

## **GPE's Education response to COVID-19:**

### **UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank Joint Proposal for a Consortium of Grant Agents**

21 May 2020



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## 1. Background and problem identification

The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a public health emergency; it is deeply disturbing education systems throughout the world and exacerbating learning inequities and hurting the most marginalized populations groups disproportionately in every country. As of 20 May 2020, it is affecting over 1.2 billion learners (68% of total enrolled student population) through nationwide school closures in 153 countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating the global learning crisis through two main transmission channels: (1) **the immediate impacts of school closures**, and (2) **the short- to medium-run impacts of the looming economic recession** sparked by the pandemic. Together, these channels will exact **long-run costs on human capital and welfare**, if countries fail to put in place mitigation strategies to dampen the impacts and support continued learning.

GPE swiftly allocated initial funding through UNICEF to support DCP planning and preparedness for the COVID crisis, which is now extended through the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Window. As part of this window, a Consortium of Grant Agents is proposed by UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank to address the impact of COVID-19 on learning in 67 GPE EPSIG-eligible countries.

The additional funding as proposed by the Consortium will build on existing needs-based plans that were developed at country level with support of GPE catalytic funding managed by UNICEF and will support scaling up as well as contributing to increased efficiencies and results through linking it with best practices and benefiting from global goods and multi-country initiatives. At country level UNICEF is the grant agent of the catalytic funds which allows close coordination with the global and regional key intervention areas identified in this proposal.

The Consortium will complement national operations in these countries, by focusing on global and regional activities that both support continued learning during the crisis and lay the foundation to mitigate the long-term impact and back to school preparedness. The consortium will align to the Global Education COVID-19 Coalition to facilitate full coordination within the global education response, mobilize additional partners and resources and amplify the consortium visibility including at the level of end users (learners, parents & teachers). The Consortium will recognize GPE's funding and partnerships in outreach, communications and markings related to the grant and will liaise with the GPE communication department.

## 2. Objectives, response and strategies

*“In the context of national school closures across all GPE member countries, the principal goal of the \$25m grant is to keep children learning by supporting the development, dissemination and delivery at scale of new and existing global and regional learning continuity approaches in the 67 GPE ESPIG-eligible countries. In particular, the grant will prioritize approaches that ensure learning for the most marginalized children such as girls and children with special needs and disabilities. These may then be funded by a combination of domestic resources, applications to the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Window, the private sector, foundations and bilateral donors.”*

*- GPE Continuity of Learning Call for Proposals*

**Overall goal:** Continued learning for children, particularly those most marginalized, ensured through the development, dissemination and delivery at scale of new and existing global and regional learning continuity approaches in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank are joining forces in this Consortium to help ESPIG-eligible countries adopt evidence-based strategies and measures to respond to the pandemic.

**Guiding principles:** The work is guided by the following 8 overarching principles:

- Making a change for children and youth now during this crisis
  - Implementation and roll out to start in the coming weeks
  - Make use of what is already available – expand what works (scale + multi-country)
  - Reach most marginalized target groups
- Building resilient systems to withstand future shocks
- Not country specific but cross-countries, (sub-) regional, global that would fulfil multi-country operational gaps, and leveraging multiple partners strengths and existing social programs.
- Given common challenges across countries, global efforts can efficiently bring solutions
- Leveraging knowledge and resources from partners will allow for impact at scale
- Leadership of global activities based on comparative advantages
- Successful local-level implementation requires tight horizontal and vertical coordination
- Adapting and iterating as early lessons are learned

The following lead departments of each of the three consortium members will be the main focal units for their agencies in managing the implementation process and related coordination efforts;

- UNESCO: the UNESCO HQ Education Executive Office, working in close collaboration with Programme Directors at HQ, the 7 UNESCO specialized Education Institutes and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), all regional education Directors.
- UNICEF: the UNICEF HQ Education Team in Program Division, working in close collaboration with seven regional offices and their education advisors.
- World Bank: the Global Engagement and Knowledge unit, working in close collaboration with regional education leads.

