

**PAKISTAN NATIONAL EDUCATION  
RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE PLAN (K-12)**  
*for*  
**COVID-19**

**Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training**

**Government of Pakistan**

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## 1 Introduction

The National Education Response and Resilience Plan for COVID-19 provides a framework of strategies and interventions for Pakistan’s education system to cope with the effects of COVID-19. Given the COVID-19 emergency and the urgent need to develop a plan for a coordinated national approach, this plan has been developed through a rapid consultative process with provinces and key stakeholders. The plan development also benefited from the desk review of a wide range of existing guidelines including the Framework for Reopening Schools<sup>1</sup>, best practices, provincial Education Sector Plans, PSLM and PES etc. Provincial and Federal Government actions and responses and the discussions currently being held in local education groups, technical working or Disaster Risk Resilience (DRR) groups also informed the development of this plan.

As the situation is still evolving with uncertainty, the future course of this pandemic cannot be predicted accurately. Hence the plan and framework provides a set of options and strategies that can be operationalized and implemented by provincial and area education authorities and departments in collaboration with other stakeholders based on different short to medium- and longer-term eventualities that will be context-based. This plan will be treated as a living document with subsequent elaborations capturing provincial responses and best practices from within the country and outside as the implementation progresses. Existing national and provincial level response and coordination structures will be involved in revisions of the plan through a consultative and inclusive process involving other Ministries, line departments, development partners, academia and civil society. The unique nature of this challenge also calls for a more iterative planning and implementation approach with feedback loops to continuously adapt to changing circumstances expected over the next few months and possibly two to three years.

The plan covers all geographic areas and provinces of Pakistan including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Islamabad Capital Territory.

The plan covers both the public and private sectors and includes all levels of education up to higher secondary level.

- Pre-Primary (Katchi – ECE)
- Primary (Grade 1 – 5)
- Middle (Grade 6 – 8)
- High (Grade 9 – 10)
- Higher Secondary (Grade 11 – 12)

The main sections of the plan include:

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<sup>1</sup> Framework for Reopening Schools, April 2020. UNESCO, UNICEF, The World Bank, WFP.

**Situation Analysis.** This section focuses on the specific impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on education in Pakistan so far. Each province/area will need to further elaborate the situation analysis based on the specific impact of COVID-19 in their areas and based on current educational statistics. The situation analysis also includes a description of potential eventualities for which the education sector needs to be prepared in order to continue learning while maintaining the safety and health of learners and education personnel.

**Guiding Principles for Implementation and Operationalization of the National Plan.** This section summarizes existing coordination structures and outlines principles related to using and building on existing coordination structures as well as strengthening Public-Private Partnerships. A list of guiding principles is also proposed to assist provinces with the selection and prioritization of strategies and interventions for responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Using them as a guide, provinces can choose interventions most suited to the characteristics of their province and prioritize activities that will further advance the goals and objectives set forward in their Provincial Education Sector Plans.

**Framework of Strategies and Interventions.** This framework takes as its starting point the overall goal of this national plan, “to support the continuation of learning and protect the health and well-being of approximately 40 million students and two million teachers and educational staff throughout Pakistan’s public-school systems.” The framework prioritizes three categories of activities: continuity of learning, school health (physical and psychosocial), hygiene and safety; and system strengthening and resilience.

## 2 Situation Analysis

COVID-19 pandemic is creating a multidimensional and multilayered crisis across the world. Primarily a public health crisis necessitating lock downs, quarantines and physical distancing, the pandemic has shocked all sectors. The economic and social impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns are huge. According to IMF, the world economy will shrink by 3 percent and Pakistan’s economy will see negative 1.5 percent growth this year. Risks of worse outcomes overshadow the next two to three years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected education and the continuity of learning, with all public and private sector education institutions immediately closed across Pakistan in mid-March 2020. Some education facilities are also designated as isolation and quarantine centers. Apart from the 19.1 million children already out of school and ongoing efforts to provide educational access for them, the closure of education institutions due to COVID-19 has directly impacted 40 million school going learners from pre-primary and primary to higher secondary levels. The situation will magnify the risks and vulnerabilities of an already weak education system with threats emanating from both endogenous and exogenous factors.

