

The rationale for following up on COVID-19 related policy decisions

3rd iteration of the joint Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19

1 February 2021

Manos Antoninis,

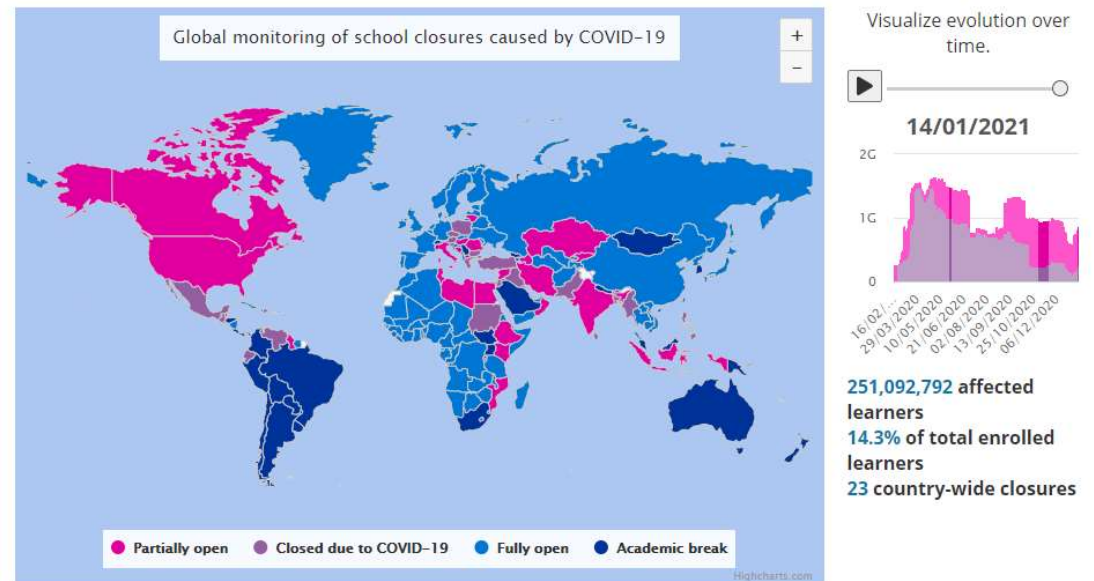
Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO

COVID-19 impact on education is complex

- ▶ Policy responses
 - ▶ Access and equity
 - ▶ Quality and learning
 - ▶ Finance
- + data challenges

+ Other levels: early childhood, vocational education, student mobility etc.

+ Big picture: distance learning as imperfect substitute and new reality



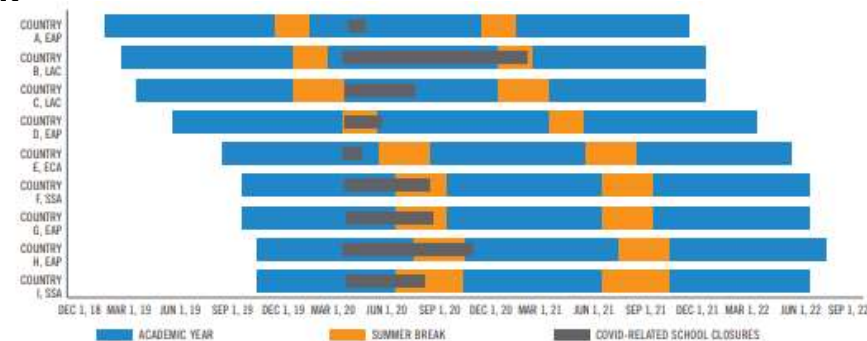
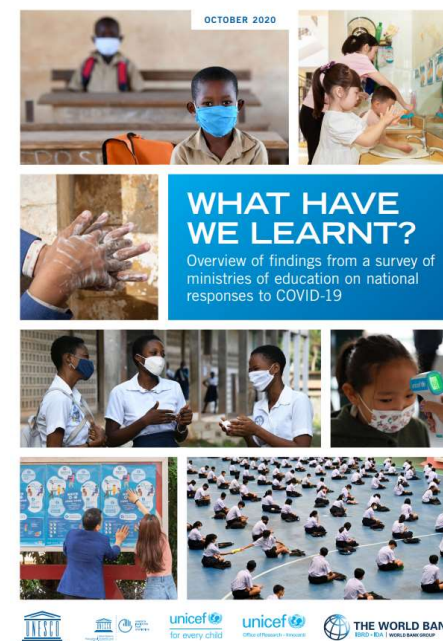
Policy responses