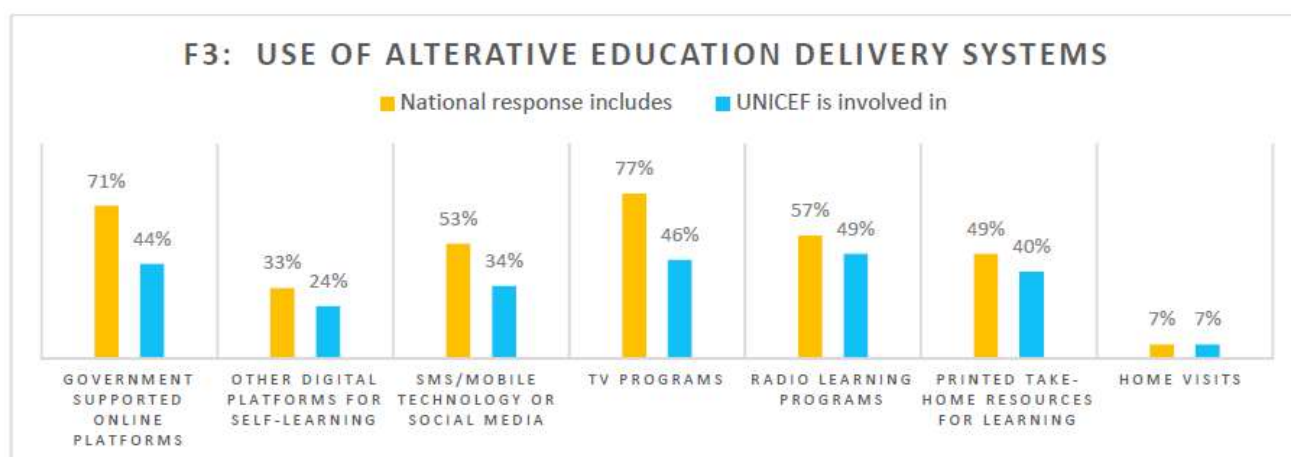
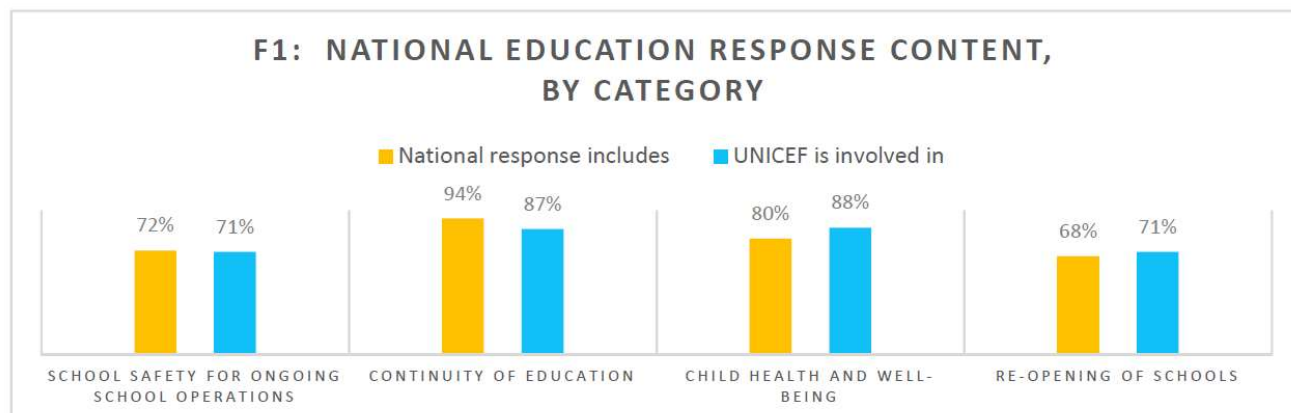
**Three main areas of focus:**

The response is clustered around the following three main areas of focus, all with an emphasis on reaching the most marginalized, that are in line with GPE’s Continuity of Learning approach:

1. Global and Regional Coordination
2. Learning continuity at scale that reaches the most marginalized.
3. Monitoring, evidence, learning and preparation for future emergencies

The immediate release of GPE catalytic funding, managed by UNICEF, to 87 countries allowed a rapid initial education response planning in a coordinated manner based on existing coordination mechanisms. Additional GPE funding to implement the global and regional multi-country Continuity of Learning proposal by the consortium will be complementary to the catalytic funding provided to countries and will focus on global and regional coordination, ensuring scaled up Continuity of Learning and strengthened capacities for education response in the context of emergency response with a focus on the most marginalized.

In terms of geographic focus and identified countries, the support will directly benefit the ongoing work in 67 GPE ESPIG-eligible countries. It is likely that additional countries will benefit, e.g. through access to global goods and tools, knowledge management, and specific multi-country initiatives. Findings from a rapid survey undertaken by UNICEF country offices show that countries developed response include a comprehensive set of response areas such as school safety, continuity of learning, child health and well-being, and the re-opening of schools. In addition, the survey findings show the use of alternative education delivery systems based on context.



### 3. Management structure, Partnerships and Reporting

#### Management Structure

- a) The management structure of the programme will be:
- a. **Steering committee** that includes the education leads from each member:
    - i. Stefania Giannini (UNESCO)
    - ii. Jaime Saavedra (Worldbank)
    - iii. Rob Jenkins (UNICEF)

The steering committee will provide overall direction for the programme against the agreed implementation plan, budget and results framework. It will provide an accountability function for progress against the plan, budget and results and will agree updates that form basis of the

bimonthly progress meetings with the GPE Secretariat and the quarterly survey for the Secretariat. Six-monthly reports will also be agreed by the steering committee.