The continued closure of education institutions means the loss of learning for children that will further widen the gap between the expected years of schooling and learning adjusted years of schooling and will potentially increase dropout rates and therefore the number of out of school children. The crisis has the potential to further increase educational disparities as a result of the spillover effects of an economic recession, due to COVID-19, which will magnify the existing rural-urban, gender, and socio-economic divide with the potential to increase the prevalence of child labor both in the short and long run. There is a great risk of children being pulled out of education due to the increased need for child labor, or to assist their parents in work and at homes. Geographically, rural areas and urban slums are high-risk areas with more than 70% of current enrolment and large pockets of already out of school children not enrolled in any educational institution. Similarly, girls are already less likely to be enrolled in school than boys. In crisis situations, girls are twice as likely to be out of school and face greater barriers to continuing their education. The situation calls for a comprehensive approach for continuity of learning, mitigating the spillover effects of an economic recession and safeguarding an already weak education system.

## 2.1 Eventualities

The plan considers three primary eventualities arising out of the pandemic. These are conceived at the time of developing this plan to guide the planning and action processes moving forward. As the situation evolves, the eventualities and planning assumptions may change and will be reflected through revisions in plan priorities. Depending on the circumstances, the Government may decide to open all schools with safety measures in place or go for a more staggered process in stages and with pre-determined mechanisms to shut down again depending on the resurgence of the virus in local communities. For purposes of deciding on interventions, three primary eventualities may be considered by education officials to guide and prioritize their responses.

- Resumption of schooling: Schools re-open on 1 June, most likely with special measures to prevent infection and spread of COVID-19 and regular classroom instruction will begin with extra attention to health and hygiene and some forms of social distancing implemented.
- Home-based learning required: Schools do not re-open on 1 June (or only some schools open), which will require some kind of home-based learning until Provincial Authorities, in consultation with Health, Education and other relevant authorities, determine that schools can re-open.
- Potential for start/stop, short-term closures of schools: Provincial and District Authorities will need to establish and communicate procedures to be implemented at school level

and be prepared with measures to maintain continuity of learning during shut down periods.

Pakistan needs to be prepared for any of these scenarios to forestall worse outcomes. Since some form of home-based learning is likely to be required over the coming months or potentially for a one-two year period before a vaccine or effective treatment is widely available, home-based and distance learning strategies will be needed under any eventuality.

### 3 Guiding Principles for Implementation and Operationalization of National Plan

This section covers the guiding principles that the provinces and areas can employ to prioritize and operationalize the strategies and interventions given in the plan.

#### 3.1 National and Provincial Level Coordination & Response

To tackle the challenge of COVID-19 in Pakistan, the Federal and Provincial Governments established an elaborate response and coordination structure. At the federal level, Prime Minister of Pakistan heads a National Coordination Committee on COVID-19 with different subgroups and committees to steer the national response and coordination. At the provincial level, Chief Ministers of the respective provinces are heading the response and coordination task forces and committees. These national and provincial level committees include representatives of ministries and departments of Health, Finance, IT, Education, Police and Defense.

For the education sector, there are also functional technical and DRR working groups headed by education departments of respective provinces. These bodies include representatives of provincial and area departments including:

- Education Department
- Provincial Disaster Management Authority
- Health Department
- Home Department
- UN Agencies and Development Partners
- CSOs/NGOs

For an effective coordinated response, different levels of government need to move in a synchronized and complementary way. The district level will be crucial in implementation and scaling up the strategies that work; hence they should be the focus of planning and implementation. Strong local partnerships and community support will also be required for successfully forestalling the effects of the pandemic and for achieving the provincial plans. It is essential that those involved in local service delivery (district officials, head teachers, teachers, parents and students) are able to provide feedback on what works and where there are obstacles to the continuation of education.

The figure below illustrates key responsibilities at each level of the system.



### 3.2 Partnerships

Effective partnerships will be key to leveraging additional technical resources, financing and service delivery support to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned in the situation analysis, this public health crisis is also causing a financial crisis. The Government has initiated several activities to support the people in economic stress either through direct cash transfers- ‘Ehsaas Program’ or support to small and medium enterprises through other mechanisms. Already strained education budgets will be further strained at least in the short-term. Most provinces have already been working to expand Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) to support education. This crisis will necessitate that education officials continue to explore and expand PPPs and look for creative ways of working with others, such as through agreements for increased data or internet connectivity, support for school feeding initiatives among others.

Understanding how COVID-19 is impacting the education sector is critical to designing appropriate and effective responses. Limited funds will curtail the development of new, large scale assessments. Therefore, to the extent possible education departments should make use of available data (including poverty and health data as well as geo-mapping information provided other departments) and leverage other data collection efforts conducted by partners.

The table below outlines key partnerships at various levels of the system.

