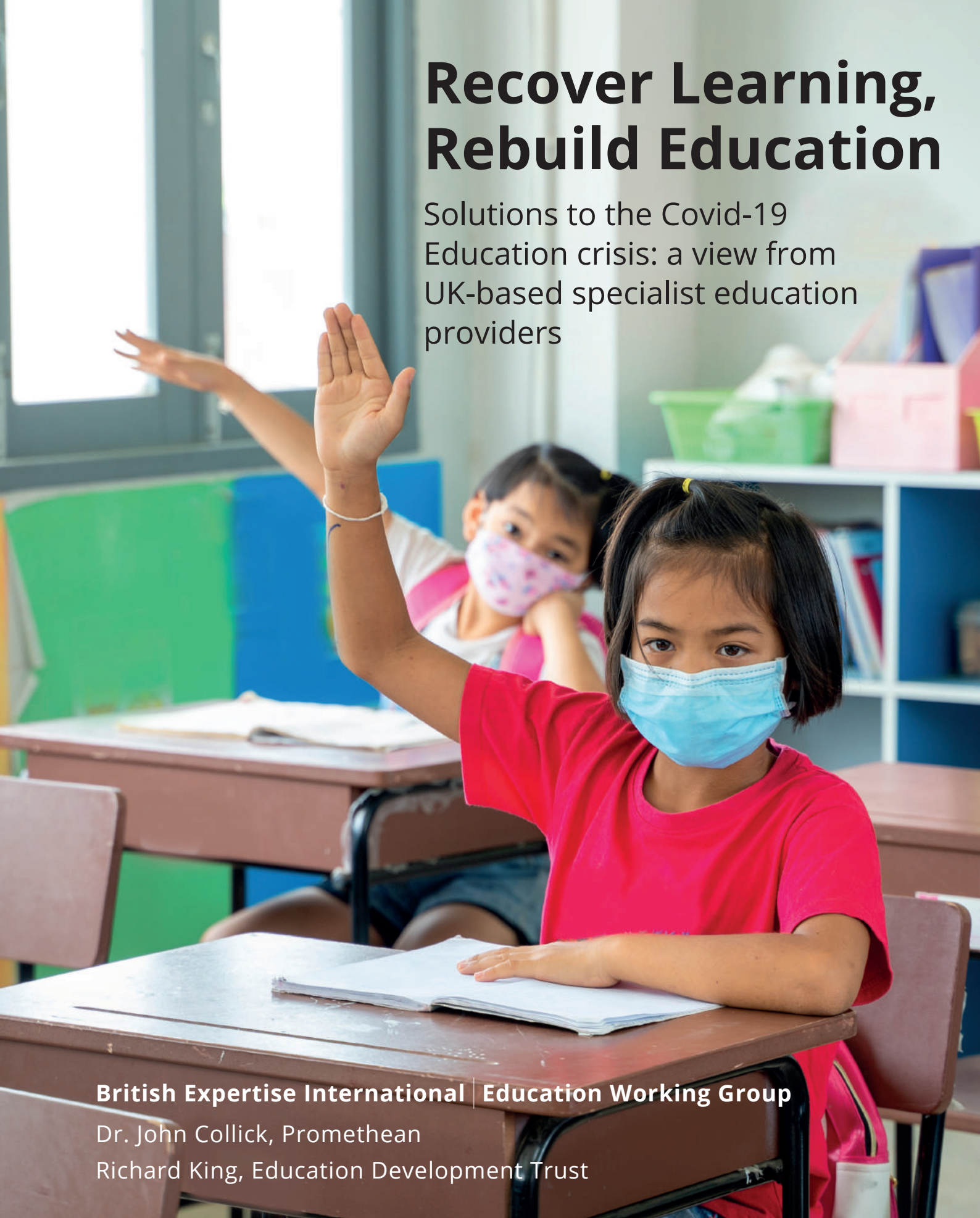


# Recover Learning, Rebuild Education

Solutions to the Covid-19  
Education crisis: a view from  
UK-based specialist education  
providers



**British Expertise International | Education Working Group**

Dr. John Collick, Promethean

Richard King, Education Development Trust

## Section 1

# Introduction

'Above all, this paper reinforces the critical need for a concerted effort, by all key actors, to respond to this education emergency and mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable in society.'

### The purpose of this briefing paper

Members of the Education Working Group (EWG) of British Expertise International (BEI) are on the front line of the Covid-19 education crisis, working together with government and donor partners. This briefing paper presents the views of the EWG on the dimensions of the crisis, based on their deep technical experience and expertise. It outlines sustainable and systemic interventions that can be used to respond, together with the support EWG members can offer to implement them.

Above all, this paper reinforces the critical need for a concerted effort, by all key actors, to respond to this education emergency and mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable in society. EWG members stand ready to play their part in that response.

### Who should read this briefing paper?

This briefing paper is intended for UK and international policymakers and the agencies that support them, such as the UN,

World Bank, Global Partnership for Education, and various other multilateral and bilateral funders. It is also intended for education policymakers at national and devolved level, all of whom are grappling with this enormous challenge. It is intended to provide a perspective on what EWG members think should be done, and how EWG members can support them.

### British Expertise International

British Expertise International (BEI) is a membership organisation dedicated to supporting its members who provide services including infrastructure, capacity building and international development, with a particular focus on the dynamic and growing markets of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and South East Europe.

BEI members range from some of the UK's largest companies, to some of the smallest. They work across a range of sectors from infrastructure to education, health and international development, but all share a common goal of exporting the best of UK expertise in professional services.

### The Education Working Group

Within the membership of BEI there are a number of organisations who provide education services. These members are part of the BEI Education Working Group (EWG), which aims to incubate collaborative approaches and facilitate information sharing. They offer a wide range of expertise, knowledge and products designed to bring the best of UK-based expertise in teaching and learning, support services, content creation, consultancy, training and capacity building to the international market. Further details of the members of the EWG and the services they offer can be found in the directory at the end of this report.



*In Rwanda, a P2 student studying from home using radio lessons in Nyarugenge District during Covid-19*

© ALAIN PATRICK MWIZERWA FROM THE USAID-SOMA UMWENYE

## Section 2

# Executive Summary

'The evidence is clear that as a result of Covid-19, a crisis in education is unfolding internationally, one that is reinforcing pre-existing challenges.'

### **An unprecedented crisis.**

The evidence is clear that as a result of Covid-19, a crisis in education is unfolding internationally, one that is reinforcing pre-existing challenges. The crisis will take years to fully overcome, with the impact felt by the most vulnerable in society. It will take education stakeholders working together to tackle it.

### **British Expertise International (BEI) members understand what is happening.**

BEI Education Working Group (EWG) members are working in partnership with governments and development partners across the world. They are seeing the scale of the challenge first-hand.

Nearly a billion young people have been affected by school closure, most for at least six months. A large number will not return for many months to come. The risk for some is they do not return at all. Despite the best efforts of systems to maintain learning continuity, closures have led to enormous challenges of both access and quality of provision, key components of the UN Sustainable Development Goal #4 – a goal inevitably now compromised for many. Beyond the immediate loss of learning, there are broader, long-term ramifications related to child protection, gender, equity, displacement, and impacts on skills, employability and higher education. As highlighted by the World Bank, the impacts of learning loss are severe for individuals, but also for national economies.

### **There is an urgent need to respond.**

Education systems worldwide need a rapid reconfiguration to return young people to learning, either directly in-school, or in flexible ways linking school to the home and the community. Many organisations, most notably UNESCO, have presented frameworks to support education policymakers to work through appropriate policies and plans to enable a return to learning, with a push to 'build back better' in the process.

