MISSION: RECOVERING EDUCATION IN 2021

The Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused abrupt and profound changes around the world. This is the worst shock to education systems in decades, with the longest school closures combined with looming recession. It will set back progress made on global development goals, particularly those focused on education. The economic crises within countries and globally will likely lead to fiscal austerity, increases in poverty, and fewer resources available for investments in public services from both domestic expenditure and development aid. All of this will lead to a crisis in human development that continues long after disease transmission has ended.

Disruptions to education systems over the past year have already driven substantial losses and inequalities in learning. All the efforts to provide remote instruction are laudable, but this has been a very poor substitute for in-person learning. Even more concerning, many children, particularly girls, may not return to school even when schools reopen. School closures and the resulting disruptions to school participation and learning are projected to amount to losses valued at $10 trillion in terms of affected children's future earnings. Schools also play a critical role around the world in ensuring the delivery of essential health services and nutritious meals, protection, and psycho-social support. Thus, school closures have also imperilled children's overall wellbeing and development, not just their learning.

It's not enough for schools to simply reopen their doors after COVID-19. Students will need tailored and sustained support to help them readjust and catch-up after the pandemic. We must help schools prepare to provide that support and meet the enormous challenges of the months ahead. The time to act is now; the future of an entire generation is at stake.

The Mission

Mission objective: To enable all children to return to school and to a supportive learning environment, which also addresses their health and psychosocial well-being and other needs.

Timeframe: By end 2021.

Scope: All countries should reopen schools for complete or partial in-person instruction and keep them open. The Partners - UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank - will join forces to support countries to take all actions possible to plan, prioritize, and ensure that all learners are back in school; that schools take all measures to reopen safely; that students receive effective remedial learning and comprehensive services to help recover learning losses and improve overall welfare, and their teachers are prepared and supported to meet their learning needs.

Three priorities:

1. **All children and youth are back in school and receive the tailored services needed to meet their learning, health, psychosocial wellbeing, and other needs.**

Challenges: School closures have put children's learning, nutrition, mental health, and overall development at risk. Closed schools also make screening and delivery for child protection services more difficult. Some students, particularly girls, are at risk of never returning to school.

Areas of action: The Partners will support the design and implementation of school reopening strategies that include comprehensive services to support children's education, health, psycho-social wellbeing, and other needs.

Targets and indicators

Target	Indicator	Data source
Enrolment is back to pre-COVID levels.	Enrolment rates for each level of school return to pre-COVID level, disaggregated by gender.	*UIS SDG 4.4* *UIS Survey on Monitoring Impact on Main Education Data Aggregates (MIMEA)*
All schools provide comprehensive services to recover learning losses and to promote wellbeing.	Proportion of schools providing any services to meet children's health and psychosocial needs, by level of education.	*Global Education Recovery Tracker* or *UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures*

2. **All children receive support to catch up on lost learning.**

Challenges: Most children have lost substantial instructional time and may not be ready for curricula that were age- and grade- appropriate prior to the pandemic. They will require remedial instruction to get back on track. The pandemic also revealed a stark digital divide that schools can play a role in addressing by ensuring children have digital skills and access.

Areas of action: The Partners will (i) support the design and implementation of large-scale remedial learning at different levels of education, (ii) launch an open-access, adaptable learning assessment tool that measures learning losses and identifies learners' needs, and (iii) support the design and implementation of digital transformation plans that include components on both infrastructure and ways to use digital technology to accelerate the development of foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Incorporating digital technologies to teach foundational skills could complement teachers' efforts in the classroom and better prepare children for future digital instruction.

Targets and indicators

Target	Indicator	Data source
All schools provide remedial education.	Proportion of schools offering remedial education by level of education.	Global Education Recovery Tracker or *UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures* *Education: From disruption to recovery*
All schools incorporate social-emotional learning into their teaching.	Proportion of schools offering instruction to develop children's social-emotional skills by level of education.	Global Education Recovery Tracker or *UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures* *Education: From disruption to recovery*
All schools incorporate digital technology to improve foundational literacy and numeracy skills.	Proportion of schools incorporating digital technology to teach foundational literacy and numeracy skills, by level of education.	*Global Education Recovery Tracker or UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures* *Education: From disruption to recovery*

While incorporating remedial education, social-emotional learning, and digital technology into curricula by the end of 2021 will be a challenge for most countries, the Partners agree that these are aspirational targets that they should be supporting countries to achieve this year and beyond as education systems start to recover from the current crisis.

3. **All teachers are prepared and supported to address learning losses among their students and to incorporate digital technology into their teaching.**

Challenges: Teachers are in an unprecedented situation in which they must make up for substantial loss of instructional time from the previous school year and teach the current year's curriculum. They must also protect their own health in school. Teachers will need training, coaching, and other means of support to get this done. They will also need to be prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccination, after frontline personnel and high-risk populations. School closures also demonstrated that in addition to digital skills, teachers may also need support to adapt their pedagogy to deliver instruction remotely.

Areas of action: The Partners will advocate for teachers to be prioritized in COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, after frontline personnel and high-risk populations, and provide capacity-development on pedagogies for remedial learning and digital and blended teaching approaches.

Targets and indicators

Target	Indicator	Data source
Teachers are prioritized for vaccination.	Teachers are on priority list for vaccination.	Global Education Recovery Tracker *Education: From disruption to recovery*
All teachers receive training or other support to incorporate remedial education approaches and social-emotional learning into their pedagogy.	Proportion of teachers that have been offered training or other support for remedial education and social emotional learning, by level of education.	*Global Education Recovery Tracker* or *UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures* *Global Teachers Campus (link to come)*
All teachers receive training or other support to deliver remote instruction.	Proportion of teachers that have been offered training or other support for delivering remote instruction, by level of education.	*Global Education Recovery Tracker* or *UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures* *Global Teachers Campus (link to come)*

Country level actions and global support

UNESCO, UNICEF, and World Bank are joining forces to support countries to achieve the Mission, leveraging their expertise and actions on the ground to support national efforts and domestic funding.

Country level action

1. **Mobilize team to support countries in achieving the three priorities**
   The Partners will collaborate and act at the country level to support governments in accelerating actions to advance the three priorities.

2. **Advocacy to mobilize domestic resources for the three priorities**
   The Partners will engage with governments and decision-makers to prioritize education financing and mobilize additional domestic resources.

Global level action

1. **Leverage data to inform decision-making**
   The Partners will join forces to conduct surveys; collect data; and set-up a global, regional, and national real-time data-warehouse. The Partners will collect timely data and analytics that provide access to information on school re-openings, learning losses, drop-outs, and transition from school to work, and will make data available to support decision-making and peer-learning.

2. **Promote knowledge sharing and peer-learning in strengthening education recovery**
   The Partners will join forces in sharing the breadth of international experience and scaling innovations through structured policy dialogue, knowledge sharing, and peer learning actions.

The time to act on these priorities is now. UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank are partnering to help drive that action.