Levels	Partnerships
National Level	Partnerships to leverage financing and global technical expertise Good practices, lessons learned exercises and sharing of information Partnership with telecom and broadcast industries
Provincial Level	Partnerships with private sector, banks, industries
District Level	Partnerships with other departments, local CSOs/NGOs for support in targeted service delivery
School Level	Local community level partnerships

### 3.3 Prioritization Process

Ultimately provinces will need to prioritize their strategies/interventions for responding to the COVID-19 crisis based on their specific context. A framework of strategies and interventions is included in the next section. Provinces will need to select their strategies/interventions and prioritize implementation of each based on their particular circumstances. To guide this process, the following general principles are put forward for consideration.

General Principles to Assist with Selection and Prioritization of Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Do no harm:</b> consider health of education staff, learners and parents; also mitigate risks for children (psychosocial, SGBV and other forms of abuse, cyberbullying, lack of access to nutritional food); prevent dropout and further widening of educational inequalities.</li> <li>✓ <b>Strengthen local control:</b> provincial and district structures are the main responsible bodies for operationalizing the Covid-19 responses. The nature of this crisis also calls attention to the need to devolve more authority to schools since school heads are ultimately responsible for the health and safety of their school community. This may necessitate quick decisions on school closure, for example, in case of a local outbreak or should staff or students become ill.</li> <li>✓ <b>Ensure continuity of learning for everyone!</b> This will require a concerted effort to reach the most vulnerable children and prioritize activities to avoid increasing inequities in either access or learning outcomes. Provincial governments, with support from development partners, academia and civil society, will need to conduct provincial</li> </ul>



vulnerability analyses to identify the most vulnerable groups or those most in danger of being left out of the process. These analyses should consider geographic disparities and vulnerabilities as well as vulnerable segments of the population (girls, children with disabilities, struggling learners, children from ethnic and linguistic minorities, children on the move (migrant, refugee and internally displaced children), children in rural and hard to reach areas, children from the poorest households, children who have dropped out and child labourers.

- ✓ **Keep sight of medium and longer-term goals:** Provincial plans should build on existing systems and structures, reinforce provincial and district capacities, and focus and strengthen efforts to reach goals in ESPs related to improving access and retention of girls, children from economically disadvantaged households and children with special needs; strengthening efforts to reach OOSC; and other relevant ESP goals such as providing water and sanitation for schools that do not currently have facilities.

While the Covid-19 pandemic poses unprecedented challenges, it also provides opportunities to strengthen the education system, including through preparedness for additional outbreaks related to Covid-19 and for further strengthening DRR and crisis-sensitive planning for schools, districts and provinces. Given Pakistan's varying hazard risks, education officials must also consider how to strengthen systems so they are better prepared to respond if a natural hazard event (earthquake, cyclone, flood) occurs during the pandemic. In addition, this is an opportunity to identify and build on lessons learned from the Covid-19 response to be better prepared to respond to other emergencies.

### 3.4 Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation of the response and resilience plans will be the responsibility of the respective provinces and area education departments in collaboration with provincial and district level governments and development partners. To the extent possible, regular monitoring will continue. It is expected, however, that there will also be a need to adapt and test out different methods for monitoring, especially as lockdowns continue. Provinces and districts will need to adapt their processes for officials to be able to work remotely and for keeping in contact with school officials. There will also be a need for increased monitoring during the acute phases of the pandemic so that evidence-based decisions can be made based on available data at all levels of the system. This will also allow for course correction and changing/adapting strategies as needed.

In addition to standard educational reports and information reported on an ongoing basis, additional data will need to be collected and reported throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Indicators that will be most critical will include:

- Number of schools closed and open/operational
- Number of children (boys and girls) who did not return to school
- Number of children provided with home-based learning materials (and type of materials provided)
- Number of children who **have not** received home-based learning materials
- Number of special needs learners provided with assistive devices or special learning materials
- Number of teachers actively supporting home-based learning
- Number of children and staff directly affected by Covid-19 (either infected themselves or who have been exposed to the virus)

## 4 Framework of Strategies and Interventions

This section explains the framework of strategies and interventions that Pakistan will follow. As explained earlier, the strategies and interventions provided in this framework will be operationalized at the provincial and area levels by their respective education departments in collaboration with stakeholders. The framework will be revised periodically through a consultative and inclusive process to mount an effective response for multilayered challenges posed by COVID-19 and also to build long term resilience in the system. The framework considers learning continuity as the central challenge and recommends conceivable options in Pakistan’s context to address it.