The experience of British Expertise International Education Working Group (EWG) members suggests some **key school-level dimensions** to the crisis are critical to understand in order to implement such frameworks (see Section 4). These include effective learning technology, teacher preparation, home and community learning and accelerated catch-up. There are also **key system dimensions** to the crisis, including capacity for planning and governance, effective data, effective approaches to assessment/ qualifications and financing.

### **Education systems need support.**

As illustrated in our 'member insights', collectively, the EWG understand the complexity of the challenge based on a wealth of relevant experience. Many of its members have already been engaged with governments/ donors in the development of solutions and initiatives to both mitigate the immediate impact of Covid-19 but also to help develop sustainable and systemic responses to build resilience and capacity for the future.

### **More needs to be done.**

As outlined in Section 5, more support is needed. This means support for learners, support for educators and support for system actors. EWG members can offer help in each of these areas, across all phases (a full directory of member services is in the annex).

### **Responding to the Covid-19 education crisis requires working in partnership.**

EWG members are ready to provide their specialist technical support and insight to governments, multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies to do so.

'More support is needed: support for learners, support for educators and support for system actors.'

## Section 3

# The lost-learning crisis: an education emergency

'Now systems are beginning to reopen, we have entered a critical period to ensure not just schools can begin to function, but that all learners return to school and differential learning loss is addressed.'

The enormous scale of the impact from Covid-19 on education systems must not be underestimated. According to UNESCO nearly one and a half billion learners have been affected<sup>1</sup>, with nearly half a billion unable to access learning at all<sup>2</sup>. The consequences of being out of school are now starting to be documented, with reports from the World Bank illustrating the deep and long-lasting impact lost schooling has on attainment, equity, earning potential and national economies.<sup>3</sup>

Compounding the challenge, the magnitude of the wider Covid-19 crisis risks hiding both the impact felt by young people, and the policy attention required to address it. A critical dimension is funding. UNESCO recently forecast the funding gap to achieve SDG4 will

grow to £200 billion per year<sup>4</sup> due to Covid-19, yet at the same time, despite rapid response funding streams created, for example, by the World Bank or GPE, as the recent *Save Our Futures* campaign highlights<sup>5</sup>, both domestic and international education financing could potentially fall. Urgent attention is needed to address this funding gap.

The time is now to draw attention to this emerging 'perfect storm' of growing impact coupled with reduced resources available to address it. Policymakers rallied to help drive efforts to maintain learning continuity when schools closed. Now systems are beginning to reopen, we have entered a critical period to ensure not just that schools can begin to function, but that all learners return to school and differential learning loss is addressed.



Remote Teaching on Ceibal en Ingles project in Uruguay. (British Council)

<sup>1</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition>

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.unicef.org/resources/remote-learning-reachability-factsheet/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/simulating-potential-impacts-of-covid-19-school-closures-learning-outcomes-a-set-of-global-estimates> - suggests the global economic impact could reach \$10 trillion

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-warns-funding-gap-reach-sdg4-poorer-countries-risks-increasing-us-200-billion-annually>

<sup>5</sup> <https://saveourfuture.world/why-invest-in-education/>

*The librarian of School No. 100 assists primary grade students with reading in their school library, Tajikistan (Chemonics)*



© USAID/READ WITH ME, TAJIKISTAN

'EWG members believe this represent an education emergency which requires rapid and concerted action between governments, funding agencies and organisations with education expertise – such as ourselves – in response.'

**EWG members believe this represents an education emergency which requires rapid and concerted action between governments, funding agencies and organisations with education expertise – such as ourselves – in response.**

### The key impacts on children and young people

School closure (and related economic and social disruption) are impacting children and young people in a number of ways:

- **Access to learning:** As highlighted by UNESCO and UNICEF reports, millions of young people have either been locked out of learning entirely, or have experienced differential exclusion due to the lack of connectivity, space or support to engage with remote learning.
- **Learning loss:** As highlighted by the World Bank, learning loss is a critical challenge, and even with efforts to maintain learning continuity the scale of loss is significant, with catch-up being difficult and time consuming, with inequality in outcomes growing as a result.
- **Child protection:** For many, particularly marginalised children, school represents a safe space; with widespread school closure

many children and young people are at far higher risk of social, economic and sexual exploitation.

- **Skills and employability:** School closures and remote learning have not only disrupted the academic progress of young people, but also skills acquisition for employability – including vocational training – further compounded by disruption to qualifications.
- **Higher education:** Access to higher education has been significantly disrupted, both domestically and internationally. Campus closure, delays to teaching, and the financial challenge faced by both universities/colleges and students themselves – some of whom may never transition as a result.
- **Gender, equity and displacement:** Perhaps of greatest concern is the way in which all of the impacts above are being felt by the most marginalised, who have the least power or control to withstand them. Girls, the economically disadvantaged, those with disabilities and those in displacement contexts (internally or cross-border) will be disproportionately affected, threatening to undo concerted attempts by governments and donors to address the inequalities within systems that lead to such marginalization.

→

## Understanding the challenge

Resuming learning and re-opening schools is now the key challenge for policymakers. A range of **response frameworks** to support such actions to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 have been developed. These are immensely important to support system leaders not only to respond, but to realise the opportunity to reconfigure systems as they do so. They include:

- **UNESCO:** <https://en.unesco.org/news/framework-reopening-schools>
- **IIEP:** <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/five-steps-support-education-all-time-covid-19-13382>

**The experience of EWG members** is that such response frameworks are very helpful in offering policymakers ways to structure their thinking. In order to use them, we believe two key dimensions to the crisis need to be understood if system leaders are to be able to implement such frameworks and manage successful reopening (in flexible ways).

## 1 The key school-level dimension to the crisis

Four key school-level dimensions to the crisis must be considered when responding to the crisis or applying school re-opening frameworks. They are:

- **Learning technology:** This has played a key role in learning continuity, but serious challenges exist related to access and capability – e.g. as highlighted by UNICEF, about a third of children have been unable to access remote learning.
- **Teacher knowledge (motivation) and skills:** The current crisis is causing a huge strain on the profession, and responses place huge demand either through skills required to facilitate remote learning, or to deal with differential learning loss when pupils return.
- **Home and community learning:** With schools closed, for many young people the home became the site of learning, creating new opportunities for more effective and efficient learning configurations – the hybrid learning opportunity (see box above); however it also created significant equity challenges in terms of access, compounded by differential home environments.

'...two key dimensions to the crisis need to be understood if system leaders are to be able to implement such frameworks...'

## Hybrid learning: the opportunity

Getting the right combination of technology and associated pedagogy that will allow for:

- Blended and seamless class and distance learning
  - Sequential combinations of both (e.g. 2 days classroom, 2 days online)
  - Parallel combinations of both (e.g. 50% of the students, 50% online)
  - Flexibility to rapidly move from 100% in-class to 100% online and back again as the global situation changes
  - Differentiation and assessment for both
  - Ongoing community involvement to ensure learning coherence/continuity
- Getting the right combination will depend on context, resources available and the capabilities of key actors.

## Accelerated learning and catch-up:

Pupils have lost learning in different ways, as schools return being able to provide targeted support for pupils to catch up core curriculum areas is a key strategy – requiring specific pedagogy and curriculum re-planning.