- b. **Technical Management committee** that includes the technical leads from each member and will report to the steering committee
- i. Astrid Gillet (UNESCO)
  - ii. Omar Arias (World Bank)
  - iii. Peter de Vries (UNICEF)

The technical management committee will be responsible for the day to day management of the programme and implementation according to the implementation plan, budget and results framework. The committee will produce the quarterly survey to be approved by the steering committee and report back at the bimonthly progress meetings. It will also maintain a close working relationship with the GPE secretariat lead for the grant. The committee will also be responsible for meeting all requirements for progress and financial reporting; submitting request for tranche payments to the steering committee.

As part of their responsibility the members of the technical management committee will closely monitor implementation and liaise directly with the technical specialists that are technically leading the specific activities. The members will also ensure close coordination among the three consortium members.

The technical teams liaise directly with co-implementing partners, country-based grant agents, particularly UNICEF, the grant agent at country level managing the initial catalytic funding provided by GPE.

- b) Grant performance meetings will take place every two months between the GPE Secretariat and the Steering Committee supported by the Technical and Management Committee. The grant performance meetings will monitor progress in terms of achievement of inputs and milestones and financial utilization. The meetings will also be informed by quarterly survey and the six-monthly progress reports. The GPE Deputy CEO will chair these progress meetings.

#### Adaptive approach

Recognizing the fast-evolving programming context in response to the COVID-19 crisis, an adaptive approach will be applied to ensure the consortium members are able to adjust program activities and related resource allocations. The technical management committee will submit proposed adaptations to the steering committee for their agreement. The adaptations will be reflected in the six-monthly reports. The request should set out the changes and the rationale, including where/if relevant the data used to support the adaptation and any impact on agreed results.

#### Coordination

UNESCO will take the lead in global coordination by linking with the COVID-19 Global Education Coalition, with over 100 partners from the private sector, multilateral organization, including GPE, and civil society, which was launched by UNESCO on 26 March, in order to facilitate synergies, avoid overlaps and leverage partner's capacities in the global education response.

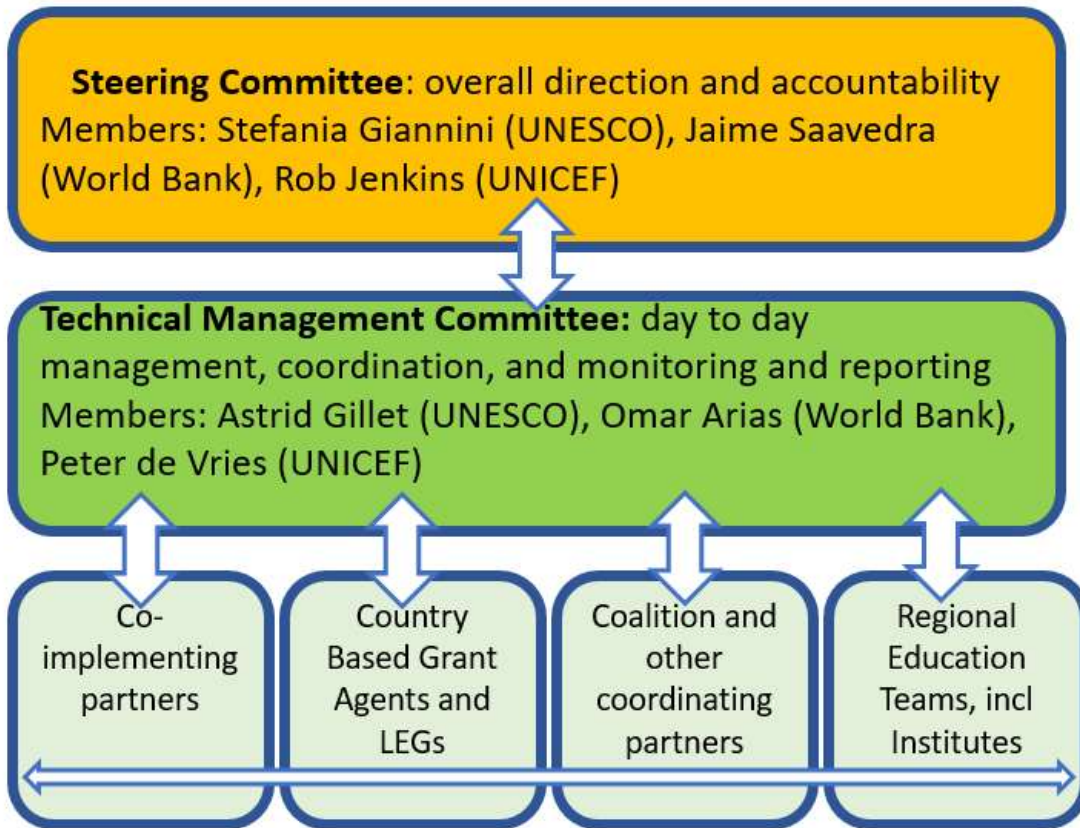
It is important to note that some specific initiatives within the overall response, such as Read@Home, will benefit from other global coordination mechanisms, such as the Global Book Alliance, member of the COVID-19 Global Education Coalition.