The framework is structured around an overall goal and three priority areas. For each priority area, a variety of strategies and interventions are identified. Provinces will need to review and consider these strategies and interventions and select those that are most relevant for their context. Provinces will also need to prioritize the implementation of interventions. Some, such as cleaning and disinfection of schools and stocking schools with appropriate cleaning and sanitation supplies, must be prioritized for immediate implementation. Others, such as evaluating the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector and building on lessons learned, are more appropriate for the medium-term. Many interventions that will need to be implemented immediately will also continue into the medium to longer term depending on the nature of the action and the requirements of response. Accordingly, these actions are conceived to become part of the regular operations of education system in Pakistan for two reasons; i) to build system resilience over the longer run and ii) because the innovations required to respond to this crisis will also benefit in expanding learning opportunities to millions of children not enrolled before the start of pandemic.

**Overall Goal**

**To support the continuation of learning, protecting the health and well-being of students, teachers and educational staff and building resilience in Pakistan’s education system, from pre-primary through higher secondary education**

**Priority Areas of National Education Response & Resilience Plan for COVID-19**

**Priority Area 1: Continuation of Learning**

**Priority Area 2: System Strengthening and Resilience**

**Priority Area 3: Addressing Health (Physical and Psychosocial), Hygiene and Safety**

#### 4.1 Continuation of Learning

The closure of all schools and educational facilities due to the pandemic requires the education system in Pakistan to rethink access to education through a different and new lens; reaching children in their homes and supporting a blend of different learning modalities. This also becomes important in the medium to longer term for three reasons; i) because of the anticipated resurgence of virus transmission in different areas requiring localized lockdowns and closures of schools and education facilities, ii) to build learning oriented and learning centric resilience of education system that can mitigate the scarring effects of any eventuality and iii) to expand the outreach of the education system through different modalities available even after the complete elimination of virus to reach children not enrolled in education system.

**RETHINKING LEARNING PATHWAYS**

As the departments and ministries will test and try different approaches for continuity of learning, Pakistan will also need to rethink curriculum and learning pathways for different segments of children based on monitoring and analysis of learning responsiveness. This will also guide creation and development of learning content best suited for delivery through different modalities and with positive impact on learning.

It is with this approach that the plan looks into continuity of learning and provides short- and medium-term strategies. This approach is also important because as we progress, there will be some one-time investments required which will also go a long way toward expansion of learning infrastructure and eco system of Pakistan.

The broad modalities of learning are categorized in following table according to the access to technology spectrum and learning facilitation needs.

Learning Facilitation Need	Technology Spectrum		
	No Tech Offline	Low Tech	High Tech Online
<b>Self-Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbooks</li> <li>• Workbooks</li> <li>• Printed Targeted Materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TV learning programs &amp; channels</li> <li>• Radio learning programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Featured smart phone apps and web platforms for learning</li> <li>• Digital books (audio)</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>
<b>Guided Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home-based guided learning through household/community members</li> <li>• Teacher/tutor home visits (respecting health directives and social distancing)</li> <li>• Classroom based learning (stopped, can resume upon schools reopening)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching or follow up calls by tutors</li> <li>• One and two-way SMS based- learning interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online digital classrooms</li> <li>• Video conferencing</li> <li>• Blended learning in classrooms</li> </ul>

Provinces and area education departments and responsible authorities will need to explore a mix of all the above modalities to reach maximum number of children and youth with learning effectiveness<sup>2</sup>. While the departments have already started using different modalities on urgent basis and will initiate broadening the scope in the short term, in parallel, monitoring and analysis will be required to test the effectiveness of different mix of modalities on different segments of students. Overtime, the choice of scaling, investments and/or prioritization of one modality over the other will be undertaken. Choices will depend on two aspects; i) technology spectrum and access in different segments of population and ii) learning needs and responsiveness of children at different levels. Combined analysis of these two aspects will best guide the approach and investments in the long run.

The role of schools, teachers, head teachers and local administration will be crucial and will become more important to reach maximum number of students and will require increased efforts required for continuity of learning using different modalities during school closures, after reopening of schools and post COVID-19 to mitigate the effects during different phases. Teachers, head teachers and education officials will need to be trained in ways and methods of new learning environment with different outreach modalities. More teaching workforce will be required if the reopening of schools and conduct of examinations occur through a staggered process, for certain grades and priority segments of learners. To prepare for this, the provinces and area education departments will need to explore and strengthen partnerships between schools and communities and other stakeholders.

#### 4.1.1 Strategies and Intervention Options

- **Develop and implement a Distance and Blended Learning Competency Standards and Assessment Framework.**
  - This will include design and implementation of an inclusive distance and blended learning certification and learning pathways for different segments of learners including out-of-school children and the ones that would leave schools due to the negative shocks to household income caused by COVID-19
- **Conduct a rapid gap analysis of content for different platforms and modalities** according to levels, subjects and grades.
  - The gap analysis will look at availability of audio-visual learning and edutainment content for different platforms and printed textbooks, workbooks and learning materials.