Joint UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank survey

- ▶ Round 1: May to mid-June 2020
 - ▶ Round 2: July to September 2020
 - ▶ Round 3: February 2021 (with OECD)
- duration of school closures (24% of instruction days),
 - approaches to distance learning: potential reach
 - support measures for students/parents: internet, devices
 - support measures for teachers: new staff; teaching content
 - learning loss mitigation

...even if countries differ by region

To be used to monitor commitments made at Global Education Meeting

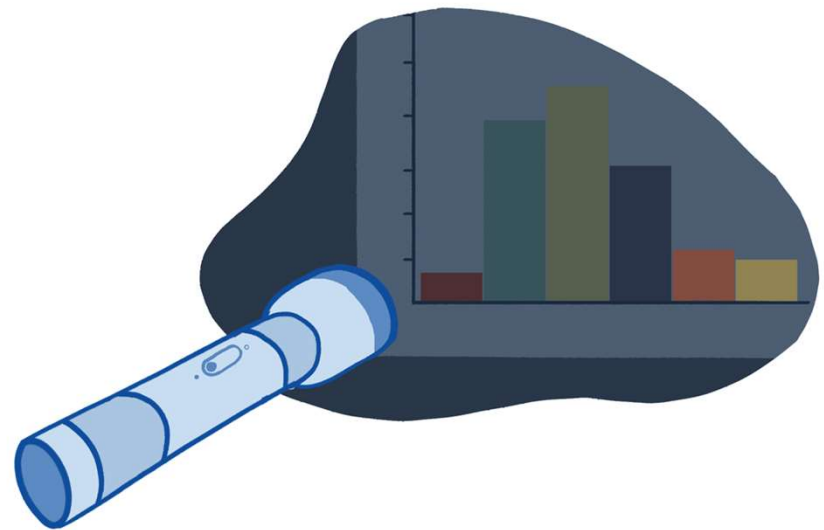


COVID-19 impact on inequality is large

...although it is hard to show by how much

Data collection systems challenged: various data sources, each casting light to different aspects

- ▶ Indirect assessment based on past data
- ▶ Direct assessment based on:
 - Administrative data/online systems
 - Phone surveys
 - Subjective views
 - ...
 - Anecdotal but insightful media coverage
 - Research on multiple topics:
from psychological impact to home support to peer effects



Access and equity

Internet, devices and living conditions

▶ internet, incl. cost and speed

e.g. 41% of rural communities in **Canada** have inadequate broadband access

▶ computers and smartphones

e.g. 45% had computer in **Latin America**

▶ radios and TVs among poorest 20%

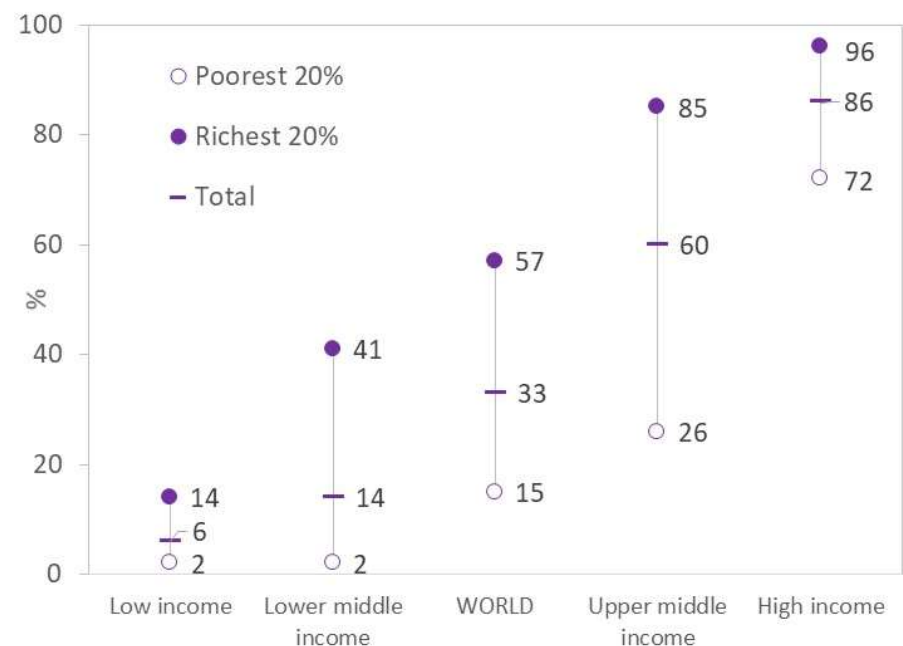
e.g. **Ethiopia** 7% , **D. R. Congo** 8% own radio