At the country level, coordination will follow existing structures as much as possible, such as the Local Education Groups under leadership of Ministries of Education. The technical teams will liaise closely with UNICEF at the country level to ensure the activities consistent with the needs-based country response plans which were developed with support from the GPE catalytic funding. Implementation will be closely linked to education sector dialogue and inform and strengthen the overall education response at country level. On the medium- and longer-term country level work will contribute to strengthening of Education Sector Plans and related capacities, particularly in relation to emergency preparedness and ensuring a strong focus on the most marginalized.

Based on the complementarity of the mandate between the regional accelerated funding for COVID-19 (short term) and KIXs (long term) on generating evidence and sharing of best practice, engagement with KIXs will be undertaken where possible through the following avenues

- 1) As plans are developed for implementation, KIX Regional Hubs (including grant agents and implementing partners) will be engaged to understand interlinkages, planned public goods, etc. with the goal of fostering collaboration, amplifying impact, avoiding duplication and identifying gaps
- 2) Regular check in meetings will be held (once per quarter) to share developments, promising solutions and opportunities for dissemination
- 3) Joint dissemination will be undertaken through amongst others KIX digital platform and knowledge exchange events

Figure 1 Management, coordination and implementation diagram



## Partnerships

Generally speaking, partnerships will be of three types: knowledge, implementation and finance. Given that some areas require extensive technical support, such as those relating to EdTech, the consortium will work closely with actors that have a demonstrated expertise in the corresponding areas (most likely at the global level). These partnerships will be critical to the consortium’s ability to deploy just-in-time technical assistance to countries to ensure timely and effective implementation of activities. Second, with the view of achieving scale, financing partnerships will be sought to crowd-in additional financing to carry out activities at the country-level, including from IDA, GPE, members of the Covid Global Education Coalition) or counterpart funding from governments directly. As explained further below, the Global Coalition can mobilize close to 100 partners and is for example working to identify opportunities to rapidly scale up remote learning including brokering partnerships with some of the world’s biggest mobile companies to provide zero-rating (i.e., for example Vodafone in Pacific already provided 7.5 M US\$, Huawei in Africa (1 MUS\$), Telefonica and Orange) . In addition, based on need and available expertise and comparative advantage, the consortium can identify implementing partners for joint implementation. Such partnerships will be highlighted at bi-monthly coordination meetings between consortium members.

## Reporting

Updates on monitoring and reporting will be included in the bi-monthly meetings with participation from UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and GPE. Concise joint progress reports based on disbursements will be prepared every six months and will include an overview of progress made against the action plan and trend data on agreed indicators. The final report will be a comprehensive report which will include key lessons learned and a consolidated disbursement overview. The consortium will apply a learning from evidence approach and the final implementation report will therefore include analysis related to relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency questions.

## 4. Main Key Intervention Areas and Activities

The below table reflects an overview of the main key intervention areas and the lead agency for each component.

Main Key Intervention Area	Lead
<b>1. Global and Regional Coordination (UNESCO)</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>
a. Global and Regional Coordination – matching country needs with Global Coalition solutions	
<b>2. Learning continuity at scale that reaches the most marginalized</b>	<b>UNICEF – World Bank</b>
a. Multi-country roll-out of learning continuity	World Bank – UNICEF
b. Read@Home	World Bank
c. Support for the most vulnerable (UNICEF)	UNICEF
d. Safe school reopening and management and accelerated learning programs (UNICEF-World Bank)	World Bank – UNICEF
<b>3. Monitoring, evidence, learning and preparation for future emergencies</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>
a. Data, Monitoring and Knowledge Sharing (short term impact)	
b. Analysis of longer-term impact of Covid-19 on learning, equity and educational financing	

While the availability of robust evidence related to education response in similar pandemics is limited, some initial findings from a number of rapid reviews commissioned by DFID on evidence and lessons learned from previous pandemics such as Ebola have come up with a number of findings that confirm a number of key lessons learned that are relevant to the design and roll-out as part of the COVID-19



Response. Overall findings<sup>1</sup> confirm that such disease outbreaks have negative impacts on children's learning, safety and wellbeing and that the most marginalized children are disproportionately affected. They are more likely to be learning less, to be eating less, and to be victims of increases in home and community violence and child exploitation. This is especially the case for girls (increase in sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy and early marriage).