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<sup>2</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that distance learning modalities are not very effective. Still there is a need to continue testing and iteration of different approaches augmented by follow ups etc.

- Gap analysis will also identify home based and distance learning assignments and supplemental materials required for all modalities (including printed materials and digital and low-tech content)
- **Create and develop content for different platforms and modalities** according to levels, subjects and grades based on the gap analysis
  - The content will include both digital and non-digital including audio visual learning and edutainment content for different platforms (TV, Radio, web based – blogs, video sites, applications accessible through smartphones etc.) and printed textbooks, workbooks and learning materials.
  - Supplemental materials (including study guides for teachers and parents) and gamified activities and assessment materials will be part of the content package identified through gap analysis.
  - The content creation and development will be reviewed as more information becomes available for different levels and subjects and segments of population and according to the distance learning standards and competencies.
  - The content language and format should be aligned with target student population endowments including socio economic background and languages including ensuring accessibility features to reach broader spectrum of students and children with disabilities.
- **Ensure distribution and dissemination of digital and non-digital learning content** according to a targeting strategy involving teachers and in partnership with other stakeholders (IT, industry etc.) for distance and home learning during the lock down
  - Printing and distribution of textbooks, workbooks and learning materials according to needs and requirements; efficient and safe methods for disseminating printed material will be needed.
  - TV and Radio programming and broadcasting for the suited grades and levels and segments of population; a coordinated approach will be required to avoid duplication; content translation and adaptation for different platforms and in different languages required in different provinces.
  - Support to edtech providers in development and maintenance of websites and applications for learning; includes supporting existing available learning applications and websites.
  - Development of SMS and smartphone applications-based push and pull content delivery and engaging platform

- **Develop and implement regular follow ups and monitoring system for different learning modalities. This will be required for two purposes;**
  - For checking in with students, parents and communities to gauge the progress made by learners including through assignments and
  - Checking the outreach, actual usage, efficacy and effectiveness of learning modalities.
  
- **Strengthen and support the role of teachers, head teachers and schools**
  - Conducting teacher and head teacher trainings and orientation sessions for different learning modalities, development of short assignments, assessment methods according to Distance Learning and Blended Learning Competency Standards and Assessment Framework
  - Providing schoolteachers and head teachers with necessary guidance and tools for community outreach (through safe methods) and follow ups including dissemination of learning content and engagement with learners in the community through different methods; this will include peer support groups and/or free call-in numbers (or mobile phone credit) for guidance.
  - Increasing teaching workforce available in districts to cater to additional needs arising out of staggered process of reopening schools and conducting assessments and examinations; this should include exploring multiple options of NCHD's model of feeder teachers in Government schools and through partnerships with other stakeholders such as Teach for Pakistan to cover the need of additional teachers
  
- **Provide targeted support to poor households through cash grants and stipends for learners.**
  - This will help ease stress on families which will allow vulnerable learners to continue remote learning and will also mitigate the risk of dropout once schools reopen.
  
- **Develop, implement and expand remedial learning/catch-up and ALP/NFE programs for children who fall behind due to school closures.**

## 4.2 System Strengthening and Resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the entire education system by closing all schools in the country which will result in changes in learning methodologies as well as increased needs to ensure the health and safety of all learners and education personnel. This extraordinary crisis calls for adaptability and flexibility of the education sector in the short-term and may provide opportunities for longer-term systemic changes that will further strengthen the education system throughout all areas of the country.

### 4.2.1 Strategies and Intervention Options

The need for flexibility will be critical in the short-term as school and district leaders may be confronted with situations where infections increase necessitating quick decisions on how to care for school communities including possible short-term closures of schools. During the short-term, it will also be necessary to re-think and revise (at least temporarily) critical policies in order to achieve the overarching goal of maintaining continuity of learning for all learners and preventing the widening of disparities in access and learning outcomes. Interventions to consider immediately include:

- **Conduct quick policy reviews and issue emergency directives/policy adjustments.**
  - Policy for school start/stop during COVID-19 pandemic: Provinces should agree on policies to enable schools and the lower level administrative units to decide, in close collaboration with local health services, on future school closures or re-openings. The guiding principle is twofold: flexibility to take such decisions based on local risk-assessments and the ability to make rapid decisions on further closures.
  - Policy for re-starting and operating schools: Depending on the local context, the policy should set forward the options head teachers have with regard to operating their schools. For example, using staggered starting times for different grades to avoid congestion, consideration of implementing shifts or establishing a mixture of in-school and at home learning whereby different grades meet on different days of the week.
  - Issue policy directive about grade level promotion and on-going assessments of student learning.
  