e.g. **Nepal** 5%, **Guatemala** 13% own TV

▶ quiet room for studying

e.g. 30% of 15-year-olds don't have one in **Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand**

Access to internet at home



Source: ITU and UNICEF

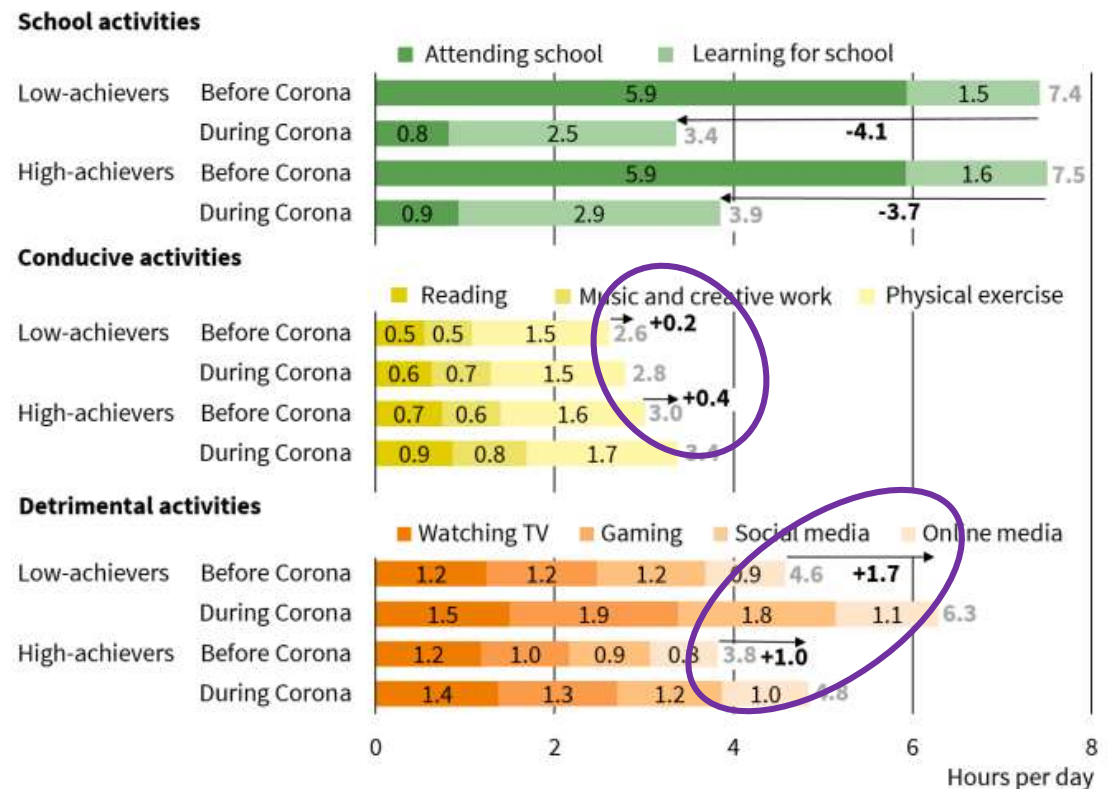
Access and equity

School attendance: online surveys

In Germany:

- ▶ Much less time on education
- ▶ Low-achievers spend more time on detrimental activities
- ▶ Parents said child learned much less: 72% if low-achiever and 58% if high-achiever

Various issues to deal with:
self-motivation, home inputs etc.