With regards to Continuity of Learning in the context of pandemics such as Ebola while availability of robust evidence is limited, the reviews have identified four lessons learned that are relevant for the COVID-19 response with a strong focus on the most marginalized:

1. Priority should be given to traditional low-cost approaches. There is little evidence that online learning, screen or mobile-phone based technologies played a positive role in supporting at-home learning, particularly among the poorest. Because of much wider availability the use of radio and TV in combination with available materials and facilitation showed considerably higher participation as well as high levels of child engagement and agreement from adults that these programs contributed to children's learning.
2. Good potential to use remote approaches for improving teacher skills. Depending on specific context and availability of existing infrastructure, remote approaches to improving teacher skills at time of school closures which can strengthen existing professional development and prepare schools for better teaching when schools re-open.
3. Psychosocial Support makes a difference. The Ebola experience shows that, especially where children are quarantined suffer from social isolation and post-traumatic stress. Informal learning programs that included psychosocial support demonstrated sustained impact. Such support included for example health education during and after Ebola-related school closures. Gender-focused programs covering life skills, sexual and reproductive health in safe places in villages in Sierra Leone led to a higher return to school once schools re-opened compared to villages which had not received the intervention.
4. Robust data, evidence and evaluation are critical to strengthen future education responses. Learning from the current COVID-19 crisis and the education response will prepare for stronger resilience and response in the case of future crises and is therefore a sound long-term investment.

These findings and related recommendations are consistent with and inform the main key interventions as proposed by the consortium as well as sequenced implementation.

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[https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/15202/793\\_mitigating\\_education\\_effects\\_of\\_disease\\_outbreaks.pdf?sequence=6](https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/15202/793_mitigating_education_effects_of_disease_outbreaks.pdf?sequence=6)

## 4.1 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL COORDINATION (LEAD: UNESCO)

### 4.1.1 Global and regional Coordination – strengthening the work of the Global Education Coalition by matching country needs and partner solutions, supporting capacity development, operationalization and delivery

Data shows that despite government efforts worldwide to provide alternative remote learning, at least 500 million children and youth are currently excluded from public educational provision due to Covid-19 related school closures. In many GPE countries, school closures have led to the interruption of teaching and learning as the shift to remote education has been uneven. This situation is dramatically exacerbating inequalities in access to educational opportunity in multiple ways.

Countries' efforts to provide quality distance learning opportunities have often been hampered by a lack of connectivity or device ownership, also requiring alternate solutions such as radio and television or even print media, especially to reach the most marginalized. In many other contexts, however, school closures have been implemented with no apparent distance learning alternative to offset the interruption of learning. This situation is undoubtedly leading to learning losses, impeding future learning and employment opportunities and perpetuating inequalities.

The duration of remote learning will depend on the sanitary situation, and many countries have expressed a desire to maintain it or apply blended learning after schools reopen as a means of complementary or remedial education. Another challenge has been the preparedness of teachers to use these tools, who have sometimes had to reinvent their profession overnight. Moreover, there has been a proliferation of educational resources, sometimes lacking quality assurance or respect for learner data and privacy. To varying degrees, some countries, including with the support of the Global Education Coalition members, have been able to train teachers, develop and curate quality assured learning resources and put into place learners' support services, including health and well-being. These responses vary by context, such as capacity, location or resources.

With close to 100 partners, the Global Education Coalition can play a key role in accelerating and scaling up delivery of remote learning, skilling, and livelihood solutions by building on its partner services and solutions, including businesses, foundations, UN agencies and government, as well as civil society organizations, media and radio networks. It will pool interventions and investment, focusing on matching country needs with partners' supply and expertise, ensuring coherence with existing or planned programmes and priorities, and facilitate knowledge sharing across regions and across countries with similar challenges.

#### **Bringing to scale and coordinating partners at sub-regional level**

The Consortium will focus its work on Africa and Asia and the Pacific under this component, targeting countries with acute education challenges perpetuated by Covid-19 and focusing on reaching vulnerable populations. In **Francophone West Africa and Sahel countries** as well as **Pacific Island Small Developing States**, interventions will follow a two-pronged approach – supporting those who are digitally isolated, while making learning more effective for those having access to distance learning platforms. They will broadly centre on the development/bringing to scale of distance learning platforms, diversification and contextualization of educational resources as well as the development of capacities for teachers and

other education personnel on a sub-regional scale. The Francophone West Africa and Sahel component in particular has the potential to be replicated to other **West and Central African countries**, including **Anglophone African countries**.

Furthermore, the marginalization of persons with disabilities has become far more accentuated during the pandemic, as they often require special support and teaching tools that are not always available in traditional distance learning. A part of this sub-component will be dedicated to empowering teachers of persons with disabilities and developing an emergency response plan to ensure their continuity of learning and right to education, with a focus on **Asia**.

#### **4.1.1.1 Francophone West Africa and Sahel countries**

Most African countries face challenges in providing continuity of education, with Francophone countries including in the Sahel, particularly concerned by the lack of distance learning solutions. This sub-component will focus on ten Francophone West African and Sahel GPE countries especially affected by the Covid-19 crisis, accounting for 24% of reported cases in Sub-Saharan Africa as of 19 May 2020. They include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

The Consortium will seek to **support targeted countries through three related interventions, focusing on the adaptation, scaling and rapidly deploying a regional platform for distance and blended learning**, including strengthening regional cooperation and pooling resources for the development and diversification of educational resources, as well as training teachers and relevant educational personnel. The aim is to leverage a common instruction language, curricula and media approaches, with adaptation and contextualization where necessary.