- **Develop contingency plans for high stakes examination systems.**
  - Procedures need to be developed for conducting this year's high stakes examinations (for grades 10 and 12). Examination centers/spaces to be selected and designed with adequate social distancing measures in place. This may require more space or that students conduct the examinations at different times, which may require extra security precautions for examination questions or the preparation of multiple examinations.



- Consider multiple options for dates of examinations depending on the rates of infection in different parts of the country.
- Consider worst case scenario if examinations cannot take place due to a COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Develop or expand systems for communicating with families and education staff.**
  - These systems should provide fast, reliable information about school re-opening, school closures, sick children. Consider the creation of WhatsApp groups, phone trees, use of SMS messages and television alert systems.
  - Engage local telecoms companies and television channels to support these efforts.
  - Develop feedback mechanism for parents, students, teachers and head teachers to provide input on what works and obstacles to continued learning.
- **Conduct rapid assessment to determine children’s access to different learning modalities.**
  - These assessments are necessary to support the development of longer-term plans for home-based or distance learning.
  - Information is needed to determine which services and devices children have access to: electricity, internet, TV, laptop, tablet, mobile phone (smart phone or other).
  - It is critical to identify not only the resources available at the household level but also how likely it is for each learner to have access to available devices. If, for example, the head of household has a phone that is not typically available to the children, learning plans requiring contact by phone will fail if such children do not have another option.
- **Develop and run ‘back to school’ campaigns.**
  - Include clear messages about risks from COVID-19 and procedures taken to prepare schools for reopening and put in place to keep children and staff healthy and safe while at school.
  - Include procedures for finding students who do not return to school and actions to take that will enable their return.
  - Work with and involve PTCs in efforts to make sure all children come back to school.
- **Explore and strengthen Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).**
  - Work to secure contributions from local businesses, e.g. for food packages, for free short-term data, internet or cable TV access. Consider partnerships with mobile phone companies for connectivity, donated phones and the establishment

of regional toll-free call centres that can be used for psychosocial support and/or for student or teacher mentoring and support.

- Consider long-term (and unintended) cost implications of any partnership.
- **Strengthen and review provincial, district and school level planning processes.**
  - Review plans to make sure they are crisis sensitive and have adequately considered DRR and preparedness for all levels of the system.
  - Establish emergency stockpiles and funds that can be quickly accessed by each level in the event of a crisis.
  - Consider the role of PTCs in preparedness and in implementation of emergency responses.
- **Conduct an evaluation or review of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the education system.**
  - Examine educational indicators to determine impacts related to absenteeism of teachers and students, dropout of students, possible transfers from private system to public sector due to financial situation.
  - Identify lessons learned from the COVID-19 response that can be incorporated into ongoing systems such as monitoring and mentoring systems and EMIS and NEMIS.
  - Lessons learned should also seek to identify areas which can be strengthened for the system to respond more efficiently and effectively after other disasters/crises.
  - In addition, efforts taken to restructure learning through home based or distance options should be evaluated to determine how/whether they can be used to more effectively reach out of school children and youth or illiterate adults.
  - Lessons learned from distance teacher training initiatives or mobile support activities initiated during the COVID-19 crisis may also be incorporated into longer-term strategies for teachers' professional development.
- **Develop system of school capitation grants or local budgets for ongoing maintenance of health and WASH materials.**
  - These grants would be provided to schools (and perhaps administered in cooperation with PTCs) to help with things like extra cleaning, supplies for cleaning and sanitation, and routine health supplies like masks and thermometers, etc.
- **Revise and upgrade monitoring and reporting systems.**
  - Review EMIS and NEMIS questionnaires to determine additional information to be collected as part of on-going data collection efforts. Identify indicators that will be particularly useful in terms of DRR and emergency preparedness.

- Provide training for provincial, district and school level staff on new or revised monitoring and reporting systems.

### 4.3 Addressing Health (Physical and Psychosocial), Hygiene and Safety

The COVID-19 pandemic poses serious considerations for the health and safety of all learners and education staff. The education system can play a role in providing health, hygiene and psychosocial support messages to families during the lockdown period. Critically, health, hygiene and safety measures must be considered and put in place before schools reopen to minimize the risk of infection of children and staff while at school and also as a means of preventing dropout and increasing retention of all students.