Access and equity

School attendance: phone surveys

Substituting normal household surveys

► Ecuador

- zero time spent doing schoolwork: 9% if they have internet; 23% if they have no internet
- poorest more likely to work than be in education
- boys and girls have distinct gender-segregated roles

► Living Standard Measurement surveys

= phone surveys substituting traditional surveys

- **Uganda:** urban-rural differentials – and growing
- **Lao PDR:** 55% enrolled before, 25% engaged in education during COVID (but 19% among ethnic minorities)

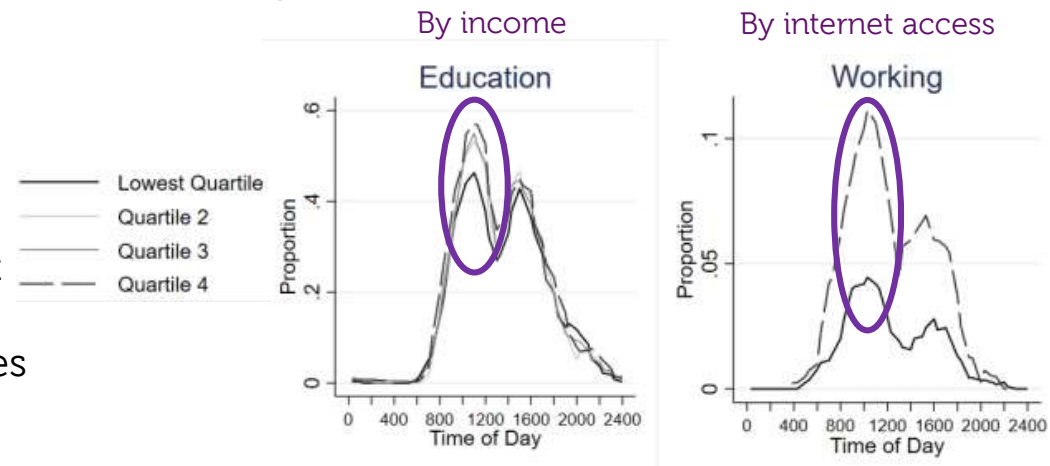
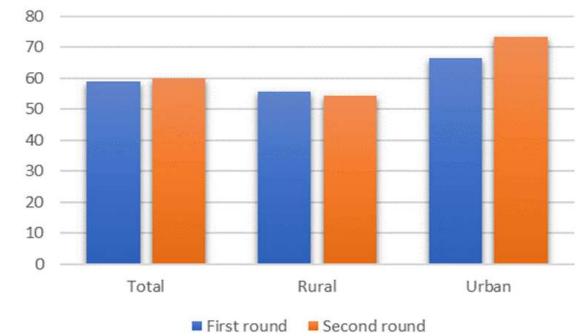


Figure 2. Share of households with at least one child (3-18) engaged in any education or learning activities (conditional on having at least one child) by survey round and rural/urban residence, (%)



Quality and learning

General issues

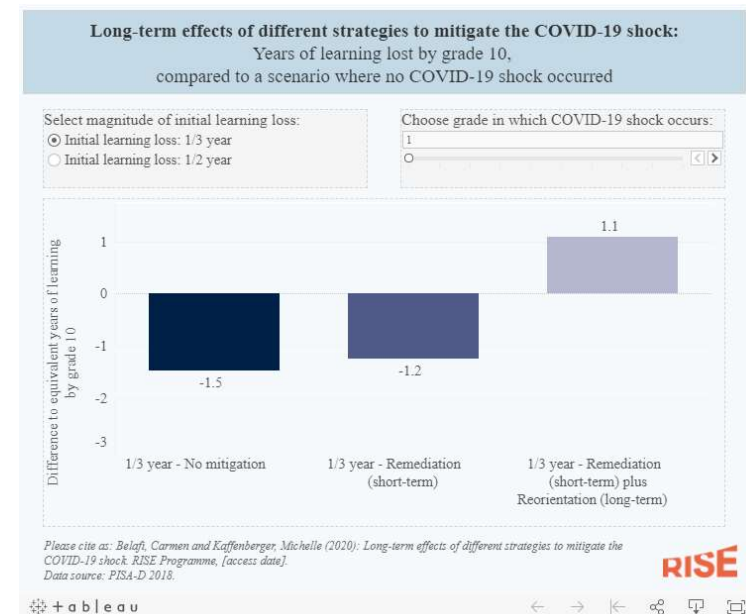
Long term impact:

...so far, **projections** on scenarios, no real data

Quantify relationship between duration/nature of disruption and magnitude of learning losses

- ▶ Impact of **distance learning** mechanisms
- ▶ Effects of schools meals and **income shocks**
- ▶ Country **capacity to monitor** learning

Learning losses due to school closures could continue to **accumulate** after children return



A 3-month school closure could reduce long term learning by 1-year's worth of learning.

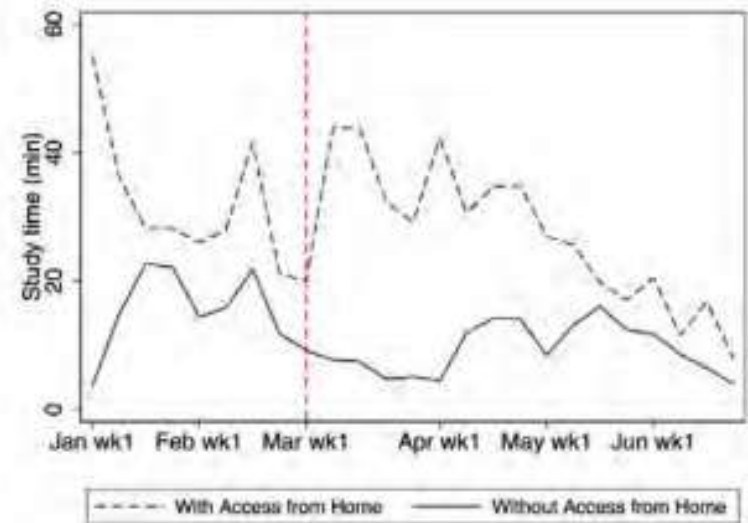
Quality and learning

Big data

Significant constraints in availability and use of such data to privacy regulations

Socioeconomic status cannot be inferred, except through proxies

A study based on user activity logs from an online learning platform in **Japan** shows that study time was larger for students with access from home



Average weekly study time by access to online platform from home
Ikeda and Yamaguchi, 2020