The first intervention relates to “de-contextualizing” and scaling up the French “Ma classe à la maison” platform for distance and blended learning, which has already been successfully tested in France, and commended by education leaders in the beneficiary countries. It will be deployed at the sub-regional level to help the countries ensure the continuity of education during the crisis, but also to provide blended learning and remedial courses when schools reopen, as well as during holidays and the start of the school year. Scaled up, the platform has the capacity to reach 12 million learners in key subject areas. As a priority, the Consortium support will aim to target 8 million learners, representing around 27% of the beneficiary countries’ student population in primary and secondary school, including TVET, while another 4 million learners can be further reached beyond the Consortium’s support. UNESCO will support the strengthening of national capacities on the basis of this model.

This work will be carried out with partners, notably the French Centre for Distance Education (CNED), OIF-AUF-CONFEMEN and relevant regional economic communities such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Connectivity is a major factor to ensure its success, which is why UNESCO is already mobilizing Global Coalition Partners, namely Orange, Huawei and Microsoft, to support the expansion of connectivity in Cameroon and Senegal with a specific focus on rural communities and will continue to expand this to other countries

Efforts will also concentrate on the most vulnerable learners, particularly girls, through the distribution of printed self-learning educational resources adapted from the online platform for this purpose. These materials will be distributed to targeted communities with no or low connectivity as a means to ensure continuity of learning during school closure or during the summer for remedial learning.

The second component will focus on supporting the diversification of educational resources and scaling up the production, curation, pooling and dissemination of these, in particular radio/TV resources, printed and digitized textbooks as well as OER. Open textbooks or other open licensed course materials will be reviewed by quality assurance experts from a variety of backgrounds to assess their quality, including gender sensitivity and age appropriateness. This will also allow the further development of regional repositories of digitized curricula and gender sensitive education resources, including high-tech, low-tech and no-tech based tools and resources. Capacity-development will be organized in cooperation with the knowledge and innovation initiative (KIX) at the French-speaking Institute for Education and Training (IFEF) hosting an educational resources centre, and the development of regional quality assurance standards for the regulation of these platforms and educational resources. Regional support for collaboration, co-production and mutual enrichment across countries will be given due consideration, including involvement of non-beneficiary, Francophone African countries in capacity development activities

Lastly, efforts will focus on developing the capacities of teacher trainers, school leaders, inspectors and other professionals involved in remote learning, designing, delivering and maintaining remote high-tech, low-tech and no-tech educational solutions. The regional platform, “Ma Classe à la maison” will also be used in this training context as a model for the development of national content. UNESCO will draw on a variety of expertise, including its teacher training on ICTs resources piloted in selected West African and Sahel countries, build on ongoing actions with IOF, members of the European Broadcasting Association as well as the UNESCO-Avicenna teacher training. UNESCO’s International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA) will also be leveraged given its expertise in teacher development on the continent.

**Deliverables:**

- A regional platform for distance and blended learning and provision of educational content for primary and secondary adapted, including the sharing of printed materials adapted from the platform
- Capacities of teaching staff strengthened on the use of the platform and the development of quality content for remote learning
- Regional repository of quality assured educational resources
- Regional standards on quality assured educational resources developed and national capacities strengthened
- Monitoring and evaluation

**4.1.1.2 Anglophone West Africa**

The sub-component on Francophone West Africa and the Sahel will be replicated in select Sub-Saharan Anglophone GPE countries, also facing challenges related to low access to distance learning solutions and particularly affected by the Covid-19 crisis. Non-Francophone African countries will be invited to select

project activities, especially those related to training workshops, the sharing of experiences, tools, resources and guidelines developed in the course of the Consortium's support.

**Five West African Anglophone countries**, namely Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, have tentatively been identified to replicate the model described above, contextualized to local needs. These countries represent 22% of the primary and secondary learners in Sub-Saharan Africa, and some 21% of the total reported cases of Covid-19 on the continent as of 19 May 2020.

The sub-component will have two distinct interventions. These relate to the development of a sub-regional learning platform, with specific focus on offline and printed learning materials, as well as teacher-training for the development and monitoring of distance education, including through radio and TV in cooperation with Coalition media and other partners, such as the African Union of Broadcasting, BBC, Commonwealth of Learning and West African Examinations Council (WAEC).

At the moment of the elaboration of this proposal, the option of establishing an appropriate regional learning platform to be scaled is yet premature, and further dialogue will be organized with the concerned countries as well as with ECOWAS. The needs and gaps of these countries in setting up learning platforms have been collected and are being analyzed, and discussions are also underway with Global Coalition partners, such as the Global Business Coalition for Education, Wikimedia and Huawei, to mobilize additional support.

