

The Federal Ministry of Education



National COVID19 Response Plan (draft) Keeping Students Safe and Engaged in Learning in Sudan



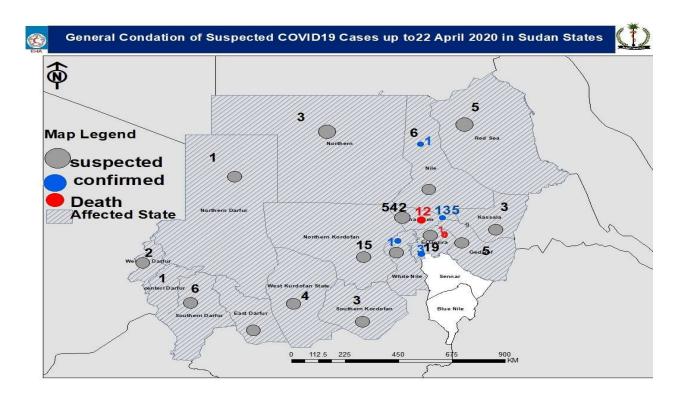
April 2020

(updated 22 April 2020)

Background

COVID19 is a highly infectious disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. It is globally affecting the safety and learning of children and youth in three main ways: (i) worsening the learning crisis - schools closures, and constraints to access distance learning platforms have reduced opportunities for ongoing student learning; (ii) increasing poverty levels - families have reduced income and access to food, and increased hardship levels; (iii) risks for child safety – lockdowns and shelter in place measures come with a heightened risk of children witnessing or suffering violence and abuse; and children in conflict settings, as well as those living in crowded and unsanitary conditions are also at considerable risk.

While it was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019, this highly infectious virus quickly spread to many other countries. On 30 January, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the virus spread as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. On March 11, WHO declared the outbreak as a global pandemic with 114 countries affected, and 118,000 confirmed COVID19 cases. In Sudan, from March 14 to 21 April 2020, there were 107 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 12 deaths¹, with further cases expected.



¹ WHO reports and the Ministry of Health Technical committee data

In response to the pandemic, the Government of Sudan, declared a public health state of emergency. Schools were closed on 15 March, 2020. The Government formulated a high level COVID19 Response Committee led by the Ministry of Health on 16 March 2020. The Security and Defense Council decided to close all airports, ports, and land crossings (with the exception of cargo flights, including those carrying technical and humanitarian support on a case-by-case basis).

All sections of the Government are actively preparing plans for the impact of COVID19 conditions on their staffing, operations and ability to delivery basic services. The provision of extra health and related services to the general population and boosting social safety nets to low income families are particular areas of focus. This is in addition to longer term planning for the ongoing safety and learning of children, youth and their families. This document focuses on the specific plans of the Ministry of Education.

Aim of this Response Plan

This document presents the Ministry of Education's National COVID19 Response Plan. This includes measures for continuity of learning, student safety, and psychosocial well-being. While interventions focus mostly on the direct plans of the Ministry of Education, some are also related to health, water, sanitation, hygiene, and child welfare.

This response plan provides a framework of interventions, and highlights areas where other partners might assist with financial and technical support. As the situation changes on the ground, and further monitoring data become available, this plan will be updated and interventions adjusted as needed.

Key Issues

There are several key issues impacting the learning and safety of children, youth, education personnel and families which are especially impacted by the COVID19 situation. These include:

• Schools are impacted both by closures due to COVID19, as well as the establishment of a new unified school calendar which has the start of the school year for all students now set for 6 September 2020. This means that students are out of school this year for at least 5.5 months. The school closures impact the education of more than 8.1 million K-12 students, and 653,000 tertiary level students. In addition to these, are the 3.6 million children (5-13 year olds) already out of school.