## 2 The key system-level dimensions to the crisis

Four key system level dimensions also to be considered are:

- **Planning and governance:** With the rapid requirement to create Covid-19 learning continuity plans when schools closed, this is a significant capacity challenge – potentially overwhelming – but done effectively, offers opportunity to benefit from new models, e.g. hybrid learning.
- **Data:** With school closure many systems stopped collecting data on learning; this is needed to target interventions when schools reopen and learning restarts – e.g. to target accelerated catch-up at school level, and at system level to map progress and direct resources.
- **Qualifications and assessment:** Many pupils have had key national examinations disrupted – despite efforts to re-open schools in many jurisdictions for key year groups. Alternative ways to provide transition-critical qualifications and support effective forms of formative and summative assessment will be even more critical as schools reopen flexibly.

- **Financing:** Perhaps one of greatest challenges facing education in the medium term will be the combinations of funding – particularly from development partners – being focused on health and economic recovery, and reduced domestic financing as a result of economic disruption.

It is important to understand how these dimensions are related to each other and key aspects of impact, as outlined in the diagram below.

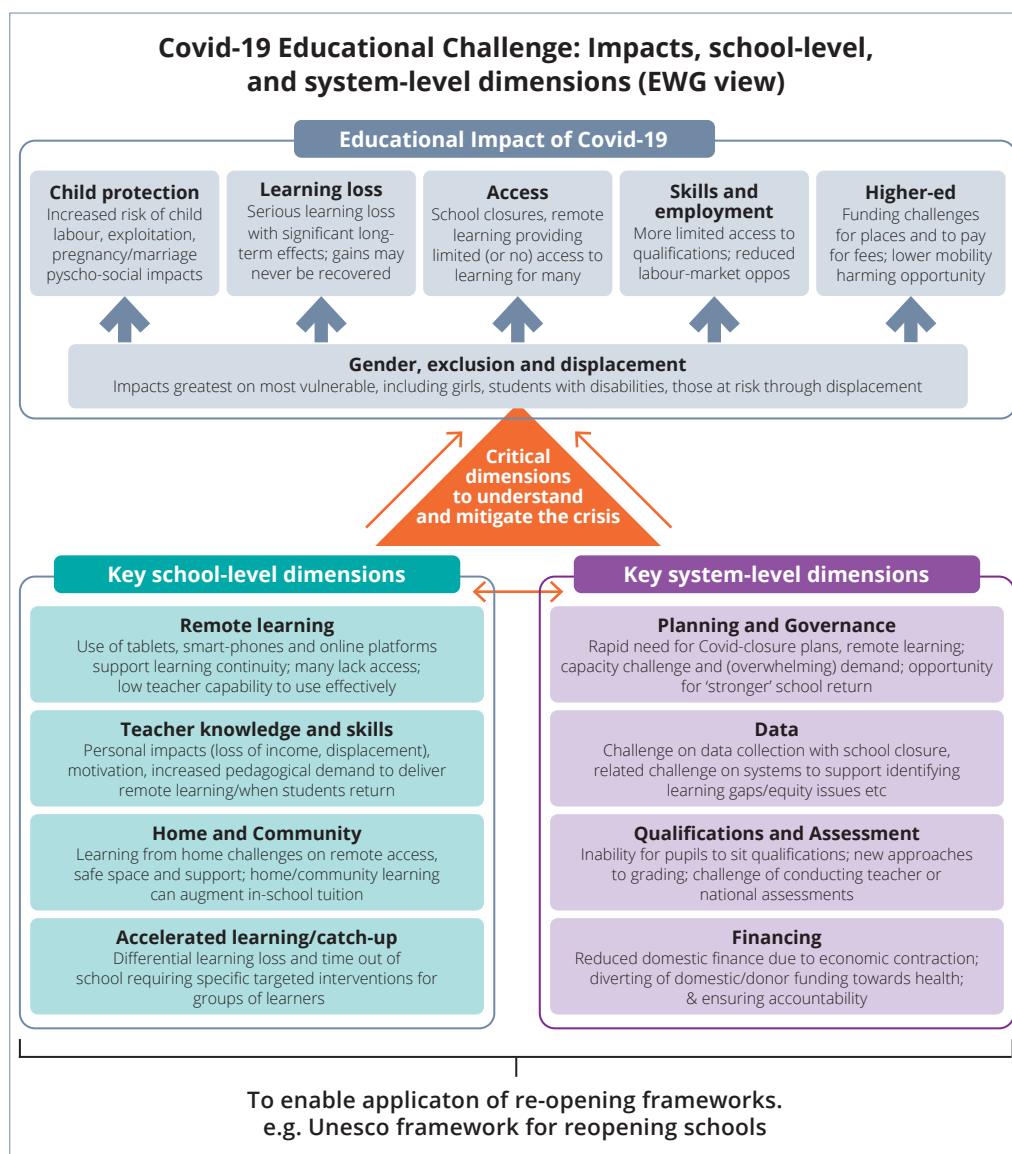
In the following section we provide insights from EWG members into some of the key aspects of the school and system level dimensions.

### An evidence-based response

As countries plan, using the available evidence is critical. There is an emerging evidence base on crisis response in education that can help, for example:

- **The Ed-tech hub** has worked on a number of rapid reports e.g. with Education Development Trust looking at what hasworked in previous crisis, and in the early stages of Covid-19 related to gender, remote learning and effective policy responses (see <https://edtechhub.org/>)
- **The Centre for Global Development** maintains a relevant list of emerging research (see <https://www.cgdev.org/>)

'As countries plan, using the available evidence is critical. There is an emerging evidence base on crisis response in education that can help.'



## Section 4

# Challenge and opportunity: Member Insights

We present here insights from EWG members from their experience of the learning crisis relating to different dimensions of the problem outlined in Section 3.

'Distance and Hybrid Learning will have a significant pedagogical impact.'

### LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

#### Promethean

The current Covid-19 pandemic has led governments to seek technological solutions to the challenge of maintaining education during lockdown. However, this has highlighted crucial issues with access, connectivity and power. Less than 15% of the world's population have broadband access, only 44% have internet access in any form and over a billion people do not have a stable power supply.

Systems and protocols implemented in response to the pandemic should be undertaken in a systemic and sustainable way, so as to be also fully integrated in,

and supportive of, post-lockdown education. This will ensure greater flexibility and transition between different modes of delivery in the event of similar crises in the future.

Teacher capacity building through training and support, from a pedagogical standpoint as well as a technical one, is crucial to the effective integration of technology into education. Distance and Hybrid Learning will have a significant pedagogical impact (such as a shift towards student-centered learning), and practitioners and students need guidance, professional communities and support to respond and benefit from these changes.

### SAFEGUARDING

#### Cambridge Education, Mott Macdonald

During the current pandemic there is an increased risk of violence towards children when isolated at home. Interventions include contextualised parenting lessons in parallel to standard remotely-delivered lessons for the students, the raising of overall awareness and support for social services where necessary.

There are significant risks of students falling out of the system because of a lack of learning during lockdown, and many

of them entering the economy instead. Girls are particularly vulnerable because of issues around pregnancy and forced marriage. Interventions include keeping the link between education and the children to prevent them dropping out by targeting the most vulnerable and marginalised with appropriate educational content.

Prevention of virus spread on return to school is another key issue, worsened by overcrowding and lack of resources, especially WASH facilities, especially affecting girls and female teachers. Interventions include fumigation, Covid-19 targeted sanitation and the improvement/introduction of WASH systems. Mitigators of overcrowding could include a phased return or school shifts to reduce class sizes. Support can be provided through systems strengthening programmes that build the capacity of governments to plan and use data and evidence to pivot and adapt to the changing situation.

