID-19 pandemic affecting your ability to meet reporting requirements, if yes, to what extent?

Level of reporting	Yes, severely	Yes, moderately	No, not at all
Global	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Monitoring Data on Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic

15. Overall, what is the main challenge in producing statistical data due to the pandemic? Please rank according to relevance (1 = most relevant, then 2, etc.).

Challenge	Relevance
Getting timely data from school principals	
Access to servers/data transfer (technology constraints)	
Administrative data provider is not able to collect/does not receive data	
Annual school census delayed/postponed	
Low response rate from schools	
Staff not available	
Funding constraints	
Major household and population census has been postponed/delayed/cancelled	
Other. Please specify:	

16. Have you monitored or will you monitor educational variables (enrolment, attending, infrastructure, etc.) during the Covid-19 pandemic?

- Yes. Go to next question.
- No. Go to question 23
- Do not know. Go to question 23

17. What is the data source to monitor the main educational variables?

- Sample of schools
- All schools
- Sample of households
- Do not know



18. What is the most common method used to monitor educational variables?

- Online questionnaire
- Via email (electronic copy)
- Via mobile or land line phone
- Via mail (hard copy)
- Regional/district level meetings
- Do not know
- Other. Please specify: _____

19. Are you adapting the definition or adding new school statistical variables (e.g. remote enrolment or attendance, number of square feet per classroom) during the COVID-19?

- Yes. *Go to next question*
- No. *Go to question 21*
- Do not know. *Go to question 21*

20. Please indicate the definitions of the adapted or new variables:

Variables	Definition	
	Original (previous)	New

Frequency of Collection

21. Are you collecting some data more frequently than usual (and therefore outside previously planned data collection initiatives)?

- Yes. *Go to next question.*
- No. *Go to question 23*
- Do not know. *Go to question 23*

22. Which kind of data are being collected more frequently than usual?

Student enrolment

- If so, are you collecting this data by gender?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not know



- If so, are you collecting this data by other characteristics (e.g. location, disability, etc.)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
- How often is the data being collected? Please select the frequency that is closest to yours
 - Every two years
 - Every year
 - Every six months
 - Every three months
 - Every two months
 - Every month
 - Every two weeks
 - Every week
 - Every day
 - Do not know
- **Student attendance to school or online**
 - If so, are you collecting this data by gender?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
 - If so, are you collecting this data by other characteristics (e.g. location, disabilities, etc.)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
 - How often is the data being collected? Please select the frequency that is closest to yours
 - Every two years
 - Every year
 - Every six months
 - Every three months
 - Every two months
 - Every month
 - Every two weeks
 - Every week
 - Every day
 - Do not know
- □ **Teachers attendance to school /online**
 - If so, are you collecting this data by gender?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
 - If so, are you collecting this data by other characteristics (e.g. location, disabilities, etc.)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not know
 - How often is the data being collected? Please select the frequency that is closest to yours



- Every two years
- Every year
- Every six months
- Every three months
- Every two months
- Every month
- Every two weeks
- Every week
- Every day
- Do not know

Number of learners per class (class size) to observed the recommended social distancing measures in a class

- How often is the data being collected? Please select the frequency that is closest to yours
 - Every two years
 - Every year
 - Every six months
 - Every three months
 - Every two months
 - Every month
 - Every two weeks
 - Every week
 - Every day
 - Do not know

Functional electricity and access to internet

- How often is the data being collected? Please select the frequency that is closest to yours
 - Every two years
 - Every year
 - Every six months
 - Every three months
 - Every two months
 - Every month
 - Every two weeks
 - Every week
 - Every day
 - Do not know

Sanitary bloc/Functional toilets for girls and boys

- How often is the data being collected? Please select the frequency that is closest to yours
 - Every two years
 - Every year
 - Every six months
 - Every three months
 - Every two months
 - Every month



- Every two weeks
 - Every week
 - Every day
 - Do not know
- Water and sanitation: access to water and hand washing stations (in operation)**
- How often is the data being collected? Please select the frequency that is closest to yours
 - Every two years
 - Every year
 - Every six months
 - Every three months
 - Every two months
 - Every month
 - Every two weeks
 - Every week
 - Every day
 - Do not know
- Other data: Please specify: _____
- No additional data collection initiatives are being undertaken.
- Do not know.

Please provide any relevant details or plans for monitoring enrolment and attendance more frequently:

23. Are students receiving additional socio-economic stimuli during the pandemic? (select all that apply)

- School meals
- Allocations
- Computers or tablets
- Other Please specify: _____

Support Needs

24. Does your institution need additional external support to face the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Yes. *Go to next question.*
- No. *Go to question 26.*
- Do not know. *Go to question 26.*



25. What type of support do you need? Please also rank the support needed by degree of priority (1 = most important, then 2, etc.). If a type of support is not needed, please leave the degree of priority blank.

Type of support	Degree of priority
Financial	
Technical assistance / capacity development	
Equipment (computers, tablets, servers etc.)	
Connectivity at HQ (internet bandwidth and reliability)	
Connectivity in decentralized locations	
Connectivity at home for staff	
Software for remote work	
Software for remote data collection	
Training on new technique for data collection	
Other, please specify:	

Nationally Broad COVID-19 Pandemic Responses

26. Has your country planned any survey on COVID-19 and its impacts?

- Yes. *Go to next question*
- No. *Go to question 28*
- Do not know. *Go to question 28*

27. Which agency/department(s) is leading in undertaking the COVID-19 survey and its impacts?

- UN agencies
- Ministry of education
- Other ministries. Please specify:
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Please specify:
- Others. Please specify: -----
- Do not know

Additional Information

28. Are there any documents or resources, including websites, publications, datasets of relevance to the response of your institute/country to COVID-19 pandemic that you would like to share with the international statistical community?