- Grade 8 and Grade 11 exams have not yet been completed in most localities due to school closures. For the Grade 8 and 11 exams, approximately 500,000 students, 4,000 exam centers, 100 staff at each of the exam centers are involved.
- The MoE is in the process of designing a new curriculum.
- There are increasing COVID19 infections rates in Sudan leading to increased curfews and banned gatherings, including reduced personnel in work offices, and difficulties to access teleworking modalities for many.
- Students such as those from Khalwas, the homeless and those in refugee and IDP settlements are at higher safety risks.
- Community teachers, who account for one in six teachers in Sudan also have their livelihoods severely affected as they no longer receive parent and community contributions while schools remain closed.
- Various distance learning methods have been proposed to address continuity of learning. However, Sudan does not yet have the infrastructure to provide equitable distance learning through the Internet for all learners. Sudan had 13.1 million internet users by the end of 2019, comprising around 30 percent of the population (Internet World Stats). Internet penetration in Sudan is lower compared to the rest of the Africa region (39.3 percent). At the same time radios are much more prevalent in Sudan, and phone connection is at about 76%. Weekly SMS alerts sent to the phones of listeners 30 minutes prior to a broadcast can boost radio campaign listenership by up to 20%.2 Sudan has 30.1 million mobile-cellular subscribers (ITU, 2018), which is equivalent to 72 mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants. There are also some new promising interventions using phones for teacher training (as being conducted by the British Council in Sudan), as well as using tablets, phones, and various social platforms for student quizzes, learning games, learning phonics, student and teacher fun competitions for material development, and tracking student learning etc. TV access is also being promoted, although may be more accessible in urban areas.

<u>Key Areas of concern</u> for the Ministry of Education include:

- (i) support COVID19 messaging around awareness, risk mitigation/healthy practices;
- (ii) have students sit for their exams as soon as viable in a safe environment, and support review work until that time;
- (iii) keep children and youth engaged in learning so they do not fall too far behind;
- (iv) have the new school curriculum in place for the start of the new school year;
- (v) prepare schools for the new year (e.g. procure hygiene supplies, develop safe school guidelines, scale up WASH, disinfect buildings where needed, prepare catch-up educational learning strategies);
- (vi) try to ensure students return to school/are supported to stay in classes when schools re-open;

² Source: The new age of radio: how ICTs are changing rural radio in Africa (Bartholomew Sullivan), Farm Radio International, 2011, p.5

- (vii) keep teachers engaged and paid. Maintaining the livelihood of community teachers is particularly problematic;
- (viii) have the National Center for Curriculum and Educational Research (NCCER) prepare the new curriculum, including using electronic and digital platforms;
- (ix) have the MoE deliver all basic services, including in teleworking environment.

Focus of education response

Schools are preparing to open on 6 September 2020, but it will depend on the status of the COVID 19 in Sudan whether it is safe to do so, or whether the MoE will need to rely for a longer period of time on more distance learning methods for at least some school communities.

Based on the above issues and concerns, the Ministry of Education plans to focus on these core areas.

1. Promote safe learning at home until schools reopen:

- Support community COVID19 messaging for risk mitigation (include advocacy for homes and school spaces free from violence for children)
- Support the psychosocial well-being of students, parents and school staff/educators
- Prepare exam lesson reviews for Grade 8 and 11 students
- Encourage reading, writing, numeracy and acquisition of life-skills, and develop the required radio, TV, phone and/or paper-based alternatives to do this
- Conduct rapid assessment to assess (i) the state of non-formal education (NFE) needs; (ii) accessibility of e-learning platforms, (iii) student needs
- Modify some of the teacher training programs which were meant to be delivered face-to-face using digital means such as by phones and TV based training.
- Monitor access to learning during COVID19
- Begin plans and preparations for scale up of water, sanitations and hygiene once schools are reopened (soap and water supplies, sanitizers)

2. Prepare for schools to reopen safely, conduct exams and facilitate catch-up

- Support the National Center for Curriculum and Educational Research (NCCER) to develop the new curriculum, including digital platform systems.
- Ensure safe return to quality learning for teachers, learners and school communities
 (Schools disinfected and enhanced with adequate water, sanitation and hygiene
 facilities; continued COVID 19 messaging, practice basic hygiene and observing
 physical distancing where needed; Utilize Parent and Teacher Associations, teachers
 and school leaders to reinforce COVID19 risk mitigation and basic hygiene; Special
 measures in place to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been
 exposed to the virus directly or indirectly)

- Hold exams using safe COVID19 guidelines
- Assess ongoing learning "gaps" and provide catch up opportunities
- Monitor how well students are learning with distance materials, and/or adjusting back into schools

3. Accelerate innovative approaches to reach the most vulnerable strengthen system capacity

- Scale up innovative approaches (multiple pathways) for learning and child protection, including expansion of use of Non-formal education materials
- Supply of school uniforms, educational learning materials and other supplies to offset schooling costs
- Provision of solar bank packs, especially to communities/schools without electricity, and where there are students with low learning levels.
- Ensure children released from Khalwas have access to learning opportunities and have somewhere safe to live.