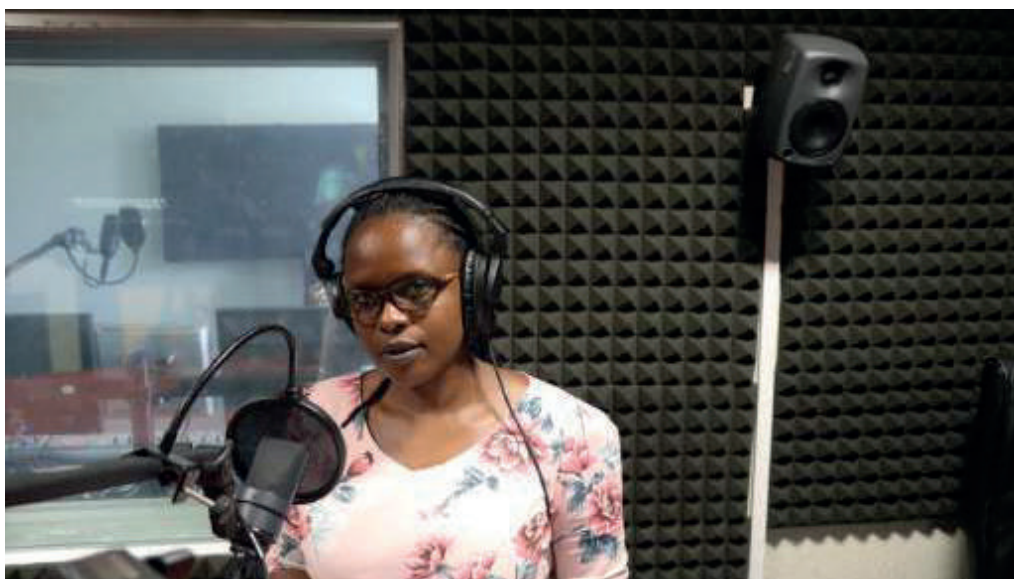


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*FCDO-funded Pakistan  
Education Innovation Fund.  
(Mott MacDonald,  
Cambridge Education)*



*Teacher Josiane teaching a Maths radio lesson during Covid-19, supported by the FCDO funded Rwanda BLF programme, run by Education Development Trust (EDT)*



© BLF RWANDA

## EXAMS, ASSESSMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS

### Cambridge Partnership for Education

In most countries the onset of Covid-19 had a massive negative impact on examinations, assessment and qualifications because of the decision to stop schooling and national exams, especially as many young people depend on the latter to get the grades they need to go to university or continue along other pathways. The extent to which education systems had incorporated continuous assessment was an indicator of their ability to react and mitigate the effects of lockdown. For example, in Norway 80% of assessment is continuous, so the loss of the remaining 20% didn't have a significant impact. Similarly, where teachers and schools were given sufficient additional support to deliver alternative forms of assessment, systems were better able to mediate the impacts of closures.

The next big challenge lies in integrating students back into school. The usual loss of learning that happens over summer has massively increased, compounded by issues of well-being and mental health caused by the crisis. It is vital and urgent to develop and apply diagnostic assessments for these pupils to accurately identify what they have forgotten/lost. This will increase the need for a robust personalised approach to teaching and so teacher support is also paramount.

Cambridge can provide formative assessments that accurately measure a child's potential and progress, including:

- Baseline assessments that support educational tracking – giving measures of an individual's potential and progress through school.
- Diagnostic assessments that help inform teachers where interventions may be helpful to improve pupil outcomes.
- Attitudinal questionnaires that help to give a deeper understanding of the learning environment as seen by children and young people.
- Entrance assessments that help identify the young people that meet the selection criteria for school intake.

Experienced teachers in particular may struggle with the new paradigms because they will have to change their schedules, routines, resources and approach. Bottlenecks around capacity are likely, especially in countries lacking resources and budget.

In the long term it is necessary for governments to implement plans and protocols to handle similar crises in the future. This may involve re-examining the curriculum to focus on basic skills to make the best use of the time available, should it become severely restricted once more. These protocols and frameworks should be context sensitive, at national, regional and institutional level.

'Loss of learning has been compounded by issues of well-being and mental health caused by the crisis.'



'Much can be done through collaboration with a strong network of researchers, practitioners and civil society organisations (CSOs) on the frontline of educational development.'

## GENDER AND INCLUSION

### Social Development Direct

The economic impact of the pandemic, both in the short and long term, may lead to the dangerous de-prioritisation of gender equality, social inclusion and safeguarding in education by donors and policymakers. Such regression would have significant negative impacts (both social and economic) on poor households and their access to education, pushing marginalised young people out of education and increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence and abuse, early marriage, teenage pregnancies, FGM, human trafficking, etc. – with girls and persons with disabilities among the most at risk.

It is therefore important to support continued advocacy and funding for inclusive education; to monitor and evaluate the unfolding situation, identifying and tackling

systemic barriers that are exacerbated by the crisis; to listen closely to CSOs representing marginalised groups; and to provide clear, up-to-date information and guidance to education policymakers, practitioners and funders. This will help to create an enabling environment for the development of manageable, cost-effective methodologies and solutions that protect and advance marginalised young people (and their households) – embedding a culture of safeguarding in all that we do.

Generating evidence in pandemic conditions can be particularly difficult, but SDDirect experience with its global Helpdesk facilities show much can be done through collaboration with a strong network of researchers, practitioners and civil society organisations (CSOs) on the frontline of educational development.

## LEARNING DATA

### RTI International

Information on student learning is critical to informing plans for returning to school. How much learning loss occurred while schools were closed? How is the learning loss distributed among low and high performers? How should teachers adjust their expectations and approaches to delivering lessons? What should catch-up and remediation programmes look like to meet the needs of all students? If schools continue to be closed, what skills should distance learning programmes seek to reinforce? Answers to these questions can be informed by analysis of datasets on student learning outcomes collected prior to the pandemic.

For example, RTI researchers are using data from 27 low and middle income countries

(LMICs) to estimate year-on-year growth in student reading achievement under normal conditions, as a starting point for developing models to estimate learning losses (relative to expected growth). Since learning loss will not be equal for all students, we focus on examining full distributions of scores in order to produce more precise estimates than could be obtained by relying only on average change. These analyses have yielded evidence of common trends across countries, grades, and languages—leading us toward a new model of estimating loss. Ultimately, this work provides insight about how to easily estimate expected year-on-year growth measures and conversely to estimate learning loss estimates (as proportions of a single year's expected learning gain). These models will directly inform our work with governments to plan what school should look like upon return.

Beyond looking at assessment and outcomes, data systems should be crisis resilient and ensure that re-enrolment can be tracked and student attrition minimized. To this end governments should work to strengthen their Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) to be able to provide policy makers with real time, accurate data. This is a key opportunity to look at how this can be supported, with a particular eye on collaboration with the health sector for responding to the needs of the whole child.

*Tusome Early Grade Reading Activity. (RTI International)*



© AMINA JASHO



© GIRLS' EDUCATION CHALLENGE (GEC)

*Community learning in Turkana during Covid-19: from the Education Development Trust 'Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu' (Let Our Girls Succeed) project, which is part of the FCDO funded Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) - for which Nathan Associates supports the evaluation. (EDT/Nathan)*

## COMMUNITY LEARNING

### Education Development Trust's

programme in Kenya provides a great example of a community learning in response to Covid-19, and the issues and challenges raised with school closures and the push for home-based learning. This had a significant impact on marginalised groups, and girls' education in particular.