Drawing on these analyses, beneficiary countries will be supported in the following areas: capacity development on the preparation and delivery of online content and e-assessment of learners; production of concise guidance for teachers on how to plan and conduct home-based teaching for distance learning solutions; designing and delivering online courses using Moodle and other learning management systems (LMS); leveraging mobile technologies and smartphones to support continuous learning and socio-emotional wellbeing; the reopening schools; remedial and blended learning, as well as the organization of exams.

**Deliverables:**

- Outcome document on the digitalization of curriculum and other learning content through a policy dialogue with English-speaking African countries and ECOWAS, followed by a regional implementation plan
- Capacities of teaching staff and relevant education personnel strengthened on the digitization of curriculum and delivery of distance education via a mix of mediums (online, offline, traditional media, printed materials)
- Knowledge, expertise and capacities strengthened through participation in knowledge sharing, training and co-production of distance learning resources and tools
- Monitoring and evaluation

**4.1.1.3. Pacific Small Island Developing States**

Covid-19 represents a significant challenge to the Pacific region, with limited access to healthcare and Covid-19 testing as well as distance learning opportunities. The nations are often plagued by tropical cyclones, such as the devastating category 5 Cyclone Harald of April 2020, that further complicate social

distancing due to widespread infrastructure damage and contribute to frequent school closures. It is therefore imperative that the region develops resilient education systems through a common approach to be prepared in the face of the continuing global pandemic. Collaborative platforms are necessary to avoid duplicated investment in building local ones to serve only hundreds of teachers and students locally.

The Consortium will therefore seek to **support nine Pacific Island countries through three related interventions to develop distance learning and teaching during the Covid-19 crisis and build crisis-resilient school systems**. The nine countries include Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The interventions will focus on the development of a regional platform for distance and blended learning, a regional repository of resources and developing capacities of teachers and other education personnel. Efforts will build on ongoing work in cooperation with Global Coalition partners, such as establishing online platforms and optimizing existing ones, training ministry and teaching staff, reducing the cost of connectivity as well as resource curation and curriculum alignment.

A regional open source platform will be deployed and Global Coalition partners further mobilized to support connectivity, especially for marginalized groups. Connectivity support is already being provided to Samoa in cooperation with Vodafone, for example, while negotiations to expand to other regions are ongoing. The regional platform will be based on Moodle, which is an open source platform, and adapted to specific countries. Based on analyses of needs conducted by UNESCO in cooperation with Moodle Foundation partners, it will draw on the experience of Samoa where Moodle platforms have already been installed and will include features and tools such as the course set up and calendar. The aim is also to foster more inclusive and crisis-resilient school systems by developing long-term distance learning strategies, while also creating sub-regional hubs for sharing open resources and free communication tools.

Second, support will be provided to develop a repository of digitized curriculum-aligned resources covering selected subjects and grade levels, to be hosted by the regional platform. The aim is to support distance learning based on different technology delivery models, including through online platforms, TV or radio programmes as well as textbooks and other print materials. Efforts will be made to align the open educational resources (OERs) of partners, such as Khan Academy and Bibliothèques Sans Frontiers, with the national curricula of GPE Pacific Small Island Developing States to fill the gaps of curricular courses and content required by distance learning programmes, and design adequate pedagogical activities.

The third dimension of this sub-component will focus on scaling up regionally the efforts of countries in developing the capacities of teaching and supporting staff to use these resources and tools. Focus will be given to teacher training under low tech distance learning scenarios, building upon UNESCO's teacher training resources and supported by the resources of Moodle platforms. It will also draw on the Coalition's actions with the media, publishers and global public goods including the Global Book Alliance and Asia Broadcasting Union. Moreover, focus will be given to developing regional quality assurance standards and regulations of on-line platforms, tools and education resources.

#### **Deliverables**

- Set up of the regional platform for the distance and blended learning of students and teachers and national capacities strengthened on its use

- Regional repository of curriculum-aligned resources covering selected subjects and grade levels in accordance with countries' priorities developed to support distance learning based on different technology delivery models
- Capacities of teaching and support staff strengthened based on training materials developed
- Monitoring and evaluation

#### **4.1.1.4. Asia – meeting the learning needs of children with disabilities**

The Covid-19 crisis is affecting over 186 million learners across all levels of education in the nine GPE EPSIG-eligible countries in Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Timor-Leste) and many are adopting remote learning practices to reduce the learning disruption. These countries are home to some 25 million people with disabilities, whose vulnerability in the education system has often been magnified by the crisis.