4. Strengthen system capacity

- Build capacity of NCCER and teachers in support of effective learning through multiple pathways
- Build the capacity of the MoE to deliver basic services, coordinate the COVID 19 responses and do business using more electronic and digital platforms

	COVID19 Response Framework					
1. Promote safe	learning at home until schools rec	pen:				
Objective	Intervention	Indicator	FMoE Focal Person	Activities	Budget USD	
(i) <u>Suppo</u>	(i) Support community COVID19 messaging for risk mitigation (include advocacy for homes and school spaces free from violence for children)					
(ii) School children their families, and school staff have adequate information on COVID19, risk mitigation, hygiene and healthy preventive measures.	Utilize all social media platforms for the MoE, Directorates, Schools and partners to continue disseminating WHO and MoH awareness raising materials This includes (a) broadcasts on hygiene promotion, animation movies produced earlier by MoE; (b) develop and deliver child-friendly key messages on COVID-19 prevention and preparedness in relevant local languages - in coordination with health, WASH and child protection actors, and with child participation where safe; (c) include advocacy for home and school spaces free from violence for children	Improved understanding of COVID 19 causes and risk mitigation strategies # of children and youth/girls and boys 4-18 with access to lifesaving COVID 19 messages # of school staff with access to lifesaving COVID 19 messages	Media and communica tion and School Health unit.	 UNICEF and WHO provide continuous support with information sharing. MoE partners as part of the resource mapping to share any Arabic materials developed by their organization in the region Partners share FMoE materials in their website and media releases Develop and deliver remote guidance for teachers/school staff on COVID-19 and the importance of social isolation, how to remotely support wellbeing and play, including referrals and selfcare in coordination with child protection actors. 	200,000	
(iii) <u>Suppo</u>	rt the psychosocial well-being of stud	lents, their parents and ed	ucators			
Girls and boys affected by the COVID-19 crisis receive psychosocial and mental health support	guidance for caregivers and		 Media and communica tion and School Health unit UNICEF Child protection section 	 Prepare and disseminate media and social media messages to caregivers, teachers and children Provide and disseminate PSS messages and offer individual counseling to children, teachers and parents 	500,000	

	 Provision of household- level recreational materials for home play 				
Objective	Intervention	Indicator	FMoE Focal Person	Activities	Budget USD
(iv) <u>Prepar</u>	e Exam Review Lessons for Gr 8 and Gr 1	1 students			
Female and Male students participate in Gr8 and Gr 11 review lessons,	 Exam review lessons Record TV and Radio sessions and lessons for review of G8 and G11 subjects in preparation for the final exams: Develop educational platform and link with social media accounts on Facebook and twitter for wider coverage and easy access: Provide special support to students in the rural areas and most vulnerable who have no access to internet, TV or smart phones in form of paper-based reviews: 	# of female and male students participating in review lessons	Undersecretary and the Examination Directorate	 TV and Radio materials will be recorded and broadcast to benefit all students across the country who have access to TV and/or Radio. TV and Radio materials will be made available on this platform/website and its link will be made available on all existing state MoE websites as well as on the federal MoE website for students in urban settings who have access to internet (SMART phones, Laptops /PCs). Reviews booklets for G8 and G11 students will be compiled in booklets, printed and distributed to the 18 states to support those who cannot access internet-based, TV and Radio materials. 	300,000
(v) <u>Encour</u>	age reading, writing, numeracy and acqu	uisition of life-skills, and devel	op the required rad	io, TV, phone and/or paper-based alternat	ives to do this
Girls and boys affected by COVID- 19 school closures have continuity of education provision and the opportunity to catch-up on lost learning	Development and delivery of distance learning content based on national curriculum, health and MHPSS messaging though television, TV, social media platforms and also paper based modalities where possible - emphasis on reading, writing, numeracy and acquisition of life-skills	# of children and youth/4- 18] accessing distance learning, through radio and Television # of teachers (formal and volunteers) trained in distance learning facilitation	- NCCR - Media and communica tion department FMoE - State MoE - World Bank	 development of distance learning programs in Math and Reading to be broadcasted through TV and radio with quizzes for students to engage; development of Reading and Mathematics columns to be disseminated through newspaper. 	15,000,000