Kenya closed its schools early on. Its Covid-19 mitigation plan included the use of broadcast TV and radio, together with online education. However, many girls (approximately a third) lack access even to radios. And even when

they do, there are still huge challenges due to economic pressure, family movement and childcare expectations.

In response, the programme focused on ways to use the community to maintain continuity through the use of 'community health volunteers' (CHVs) who delivered education materials as part of household visits – also helping to encourage learning in the home environment and engaging with parents/literate siblings/caregivers. Community 'reading corners' were set up, and the programme augmented by maintaining teacher engagement through WhatsApp groups facilitated by 'learning coaches'.

The results have been remarkable. In the Arid-and Semi-Arid (ASAL) areas, levels of learner engagement despite school closure have been higher than 90%, and in the urban slum areas, over 80%. This is despite the wider economic challenge presented by the Covid-19 restrictions. It demonstrates the power of the community as a key mechanism to improve learning continuity during school closure and mitigate critical equity issues, and also offers the potential to redefine learning relationships as schools reopen in flexible and adapted ways.

## PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE

### McKinsey Development Partners

Education systems face a multitude of challenges as they respond to COVID – ensuring health and safety, maximizing student learning and thriving, supporting teachers and staff, and establishing a sound operational and financial foundation. Leaders are making decisions based on limited and rapidly changing epidemiological evidence and are having to make difficult trade-offs. Seven guiding principles can enable effective planning and delivery across the remote learning and school reopening process:

- Dedicating leadership capacity at each level of the school system to ensure that the response is well-coordinated and monitored
- Developing clear protocols and decision-making processes to ensure consistency and efficiency across health safeguards and learning models, including cascading national, state, and local guidelines
- Communicating clearly and often across stakeholder groups including teachers,

principals, parents, and students to build trust and integrate stakeholder input into designing sustainable models for learning through the pandemic

- Creating strong relationships at the policy and operational levels with relevant government and non-government entities, for example with local and regional health departments
- Ensuring rigorous testing of plans, for example through 'day-in-the-life' simulations that map out a typical day for students and teachers at different grade levels in the new normal
- Putting in place effective data and monitoring systems to track implementation of health and pedagogical interventions, and to continuously inform future strategy and improve the response

None of this is easy, but systems can act decisively to both respond to the immediate crisis and build a bridge towards better educational systems for the future.



'The results of community learning have been remarkable. In the ASAL areas, levels of learner engagement despite school closure have been higher than 90%.'

'Investment should continue in improving approaches to mobile and web-based data collection.'

## EVALUATION AND RESEARCH SERVICES

### Itad

The Covid-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for monitoring and evaluation. Lockdown and isolation has meant that people have become separated from many of the systems and processes used to collect data, leading to the need for alternative and innovative approaches to monitoring. When people are no longer able to contribute to evidence generation through the usual channels, how do you develop alternative approaches? Investment should continue in improving approaches to mobile and web-based data collection to allow for user voices to continue to influence programming. Geospatial mapping and the use of mobile data offer a possible alternative for generating evidence on hard to reach populations but raise ethical questions surrounding the desirability and legitimacy of mass surveillance.

In the specific case of education funding, the last six months have seen a massive

reallocation of resources from donors etc. This calls for careful monitoring to ensure value, transparency and accountability. The 'covidisation' of systems has occurred at great national cost and evaluation is needed to understand the long-term effects of diverting funding and resources. We also need to evaluate governance and strategic collaboration at the national and global level to understand which organisations and coalitions are working and why.

There are two timelines that need to be considered for monitoring and evaluation. The first consists of a rapid testing cycle to build up an evidence base as quickly as possible to look at the efficacy of interventions such as educational technology. The second timeline is focused on developing a long-term understanding and decision making processes to handle future resurgences.

### Generating evidence on access to schools and learning loss during Covid-19

Understanding the effects Covid-19 has had on school closures and learning loss, is a key evidence gap.

#### Tetra Tech International Development

is conducting two studies as part of its independent evaluation of Phase II of the Girls' Education Challenge Fund looking at how projects around the world are supporting marginalised girls during Covid-19 and how this is affecting their progression

through school and learning outcomes. How is Covid-19 impacting the enrolment and learning of marginalised girls, what are education interventions doing to mitigate this, and with what effects on learning? Using predictive modelling techniques and qualitative methods, the studies will deepen understanding in how learning is changing during Covid-19 and how teachers and schools are adapting in this new reality.

## COMMUNICATIONS TO SUPPORT PLANNING

### Palladium

Through the Education Pathways to Peace programme ("Pathways") in the Philippines, Palladium has worked in partnership with the Government, supporting conflict-sensitive quality education services in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), an area with the country's poorest education learning outcomes.

More than 860,000 primary school students were affected by COVID-19-related education disruptions. Working with the BARMM's new inter-agency Covid-19 taskforce, the Pathways programme has drawn on its adaptive

programming approach to help address the impacts of the pandemic at the education front line.

Offline and online strategies are being deployed to better support the ministry's education services and Covid-19 Learning Continuity Plan, including the use of SMS and text blasts, two-way radio, social media, and broader mass media platforms. Pathways helps create a multi-platform communication system to help disseminate information including the Learning Continuity Plan and serve as an additional instructional delivery option.



A parent supporting their child during a radio lesson at home in Rulindo District, northern Rwanda during Covid-19. Education Development Trust (EDT)

## TVET

### Pearson PLC

There is a huge demand for quality Vocational Education, featuring high on governments' agendas and strategies in order to drive growth. However, often Vocational Education programmes can be out of date and not delivered with relevance and quality, an issue that is exacerbated by a disconnect between school outputs and employers. Covid-19 has amplified these issues, as well as having significant impacts on sectors such as tourism, hospitality and the aeronautical industry. However, the pandemic has seen a huge demand for skills and capacity in sectors such as health care, digital and logistics.

TVET providers therefore need to be able to rapidly shift to meet changing sector needs. It is important to ensure flexibility within the system so that taught skills are designed to be transferable to increase mobility and flexibility.

Following lockdown, there has been a big shift to digital and online platforms to increase access to vocational learning and facilitate rapid training and deployment. This complements long-term strategies to provide continuous lifelong adult education via online systems. Increasingly, technical skills have a short shelf life so constant upskilling is a requirement. A modular curriculum incorporating quality-assured continuous assessment is part of this approach.

One key issue is the loss of opportunities for practical learning. To mitigate this, blended learning models and simulations to replicate real environments and allow for practice can be adopted, although applied learning remains a challenge. Mobile devices (i.e. phones) for learning provide a solution to issues of access in countries where there is poor infrastructure. Community based vocational education can also aid provision in marginalised and harder to reach communities.

## TVET

### The Woolwich College

The pandemic has forced TVET providers and learners to use currently available technology, not all of which was necessarily fully suitable for the TVET sector. With limited time for preparation or transition into this new way of learning, the learning experience has been patchy and to some extent compromised.

That said, whilst not ideal, this has led to new, blended delivery models that were previously under-used, with some elements of curriculum delivery becoming more effective. For example using live teaching and learning online has been a time saver for learners who are already working whilst studying, and some TVET providers have used asynchronous recorded sessions of the classes to allow learners to access content at their own convenience.