#### 4.3.1 Strategies and Intervention Options

- **Develop health and psychosocial IEC materials for parents and students**

These will include;

- Tips for parents and students about how to cope with the stress of the shutdown
  - Actions to take in relation to COVID-19 such as social distancing and hygiene messages
  - Messages related to procedures for the safe re-opening of schools.
  - Messages can be delivered by SMS to parents with mobile phones, broadcast on local TV and supplemented with phone calls to families without access to technology.
- **Conduct rapid assessment of school facilities.**
    - These are urgently to identify the need for water, sanitation, health facilities and supplies.
    - Use existing EMIS data to identify schools that are known to not have adequate water and sanitation. Prioritize these for additional WASH information.
    - Use SMS or low-tech solutions to gather and report this information.
  - **Prepare guidance for schools to re-open safely.**
    - This will involve a checklist of simple, cost-effective and pragmatic arrangements, to manage foot-traffic flows in, out and within schools, and to manage available space as best as possible while taking measures to practice physical/social distancing.
    - It will also include guidance on cleaning and disinfection of schools prior to reopening.
    - Put in place monitoring procedures to ensure that all schools have been properly cleaned and disinfected before reopening.

- **Procure and distribute WASH and IPC kits to schools and other education facilities.**
  - Kits will contain materials for school cleaning and sanitation, hand-washing stations or temporary solutions depending on context, WASH and hygiene supplies for children and staff and IPC materials such as thermometers and masks.
  - For schools that do not have access to water, put in place temporary solutions such as tanks or procuring water from local vendors.
  
- **Establish provincial and district systems for monitoring and reporting on the health situation.**
  - Monitoring reports to include number of cases of COVID-19 in the community, any instances within school (students or teachers or family members of either); number of children who have returned to school and number who have not, interactions with Ministry of Health or local health providers.
  - Assess and upgrade IT and telecoms equipment in provincial and district offices.
  - Consider options for providing mobile phones and credit as needed for provincial and district education officials and head teachers.
  
- **Develop and distribute guidance related to school cleaning, sanitation, WASH, infection prevention and control (IPC).**
  - These materials will primarily be used for the purpose of training and orienting education staff on standard operating procedures to follow with regard to health, sanitation and IPC.
  - Materials can take the form of posters, checklists and short videos (depending on context and ability to access the videos).
  - As needed, materials will be produced in local languages.
  
- **Develop SOPs for case detection and referrals.**
  - Train teachers and school managers on SOPs for case detection and referral.
  - Establish roles and responsibilities in the context of each school.
  - Link each school to a specific health center with a two-way communication channel for referral, testing, communicating test results, and deciding on closure based on results.
  
- **Continue “school feeding” initiatives, targeting especially vulnerable learners.**
  - Where on-going school feeding programmes exist, consider ways to continue the distribution of food to vulnerable learners. Access to nutritious food is critical for the physical and mental development of children.

- **Expand access to Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS).**
  - Strengthen links between schools and centers where MHPSS is available.
  - Establish referral mechanisms and consider adoption of phone support services that can be accessed by students and education staff.
  - Expand teacher training initiatives related to psychosocial interventions for children.
  
- **Revise monitoring systems to include measures related to school health and sanitation initiatives and to track any instances of COVID-19 within the school community.**
  
- **Strengthen linkages between schools and Ministry of Health and/or nearby health clinics.**
  
- **Continue to equip and stock schools with critical health and sanitation supplies.**
  - These will include thermometers and masks and potentially testing supplies if/when they become available.
  
- **Construct additional water and sanitation facilities.**
  - These facilities should be constructed in line with existing provincial plans and prioritizing schools without these facilities, especially without access to water supply.

## 5 Costing of the Framework and Costing Tool

### **COSTING TOOL**

As part of this National Plan and the Framework, a costing tool has been developed to help provinces and area education departments to develop projections of their needs and associated costs. The tool will be made available on Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training's website.

Costing of this plan was guided by the framework of strategies and intervention options under the three priority areas in the previous section.

For costing purposes, these strategies and interventions are divided into two broad categories; i) strategies and interventions with one-time costs and ii) strategies and interventions that can be scaled up with scale costs. The former category of costs is termed as "Development Costs" and the latter "Scale Costs". Some of the strategies falling under regular operations of education departments are not costed in this framework and plan. The plan and the tool for costing only provide additional cost outlays over and above the regular budgets of education departments and ministries.