	Provision of home-based teacher and learner supplies Provision of critical education services such as "school" meals	# of Children that are provided with take home food rations		 development of guides for teachers to grade and record the results of students' quizzes. Development and remote delivery of distance learning guidance, including the importance of educational continuity (especially for vulnerable groups) and tips for care givers/community volunteers to facilitate learning in local languages Provision of "school" meals – through take home ration 	
Objective	Intervention	Indicator	FMoE Focal Person	Activities	Budget USD
(vi) Conduction needs Support to Non	ct rapid assessment to assess (a) the	State of non-formal education of the assessment report is	- Directorate	(b)) accessibility of e-learning platform	_
formal education and e-learning platforms is evidence based, effective and well designed	Preparation of questionnaire and selection of the sample Support data collection Provide a comprehensive needs and accessibility report	published and shared with partners	of Planning NCALE E-learning project	 Questionnaire design and verification Data collection and data analysis Report publication 	50,000

Objective	Intervention	Indicator	FMoE Focal Person	Activities	Budget USD
	me of the teacher training programs g — include instruction for teachers			ace using digital means such as by phor	nes and TV base
Teachers Training approaches are innovative using digital media	Preparation of Adjusted teachers training materials Support the production of instruction on remote teaching methodologies	# of Teachers that are trained using digital programs	- Teachers Training Center - NCCR	 Revise the existing teachers training materials. Produce a digital content of the subjects Pilot and disseminate the online content. 	100,000
(viii) <u>Monito</u>	or access to learning during COVID19	<u>)</u>			
Availability of information related to students' access to learning	- Monitoring of Students and teachers access to the Media and digital platforms	# of Teachers and students that are trained using digital programs	- Ministry of Education information center Radio and TV stations survey	 Collect regular information from the relevant website Conduct media surveys quizzes 	50,000

Preparedness Plan are in place with relevant information and emergency supplies are pre-requisitions	- Preparedness Plan is designed and agreed with the Ministry and the Development Partners	- Partners and the Ministry of Education has a unified / costed preparation plan	- Ministry of Education Planning Directorate - Education Cluster	 National and International Experts are identified to provide inputs for the plan. The plan is approved by the Ministry and agreed with Partners. pre-requisitions of Supplies 	50,000
•	ools to reopen safely, conduct ex				
Objective	Intervention	Indicator	FMoE Focal Person	Activities	Budget USD
(i) Suppor	t the National Center for Curriculum	and Educational Research	(NCCER) to devel	op the new curriculum, including digita	l platform
<u>system</u>	<u>s.</u>				
Smooth flow of the new curriculum preparation to meet the new school year for basic education	Provision of Technical assistance to the Ministry of Education	- The New curriculum content is ready and agreed before the new school startup	- NCCR - UNICEF - British Council	- Review current Sudanese education generic curriculum framework and develop a revised curriculum framework in light of new proposed education structural changes. Undeveloped a road map for curriculum review, development and piloting. III. Capacity building for relevant staff at MOE and NCCER team on curriculum review and development processes.	100,000
(ii) <u>Ensure</u>	safe return to quality learning for te	achers, learners and school	l communities		
Ensure safe return to quality learning for teachers, learners and school communities	Improve all schools WASH facilities including latrines, water points and availability of clean water and distribution of cleaning and hygiene kits to schools as mean of controlling spread of pandemic	# of education stakeholders (government and partners) trained on education in emergencies and pandemic preparedness, response and recovery	- The Ministry of Education - Development Partners - Education Cluster	Prepare guidelines on safe school reopening including clean-up if school has been used as temporary health center, in coordination with Health, WASH, Child Protection, and local actors including authorities and NGOs. rehabilitation of classrooms and provision of essential WASH supplies	25,000,000 Targeting all the schools without latrines "5753 Schools "

	School and community training on safe schooling risk mitigation, and continuity planning ³ National, local and international humanitarian education actors have business continuity plans in place Establish school-level early-warning systems to monitor and identify future waves of COVID-19 infections Conduct consultations with students to understand their needs, the impact the crisis has had on their families/rights/community and what actions they may want to take, in coordination with other sectors	# of sector partners benefitting from capacity building to improve quality and accountability of humanitarian response		Teacher training on support to children as they return to formal learning, including MHPSS, positive discipline, and how to refer children with severe needs to specialised services (in coordination with child protection actors).	
(iii) Support Grade 8 and Grade 11 exams are prepared and conducted once the situation improves	Support the preparation for the grade 11 exams for Approximately 500,000 students, 4,110 exam centers, 50 staff at each of the exam centers are involved, so logistics to do this safely in the current environment is difficult. Support the Grade 8 exams preparations in 2641 Centers for approximately 422,413 Students	Number of Students undertaken grade 11 exams Number of Centers that are operational in safe and protective environment Number of Students undertaken grade 8 exams	Undersecretary and the examination directorate Ministries of Education and localities Education offices in 12 States and 141 localities	 Increase the number of testing halls to reduce the number of people/rooms (more teachers to monitor the exams) Ensure all testing rooms and correction centers have adequate hygiene and Cleaning kits and PPE's Increase number of correction centers Provide Hygiene messages and supplies for each exam center Support exams correction centers 11 centers 	centers.