More work is needed to support curriculum development to become more flexible for

both TVET providers to deliver, and for learners to learn in a workplace setting. There have been instances when some curriculum had a lack of flexibility to adapt during the lockdown. Awarding bodies and curriculum planners should now think of flexible approaches of learning including use of computer simulation. The current model heavily relies on face to face and on the job interactions to assess learners' capabilities. Due to the pandemic, the assessment and progression of the learners in some TVET sectors has been halted. TVET sectors could be supported to invest more in staff and student's capacity building for successful online or blended delivery.

One key challenge is the lack of reliable internet connection and power. Therefore, provision for battery operated devices and an affordable 4G internet service (via mobile phone) for TVET providers is a key potential investment government systems could consider.

'One key challenge is the lack of reliable internet connection and power.'



*Digital remote learning and technology.  
(British Council)*



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## HIGHER EDUCATION

### British Council

Higher education systems around the world face a multitude of challenges caused by the pandemic, which has disrupted traditional delivery methods. However there are opportunities to accelerate innovation and experiment with new ways of working.

One of the emerging challenges for Higher Education will be developing national quality assurance systems in a post-Covid world, particularly for the delivery and assessment of online learning.

Assessment itself will also pose a challenge, particular in international high-volume testing such as IELTS, used for international student mobility. How can these exams be run online in a timely, secure and trustworthy fashion?

Enhancing student engagement will be another issue facing Higher Education institutions, as students' expectations are high; and students, especially those who are fee paying, will likely expect high quality and innovative online learning.

The global talent pipeline has also been disrupted. While around 8m students were globally mobile last year, this will now be significantly reduced with economic impact on receiving institutions. What opportunities does this provide Trans-national education? Early career researchers and academics who were also globally mobile, developing networks in specialist fields and developing new research, have also been curtailed. What are the most effective ways of facilitating international academic engagement during and post pandemic?

Many of the world's universities will now have to accelerate organisational change. A new leadership skillset for senior leaders and academics will need to be identified and incorporated into professional development programmes in order to successfully navigate their institutions into the post-Covid environment.

What is clear that the demand for Higher Education continues to grow, and with new methods of delivery and access, opportunities exist for innovative approaches.

'There are opportunities to accelerate innovation and experiment with new ways of working.'

## Section 5

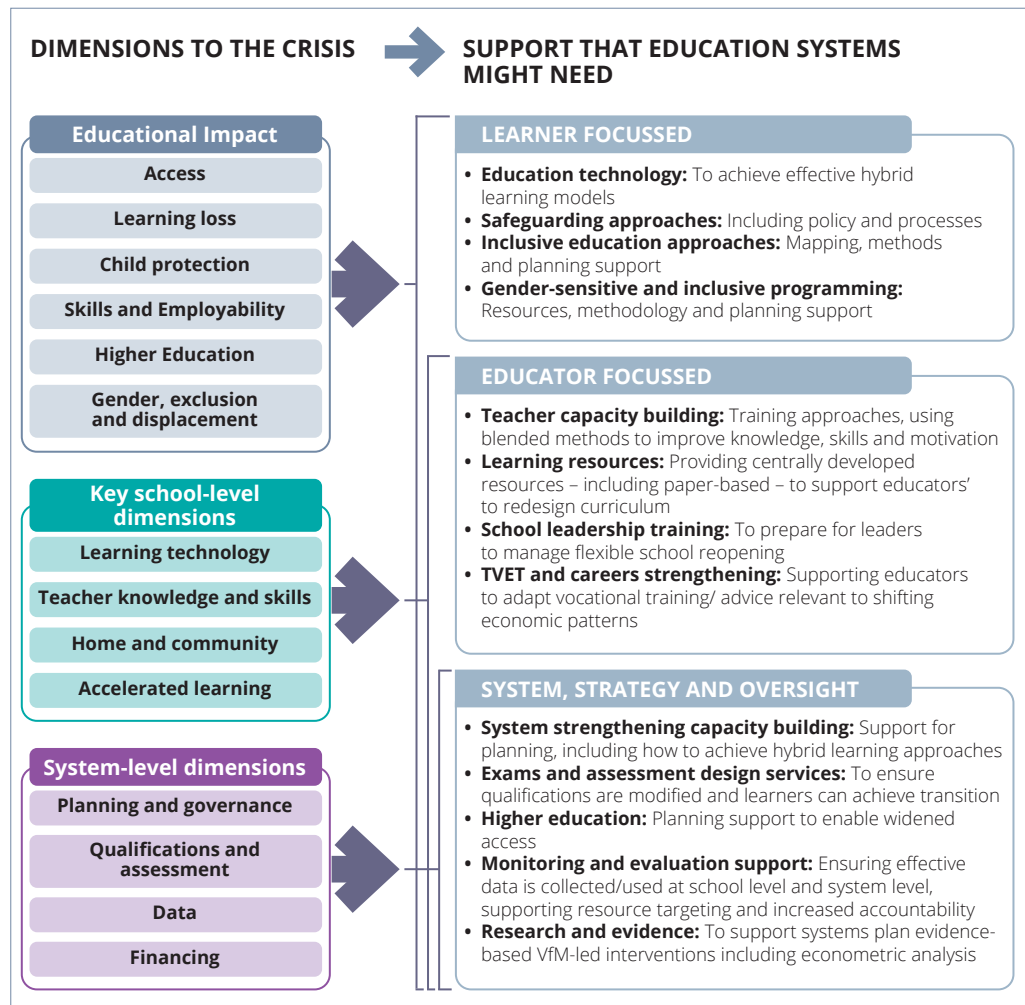
# Tackling the crisis: working in partnership

'British Expertise International is an incubator of the kind of dialogue, partnerships and collaboration required to 'build back better' for education in the wake of Covid-19.'

As outlined in Section 3, responding to Covid-19 is a complex challenge, with a number of interlocking dimensions to address. As insights from EWG members illustrate, addressing these dimensions is possible, but requires detailed contextual understanding linked with in-depth methodological and technical expertise.

Tackling the crisis will be best achieved by working in partnership, combining the efforts of governments, international multi-lateral and bilateral institutions with the knowledge, expertise and experience of organisations already working on help to mitigate this crisis.

British Expertise International is an incubator of the kind of dialogue, partnerships and collaboration required to 'build back better' for education in the wake of Covid-19. EWG members can offer technical expertise as experienced service providers. However they are also skilled and experienced partnership builders, with significant convening power and connections across diverse sectors – as well as proven capacity to assemble innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships that can tackle the huge systemic challenges of post-Covid education.



The type of support needed maps on the key dimensions outlined in this report.

This includes support:

- **Direct to learners** (and parents)
- **Direct to educators** (including teachers, school leaders and regional/district level staff)
- **At system level**, supporting strategy and oversight

Members offer support in these key areas – see matrix below. This demonstrates the comprehensive support available from EWG members to support necessary to mitigate the impact on learners, and support educators and system actors to respond effectively.