### 5.1 Development Costs

Strategies and interventions with onetime costs; Once operationalized, these strategies and interventions will only incur one-time cost. The strategies and interventions under this category include:

- **Continuation of Learning**
  - Development and implementation of a Distance and Blended Learning Competency Standards and Assessment Framework
  - Rapid gap analysis of content for different platforms and modalities
  - Content creation and development for different platforms and modalities
  - Development of remedial learning/catch-up and ALP/NFE programs
- **System Strengthening and Resilience**
  - Conduct quick policy reviews and issue emergency directives/policy adjustments.
  - Development of contingency plans for high stakes examination
  - Develop a system for communicating with families and education staff.
  - Conduct rapid assessment to determine children's access to different learning modalities.
  - Development of back to school campaigns
  - Strengthen and review provincial, district and school level planning processes
  - Conduct an evaluation or review of the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the education system.

- Revise and upgrade monitoring and reporting systems.
- **Addressing Health (Physical and Psychosocial), Hygiene and Safety**
  - Develop health and psychosocial IEC materials for parents and students
  - Conduct rapid assessment of school facilities
  - Prepare guidance for schools to re-open safely
  - Establish provincial and district systems for monitoring and reporting on the health situation
  - Development of guidance related to school cleaning, sanitation, WASH, infection prevention and control (IPC)
  - Develop SOPs for case detection and referrals

Indicative Development Cost	\$15,415,000.00
Priority Area	Cost (USD)
<b>Continuation of Learning</b>	<b>12,045,000.00</b>
<i>Development of a Distance and Blended Learning Competency Standards and Assessment Framework (2 iterations based on feedback and M&amp;E)</i>	1,000,000.00
<i>Rapid gap analysis of content for different platforms and modalities</i>	45,000.00
<i>Content creation and development for different platforms and modalities</i>	10,000,000.00
<i>Development of remedial learning/catch-up and ALP/NFE programs</i>	1,000,000.00
<b>System Strengthening and Resilience</b>	<b>2,830,000.00</b>
<i>Conduct quick policy reviews and issue emergency directives/policy adjustments.</i>	200,000.00
<i>Development of contingency plans for high stakes examination</i>	45,000.00
<i>Develop a system for communicating with families and education staff.</i>	35,000.00
<i>Conduct rapid assessment to determine children’s access to different learning modalities.</i>	150,000.00
<i>Development of back to school campaigns</i>	50,000.00
<i>Strengthen and review provincial, district and school level planning processes</i>	2,000,000.00
<i>Conduct an evaluation or review of the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the education system.</i>	200,000.00
<i>Revise and upgrade monitoring and reporting systems.</i>	150,000.00
<b>Addressing Health (Physical and Psychosocial), Hygiene and Safety</b>	<b>540,000.00</b>
<i>Develop health and psychosocial IEC materials for parents and students</i>	75,000.00
<i>Conduct rapid assessment of school facilities</i>	250,000.00
<i>Prepare guidance for schools to re-open safely</i>	45,000.00
<i>Establish provincial and district systems for monitoring and reporting on the health situation</i>	75,000.00
<i>Development of guidance related to school cleaning, sanitation, WASH, infection prevention and control (IPC)</i>	45,000.00
<i>Develop SOPs for case detection and referrals</i>	50,000.00

## 5.2 Scale Costs

Strategies and interventions that can be scaled up with scale costs; These strategies are directly linked to scale of the target communities, schools, districts and learners. Provincial and area prioritization processes will determine the actual scope of these strategies and interventions with varying scales. The strategies and interventions under this category include;

### **Continuation of Learning**

- Ensuring distribution and dissemination of digital and non-digital learning content according to a targeting strategy involving teachers and in partnership with other stakeholders (IT, industry etc.) for distance and home learning during the lock down
- Development and implementation of regular follow ups and monitoring system for different learning modalities.
- Strengthening and supporting the role of teachers, head teachers and schools
- Provide targeted support to poor households through cash grants and stipends for learners.
- Implementation and expansion of remedial learning/catch-up and ALP/NFE programs

### **System Strengthening and Resilience**

- Implementation of contingency plan for high stakes examination systems.
- Implement and expand system for communicating with families and education staff
- Implementation of back to school campaigns.
- Develop system of school capitation grants or local budgets for ongoing maintenance of health and WASH materials.

### **Addressing Health (Physical and Psychosocial), Hygiene and Safety**

- Disseminate health and psychosocial IEC materials for parents and students
- Procure and distribute WASH and IPC kits to schools and other education facilities
- Distribution of guidance related to school cleaning, sanitation, WASH, infection prevention and control (IPC)
- Continue “school feeding” initiatives, targeting especially vulnerable learners.
- Continue to equip and stock schools with critical health and sanitation supplies.
- Construct additional water and sanitation facilities.

*The costing both the components and the total cost of this plan will depend on the targets set by Federal, Provincial and Area Education Response and Resilience Plans.*