³ Continuity Planning: <u>Safe Schools Common Approach Action Pack 2 Activity #10</u> (pages 34-35) or <u>Participatory School Disaster Management Toolkit</u> (pages 46-50/206)

		Number of Centers that are operational in safe and protective environment					
(iv) Assess	ongoing learning "gaps" and provide	catch up opportunities	I		I		
Conduct State based assessment on the completion of the planned school year subjects and accordingly support catch lessons	 Conduct A national Assessment of the school year curriculum coverage Support catch up lesson as needed 	National assessment is conducted Number of Catchup classes delivered	The Planning Directorate State Ministries of Education	Identifying of National and International expertise to conduct the assessment conduct the assessment Deliver catchup classes	200,000		
(v) <u>Monito</u>	or how well students are learning wit	h distance materials, and/o	or adjusting back i	into schools			
Availability of information related to students' learning	- Monitoring of Students and teachers access to the Media and digital platforms	# of Teachers and students that are using digital programs	Availability of information related to students' learning	- Monitoring of Students and teachers learning in the Media and digital platforms	50,000		
3. <u>Accelerate</u>	3. Accelerate innovative approaches to reach the most vulnerable						
	(i) Scale up innovative approaches (multiple pathways) for learning and child protection, including expansion of use of Non-formal education materials						
Objective	Intervention	Indicator	FMoE Focal Person	Activities	Budget USD		

Children have access to Accelerated learning programmes	Development and delivery of compressed curriculum, catch-up or accelerated learning content to avoid loss of school year Provision of teaching and learning supplies to reopened schools Support community mobilisation for re-enrolment of children in schools and ALP programs School and community training on safe schooling, risk mitigation, and continuity planning Individual and/or school-level cash interventions to mitigate economic impact of COVID-19	# children and youth/girls and boys 4-18 accessing a relevant accelerated education programme # of children and youth taught by a teacher trained in supportive teaching approaches # of schools provided with school grants for post COVID recovery and preparation for reopening # of children from vulnerable families including those with disability supported through cash interventions to support	- NCCR - NCLAE - UNICEF - Development Partners	Construction of ALP centres Procurement and distribution of supplies Teacher and Volunteer incentives to support catchup classes Maintain the radio and TV programs to support revision and catch up Provision of School grants Teacher training PTA training on PSS and back to school	10,000,000
Children from poor	of school uniforms, educational lear	through cash interventions to support their schooling ning materials, other support their support their schooling	The State	Provision of School supplies	500,000
families have access to quality education	uniforms and learning materials	vulnerable families including those with disability supported with Education supplies	Ministries of Education		

(iii) <u>Provisi</u>	on of solar bank packs, especially to o	communities/schools witho	out electricity, and	d where there are students with low lea	arning levels.
Children in Rural Area have access to lighting and energy	Provision of Solar Banks Packs	Number of Schools supported with School Packs	State Ministries of Education Development Partners	Procurement of Solar Packs Distribution of the Solar Packs	100,000
(iv) Ensure chil	dren released from Khalwas have acc	cess to learning opportunit	ies and have som	ewhere safe to live.	
Improve learning Environment in Khalwas	Support the improvement of learning environment in Khalwas	Number of Khalwas supported with learning supplies	State Ministries of Education Development Partners	Provision of School supplies	100,000

4. Strengthen system capacity						
(i) Build c	apacity of NCCER and teachers in sup	port of effective learning	through multiple	pathways		
Objective	Intervention	Indicator	FMoE Focal	Activities	Budget USD	
			Person			
(ii) Build tl	ne capacity of the MoE to deliver bas	sic services, coordinate the	e COVID 19 respon	nses and do business using more electr	onic and digital	
platfor	<u>ms</u>					
FMoE has adequate	Build the Capacity of the Ministry of	FMoE has a well-	Directorate of	Training and technical support to the	100,000	
capacity to deliver	Education staff and provision of	coordinated COVID 19	Planning	Directorate of Planning and		
and coordinate	technical and financial assistance	response plan		Information centers staff		
during emergencies			Information			
			center			
			Davidana			
			Development			
			partner			
<u>Plan Total</u>					<u>55,900,000</u>	