Supporting systems to tackle the challenge: Expertise from EWG members																
BEI MEMBERS MATCHED SERVICES	SUPPORT AREA															
	Learner focused	Education technology	Safeguarding approaches	Inclusive education approaches	Gender-sensitive programming	Educator focused	Teacher capacity development	Learning resources	School leadership development	TVET and Careers	System, strategy & oversight	Systems strengthening	Examinations & assessment	Higher education support	Monitoring & evaluation services	Research and evidence generation
British Council	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cambridge Education, Mott Macdonald	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cambridge Partnership for Education <i>(unit within The University of Cambridge)</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Chemonics	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
DAI Europe				●						●		●				
Eagle Scientific	●						●	●		●				●		
Ecorys											●				●	●
Education Development Trust	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●				●	●
IMC Worldwide															●	●
Itad	●			●	●			●			●				●	●
McKinsey Development Partners	●			●	●		●		●	●	●			●	●	
Nathan															●	●
Oxford Policy Management			●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Palladium	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●
Pearson PLC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Promethean	●						●				●				●	
RTI International	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●			●	●
Social Development Direct			●	●	●		●	●	●		●				●	●
Tetra Tech International Development				●	●										●	●
The Woolwich College	●	●					●	●		●				●	●	



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## Section 6

# Concluding remarks

It is a critical time for education systems. Schools in many places are beginning to open, fully or partially, but this does not mean the crisis for education is over. In many ways, the real challenge is just beginning. Systems should be planning for flexibility, as schools, teachers and learners may have to cope with cycles of closure/re-opening, or maintain for long periods partial opening for rotating groups of children. Further, systems have to deal with the huge challenge of learning loss and the ensuring all children return, which in some places will be very difficult to achieve.

To deal with this effectively, policymakers need to understand as fully as possible the key dimensions to this problem, and work together with key stakeholders to address it. This includes advocacy to ensure sufficient funding is available, and critically, partnership to ensure the right expertise is available to guide decision making and support effective implementation.

The message from British Expertise International Education Working Group members is that we understand the scale of this emergency. We are working in systems across the world to help address it. But we believe more needs to be done, and we have experience and specialist expertise to offer.

Working together, we believe this crisis can be addressed and the life chances of millions of young people improved despite the challenges ahead. We welcome further discussion with those who want to work with us to do so.

'It is a critical time for education systems... we believe more needs to be done, and have experience and expertise to offer'

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## Appendix 1

# Glossary of Terms

<b>CWD</b>	Children With Disabilities
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>IELTS</b>	International English Language Testing System
<b>LNGB</b>	Leave No Girl Behind
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation
<b>TNE</b>	Trans-national Education
<b>UNDP</b>	The United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

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## Appendix 2

# Member Directory



### British Council

British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

It builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year the British Council reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, and through broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, it is a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. It receives a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government.



### Canterbury Christ Church University

Canterbury Christ Church University has an outstanding reputation for public services education - notably teacher education, policing, health and social care. This expertise and track record, along with the strong values base of the institution has underpinned the securing and successful delivery of in-country capacity building projects in developing and emerging countries. These are delivered under contract to government agencies and in some cases using aid or non-governmental organization funding. The theme running through all such project work is a strong commitment to sustainability and inclusive partnership working which respects and celebrates the culture, values and ethos of the communities in which the work is located. Projects are built with partners and are always bespoke and flexible according to context and need.



### Cambridge Education, Mott Macdonald

Cambridge Education believes in the power of education to transform lives. For over 40 years, they have worked to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to improve their lives through access to high quality education, especially the most disadvantaged, including girls and those with disabilities. Cambridge Education does this by providing governments and clients with access to the best expertise available and by actively managing their programmes and projects to ensure that governments, schools and teachers have the tools to improve learning outcomes and build better futures. Currently, this involves supporting education ministries across Africa and Asia reach children through radio, TV, print and digital to keep them safe and to keep them learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.



### Cambridge Partnership for Education (unit within The University of Cambridge)

The Cambridge Partnership for Education brings together the understanding and expertise in education reform from Cambridge Assessment and Cambridge University Press, supported by the collective knowledge and global network of the University of Cambridge. The work of Cambridge Partnership for Education includes designing and implementing programmes in curriculum, assessment, publishing, teacher training and raising standards of English language learning and teaching. Cambridge Partnership for Education creates coherent solutions that are scalable, sustainable and have a record of success in developing knowledge and involving local teams to build capacity.





### Chemonics

Chemonics' global network of approximately 5,000 specialists is driven by a stubborn insistence that tomorrow's world must be better than today's. As such, empowering young people is central to the organisation's mission. Chemonics is supporting the reading development of every child in years one to three in primary school across Rwanda and has helped over 400,000 learners improve their reading and mathematics in Syria, while also working to promote their wellbeing and safety. Whether it's teacher professional development in Tajikistan or education systems strengthening in Senegal, Chemonics is working to tackle the biggest challenges in education – never losing focus on the learning and wellbeing of the children they support.



### DAI Europe

DAI works on the frontlines of global development. Transforming ideas into action – action into impact. They are committed to shaping a more livable world and tackle fundamental social and economic development problems caused by inefficient markets, ineffective governance, and instability. They work with a wide range of clients, including national and local governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, private corporations, and philanthropies. Since 1970, they have worked in more than 150 countries – delivering results across the spectrum of international development contexts, from stable societies and high-growth economies to challenging environments racked by political or military conflict. DAI Europe partner with local people and institutions on scores of projects worldwide.



### Eagle Scientific

Eagle Scientific is a global provider of scientific, educational and vocational training solutions offering consultancy services, procurement and project delivery to public and private clients worldwide.

As well as providing education, scientific and vocational training equipment, the company has significant experience in the management of turnkey projects from inception to installation and on-going technical support.

Working predominantly in developing countries, a large part of its business is financed by the international aid community such as the UK's DFID (now FCDO), the World Bank, African and Asian Development Banks and United Nations agencies such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, as well as national governments and private clients.



### Ecorys

Ecorys provides leading research, consultancy and management services with over 85 years of experience working on projects across the globe for a wide range of clients (FCDO, EC, World Bank, UN offices among others). With a specialised Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) focus area, our strength in MEL lies in our ability to combine deep in-house technical expertise, with extensive sectoral and geographical experience. In education, Ecorys brings a strong track record of managing large-scale education MEL and research contracts, such as DFID Pakistan's KP Education Sector Programme, FCDO-Nigeria's Human Development Evaluation, Learning and Verification Services programme (DELVE) and the review of the World Bank's Early Learning Partnership.

Ecorys has also worked on building the capacity of education departments and sectors by improving their M&E systems on programmes such as the Zambia Education Sector Support Technical Assistance (ZESSTA) programme and the Quality Education Strategic Support Programme (QESSP) in Ethiopia.



### Education Development Trust

Education Development Trust is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to provide evidence-based sustainable solutions that transform lives through education. They do this by improving school systems at scale, delivering reform programmes to build the capacity of teachers, school leaders and supervisors. They provide strategic, technical consultancy direct for education Ministries or donors, including support through framework contracts for DFID, UNICEF, NORAD and the EU. They also conduct an influential public education research programme (available from their website). Finally, they manage a family of independent schools (including 3 schools in the south of England). In all of their work, they make 'best global practice local', combining understanding of what works around the world with a deep knowledge of the local context.



### IMC Worldwide

IMC Worldwide is an international development consultancy with roots in the planning, design and management of global infrastructure projects. They have more than 50 years' experience and have worked in over 80 countries and territories. Their team of staff and consultants offers a wealth of technical expertise in areas ranging from economics, financial analysis and management consultancy through to engineering, urban and regional planning, social assessment and institutional development. They work with government agencies, local authorities and with communities themselves to help address some of the most difficult development problems and barriers to poverty reduction.

Currently undertaking the Independent Evaluation for a LNGB Project in Ghana. It looks at learner assessments, access, inclusion, skills and employability.



### Itad

Itad is a global organisation. Their strategy, monitoring, evaluation and learning services work to make international development more effective. They generate evidence on important issues – from malnutrition to migration – to support their partners to make informed decisions and improve lives.

Itad's partners include foundations, public and private sector organisations, governments and non-governmental organisations. They know that no two organisations are alike, and every project brings new challenges, so they take an agile approach, tailoring their services to each context.