Quality and learning

Opinion surveys

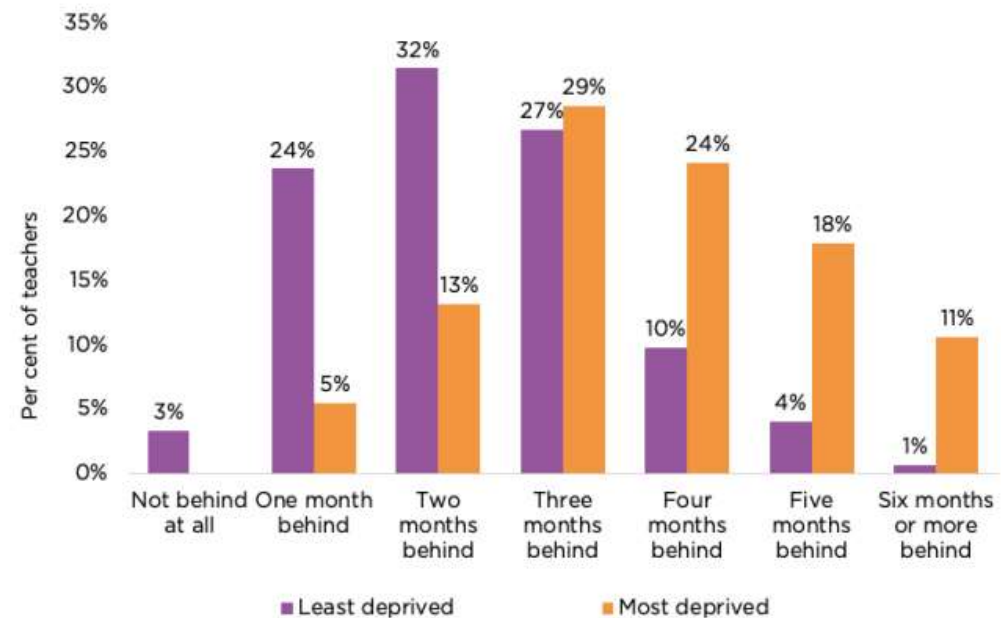
► United Kingdom

Survey of more than 2000 schools

e.g. three months behind in their studies after lockdown

e.g. learning gap between rich and poor pupils

grew by almost half (47%) between March and July



Financing for equity

► Evidence on budget impact just emerging
... but serious concerns given multiple priorities and recession.

► Education not a major part of stimulus packages
According to UNESCO, education received just **0.8%** of stimulus packages;
the share of was **2%**. among 13 of **G20** countries

► Targeted measures are not very common

e.g. few measures on disadvantaged groups

- adaptation of support programmes to students with disabilities
- adaptation of school feeding: direct cash transfers or home deliveries
- additional funds per child distributed to poorer regions (e.g. **United States**)
- school grants for internet access, adaptation costs, tutorial programmes (e.g. **United Kingdom**)
- topping up of cash transfers, e.g. Child Support Grant in **South Africa**

Policy Paper 44

January 2021

How committed? Unlocking financing for equity in education

It is difficult to agree how much countries should spend on education. The Education 2030 Framework for Action appealed to countries to spend at least 4% of their gross domestic product on education. Some people question even such a modest target because country contexts vary significantly. Different countries appear to achieve the same education results with very different levels of public expenditure. However, there is consensus that, if countries are to achieve the goal of 'inclusive and equitable' education by 2030, they need to spend their budgets, whatever their level, in ways that actively pursue these inclusion and equity objectives. This paper discusses four categories of financing policies that can support such equity objectives depending on how comprehensive they are, how targeted their coverage is and how much money they allocate. Mapping policies and programmes from 78 countries around the world shows that around 1 in 5 demonstrate a strong level of commitment to equity in education through these different mechanisms.

The international community's commitment in 2015 to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' as the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) is one of the clearest examples of the overall pledge to leave no one behind, contained in the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The unforeseen challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic risks exacerbating the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities and emphasises the need for financing mechanisms to strengthen their focus on equity in education if countries are not to move further away from their 2030 targets.

The role of public institutions in equity-oriented processes in education has received less attention than the actual results in monitoring SDG 4. This is not surprising. It is easier to observe inequality, especially with the supply of household surveys and learning assessments in recent years. By contrast, monitoring equity-oriented processes, notably policies and programmes, in a comparative way is plagued by vast differences in context and has therefore rarely been done systematically until now.

Indeed, multiple policies can be deployed to affect equity in education (OECD 2007). A recent review of European countries' approaches identifies five sets of policies. First, countries may pursue policies that facilitate stratification. They may encourage special schools, school choice, restrictions in admission, and placement into separate school tracks or repetition on the basis of low academic results. Second, they may instead promote following the same standards throughout the system. Third, countries may seek to actively support schools and students at risk of falling behind to compensate for their disadvantage. Fourth, they may promote the provision of early childhood services, which are known to be particularly effective for vulnerable groups that otherwise are not prepared for school. Finally, countries can use financing mechanisms to promote equity (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020) (Figure 1).

However, this complexity should not prevent efforts to better understand how countries promote equity in education. The purpose of this policy paper is to encourage such a discussion, unpacking just the last of these five sets of policies countries have at their disposal to promote equity in education: financing. The paper uses country examples from a new layer of country-specific information made



Monitoring the impact of the pandemic on equity

...is work in progress

Your contribution
to this third iteration
is crucial

Thank you