Key Assumptions

The COVID19 crisis is defined by a fluid situation, rapid changes and uncertainty. As such, the National Response Plan is based on following assumptions:

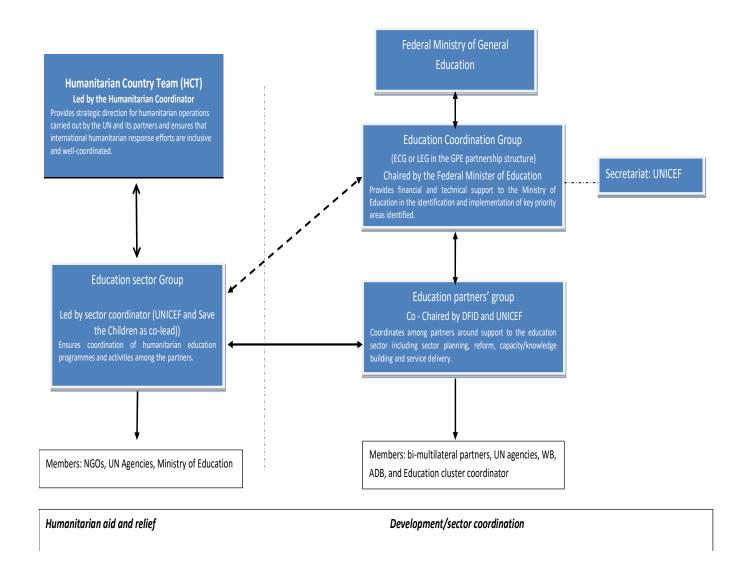
- The COVID19 will reach continue to transmit and spread locally. While the transmission, spread and affected population is difficult to predict, even in the best case of limited localized transmission of the coronavirus, schools are expected to remain closed nationwide.
- Based on experience from other countries, schools will likely remain closed at least until 6 September, and possibly longer if COVID19 infection rates remain high.
- International assistance and funding will be made available for the implementation of COVID19 response activities to ensure children will be able to continue their education.
- The Education Sector has the capacity for supporting the implementation of this response strategy through the response committees and through the development of common tools and guidance documents.
- The Education partners will be able to implement programmes in affected communities, especially for humanitarian programming.

Coordination, Harmonization, and Inclusiveness

Coordination

Coordination is currently managed with and between the MoE and several different agencies and partner groups. These include the COVID19 Health Committee, the Education Section/Cluster (for education-in-emergency coordination), and the Education Partner's group (for education development coordination (see following figure of Education Coordination Framework Structure)

Education Coordination Framework Structure



Harmonization and alignment

With multiple agencies involved in supporting the FMoE, it is critical that there be a common understanding and agreement in geographic and thematic areas of response. Through information sharing, management, and analysis, the partner agencies work to mitigate duplication and, in so doing, build holistic interventions for the greatest number of children.

Inclusive Education, equity, gender, and disability (Children with special needs)

As an education sector, it is important to remember that within our target group which is IDP in and out of camp locations, returnees and host community, there is a subset of children who can

easily be excluded from any planned response and interventions. In this time of COVID 19, children with disabilities (special needs) and girls become the most vulnerable.

Monitoring Plan

To support the data collection for the FMOE, the partners do at present have a Response Monitoring Tool/5W Matrix (Who is doing What, Where, When and for Whom) for monitoring education sector partner activities under the current COVID19 contingency response. Partners are submitting their reports on a monthly basis to the Education Sector secretariat team. Based on the submissions, the Education Sector Secretariat team is developing maps and other tools to strengthen the coordination on the response, identify gaps and prevent duplication of activities/programmes.

Regular partner participation in this monitoring is critical to maintaining strong coordination. This will continue to allow the sector to visualize gaps and needs, build partnership and collaboration, and advocate on behalf of the entire sector.

The sector will be conducting monitoring meeting on COVID19 response twice a month. These meeting will be online (Skype, etc) with all implementing partners and other stakeholders. All Education data collection will strive to use the official Education Management Information System (EMIS) school codes to allow for seamless integration with FMOE data. Furthermore, the Information Management Officer will conduct regular capacity building opportunities for the Ministry of Education staff in order to improve information management within the Education Sector.