They specialise in providing high-quality evidence and insights to help our partners make better decisions based on an understanding of what works, how and for whom. Their work in monitoring, evaluation and learning – combined with consultancy services in strategy and design – spans topics, countries and regions.



### McKinsey Development Partners

McKinsey Development Partners, a McKinsey & Company entity delivering international development work globally.

In a rapidly changing world, education has never been more important as a critical lever to help people achieve their full potential. McKinsey works to improve educational and employment outcomes, helping create prosperous societies that provide equal opportunities. McKinsey does this by focusing on increasing access, affordability, and quality for every individual, and on closing gaps in outcomes across race, socioeconomic status, and gender.

McKinsey works across all levels of education, including reforming schools systems, transforming higher education institutions, delivering education-to-employment solutions, harnessing education technology, and guiding philanthropic and for-profit investment decisions.

McKinsey serves education institutions and systems, governments, vocational training providers, service-providers, and philanthropic and for-profit investors. Their teams include former teachers, institutional leaders, researchers, and policy-makers dedicated to helping the next generation to thrive. →



## Nathan

Nathan Associates (Nathan) is a global economics and management consulting firm which has been at the forefront of working with government and business since its founding in 1946. Nathan works across several international practice areas - financial sector development, economic policy and governance, private sector development, trade and logistics and women's economic empowerment.

Since 2012, Nathan have supported DFID in managing the flagship Girls Education Challenge (GEC), a programme aiming to improve educational outcomes for girls by triggering and scaling up successful innovation amongst the private sector and NGOs. Nathan have supported the design and management of the challenge fund, and led the programme monitoring & evaluation, including rigorous data quality assessments, and portfolio results aggregation and lessons learning.

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## Oxford Policy Management

Oxford Policy Management's (OPM) education seeks to improve access of all children to quality and inclusive education, especially the most marginalised children. They support governments in low-and middle-income countries deliver high quality learning opportunities for all on a sustainable basis by working on transforming education systems; developing education assessments and metrics to better measure teaching and learning; improving education financing to ensure education resources are appropriate, efficient, effective and equitable; supporting governments in harnessing non-state actors in education; reforming early childhood development; and improving education equality to ensure no children are left behind.

They believe effective consulting requires deep knowledge of the political, economic, social and educational contexts, and orient teams and projects to achieve this. They work directly with ministries of education and donors, but also contribute to the academic debate. They engage long-term with governments to contribute to sustainable capacity for effective education.

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## Palladium

Palladium is a global impact firm, working to link social progress and sustainable economic growth. For the past 50 years, they've been helping clients to see the world as interconnected – by formulating strategies, building partnerships and implementing projects that have a lasting social and economic value - they call this "Positive Impact". With a global network of more than 2,500 employees in over 90 countries, Palladium are committed to improving the quality of life for vulnerable people around the globe, ensuring no one is left behind.

Palladium's Education practice has over 50 years' experience in transforming education systems and institutions to improve learning outcomes. They do this by working hand-in-hand with educators, policy makers, communities, and other stakeholders to implement local solutions, connecting and building on ideas and innovations from across sectors, and working to understand education systems as a whole. Palladium's work spans early childhood education, primary and secondary school, higher education and technical and vocational training.



### **Pearson PLC**

Pearson has a simple mission: to help people make more of their lives through learning.

They are the world's largest education company, with over 35,000 employees in more than 70 countries helping people of all ages to make measurable progress in their lives.

They provide a range of education products and services to institutions, governments and direct to individual learners, that help people everywhere aim higher and fulfil their true potential.

Their commitment to them requires a holistic approach to education. It begins by using research to understand what sort of learning works best, it continues by bringing together people and organisations to develop ideas, and it comes back round by measuring the outcomes of our product.

### **Promethean™ Promethean**

Promethean is a Global Education Company specialising in classroom technology. Its award-winning products are based on decades of experience working with teachers, and using their feedback and input to ensure it develops effective technologies.

Promethean is a trusted advisor to many Ministries of Education providing country specific, customized and productive education systems. It has worked on strategic education projects in Russia, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Promethean works through local partners to ensure that its solutions and support services are specifically tailored to local needs.

Teacher support is a fundamental component of Promethean's success. It provides training and support not only on how to use the products, but also on how its solutions can be used to teach effectively.



### **RTI International**

RTI provides technical expertise in designing and implementing curricular approaches and materials, and promoting teacher behavior and system change through training, coaching, and classroom-based assessment.

RTI helps address the challenges governments face in implementing national strategies by improving planning, budgeting, finance, decentralization, management, accountability, and data management systems.

RTI leverages digital technologies to improve basic education delivery and enhance traditional training approaches and student learning.

RTI collaborates with governments and donors to generate and interpret data to inform practice. They develop effective methods for assessment, monitoring and evaluation; collect actionable, high-quality data; measure program impact; and help link the results to improvements in program implementation.





### Social Development Direct

Social Development Direct (SDDirect) is a specialist consultancy and research firm focused on social development, gender equality and social inclusion. Drawing on its in-house staff of high calibre consultants and social researchers and an international network of experts, SDDirect is a leading provider of technical advice, support and research on gender and inclusion in education (including girls education; disability inclusion; gender-based violence and safeguarding; education in FCAS environments; citizen voice and accountability; and monitoring, evaluation and learning).

SDDirect has a strong track record of delivery in large-scale programmes such as FCDO's DFID's Girls Education Challenge (GEC), the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), Voices for Change, the Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Helpdesk, and the Disability Inclusion Development Programme. SDDirect is also a market leader on safeguarding and currently manages FCDO's Safeguarding and Resource Hub (RSH).



### Tetra Tech International Development

Tetra Tech International Development works with global governments and other partners to tackle complex development projects in 52 countries and to deliver results that create positive change in people's lives. Its in-house evaluation and research experts measure the effectiveness of development aid throughout the world and equip organisations and its programmes with high quality, tailored monitoring and evaluation systems. Tetra Tech bring particular expertise in carrying out large-scale evaluations of inclusive education programmes. They are currently leading the independent evaluation of Phase II of FCDO's global Girls' Education Challenge Fund to assess what's working to improve attendance and learning, for which girls, in which contexts, and why.



### The Woolwich College

The Woolwich College is an institute of further education, established by academics and entrepreneurs who have a successful track record in providing high quality education. The Woolwich College vision is to stay a challenging, relevant leader in education, in order to continue to meet the higher skills needs of an increasingly global marketplace. Their campuses are fully equipped with modern facilities and their students enjoy learning in spacious classrooms fitted with the latest audio-visual equipment.



## About British Expertise International

British Expertise International (BEI) is the UK's leading membership organisation for UK based companies exporting infrastructure, capacity building and international development, with a particular focus on the dynamic and growing markets of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and South East Europe.

Our members range from some of the UK's largest companies, to some of the smallest. They work across a range of sectors from infrastructure to education, health and international development, but all share a common goal of exporting the best of UK expertise in professional services.

BEI works closely with the UK and foreign governments to help our members understand international markets and opportunities they present through a wide range of activities. These include networking events, sector-focused forums, bespoke international market intelligence, and demand-based trade missions.

BEI has successfully delivered this unique focus, working both through our networks and alongside the UK government and other stakeholders, for over 50 years.

**Ready to have a conversation on how we can support your organisation or membership details? Contact Alexandra Barnes: [ab@britishexpertise.org](mailto:ab@britishexpertise.org) or visit [britishexpertise.org](http://britishexpertise.org)**