Children with disabilities are facing greater challenges following the move to online teaching programmes, resulting in digital exclusion and the increased risk of being left behind due to the absence of appropriate assistive equipment, access to the internet, accessible materials and support. For example, an estimated 0.5 per cent of books in developing countries are available in the accessible formats required for persons with visual, intellectual and learning disabilities. Moreover, many children with disabilities are now entirely reliant on their parents and/or family members to meet their physical, emotional, social and cognitive development needs; yet, with parents equally under stress due to the COVID-19 situation, children with disabilities are experiencing serious disruptions to their daily lives and left more vulnerable to toxic stress, violence, exploitation and abuse.

The Consortium will seek to support the nine targeted countries in Asia through three related interventions to ensure children with disabilities continue to learn at this critical time. These focus on compiling existing learning and teaching materials for children with disabilities, developing accessible learning and teaching materials for them, and developing the capacities of teachers of special needs education through online training.

For the first two interventions, UNESCO will scale up the “Translate a story” initiative in partnership with the members of the Global Book Alliance to support children with disabilities gain access to free and openly licensed high-quality reading materials (including storybooks and school textbooks) by compiling and developing reading materials in accessible format (sign languages, braille and audiobooks). Co-organizers of the Translate a story initiative and the members of the Global Book Alliance have been supporting translating children’s digital reading books from English into local languages using four different platforms. Using the existing platforms and expertise, the sub-component will create accessible reading materials (including storybooks and school textbooks), which is aligned with curriculum standards, for supporting home based reading in nine EPSIG-eligible countries.

For the third intervention, UNESCO will partner with SEAMEO, as a member of the Global Education Coalition, to leverage their existing training courses and online learning platforms to develop an online, multilingual regional teacher training platform. The aim is to support teachers of special needs education with training courses in four areas: (i) stress management and psychosocial support; (ii) the utilization of different assistive technologies to support remote learning, including high-tech, low-tech and no-tech

approaches; (iii) developing emergency preparedness to address the unique needs of children with disabilities; and (iv) transitioning back to school, including integrating COVID-19 restrictions while seeking to ensure a normal learning experience. This will build on and scale up the work of the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Special Educational Needs (SEAMEO SEN), which has been documenting best practices in teaching and learning for children with disabilities and providing both online and face-to-face trainings for teachers in enhancing the quality of special educational needs practices in Southeast Asia and beyond.

**Deliverables:**

- Accessible reading materials compiled, developed and disseminated
- Training platform for teachers of special needs education established and piloted
- Monitoring and evaluation

## **4.2 LEARNING CONTINUITY AT SCALE THAT REACHES THE MOST MARGINALIZED (UNICEF / WORLD BANK) (THIS COMPONENT WILL CHANGE)**

### **4.2.1 Multi-country roll-out of learning continuity**

Supporting countries in the planning and roll out of multi-faceted remote learning that includes the effective use of print, radio, television, and mobile technology for remote learning in low-resource environments. A short and long-term remote learning plan will be developed and using the outputs of stream 1, an inventory will be created and curation of existing experiences and content to be deployed via remote learning and how to make additional content available. Multimedia will be used to share information about remote and online learning opportunities while content will be aligned with existing curricula, ensuring the learning opportunities correspond to educational objectives, and made available.

Based on existing multi-country initiatives, the Learning Passport content will be expanded with private sector (Microsoft) and academia (Cambridge). In support of continuous learning, helpdesks will be created to support caregivers, teachers, and students while existing and new tools for teachers on remote, asynchronous learning and assessing learning in this context will be made available. Specific emphasis will be placed on supporting the use of existing low-tech and no-tech (including offline) solutions while also supplemental guidance and support on how to use and access remote learning content will be developed and made available to students, caregivers, and teachers.

With a focus on continuity of quality of learning and the readiness agenda (5, 10, 18), minimum standards / criteria (targeting, design, materials, delivery/implementation, monitoring impacts on learning, licensing and copyright issues) for remote learning (print, TV, radio, mobile, digital) by preprimary, primary, secondary level focusing on key competencies (learning) will be made available. This will also include the use of real time monitoring tools such as RapidPro. Recognizing the need to measure and assess learning, toolkits and templates will be developed and made available for the different types of distance learning, including for foundational and transferable skills for a variety of ages.



For instance for TV, this will include sourcing, curating and obtaining intellectual property rights for existing edutainment content that is either local, regional or international in the form of Live broadcasts (recordings of effective teachers delivering a live lesson) that can be aligned to the curriculum for grade levels and subjects, On-demand Content (educational TV programs or from online education providers that can be accessed 'on-demand') through websites or YouTube, and Edutainment programs (such as Sesame Street, Ubongo, National Geographic and Discovery channel for children).

To deliver on this support for countries, three interventions will be carried out by the partners.

#### **4.2.1.1 Strategic Guidance to countries on remote learning delivery models (joint World Bank and UNICEF)**

UNICEF and WB will collaborate to develop practical advice and guidance to countries. The collaboration will cover the following activities:

- i) Creating and curating knowledge on remote learning with global partners and documenting the effectiveness of remote learning approaches from countries during COVID-19 school shutdowns
- ii) Using the knowledge and evidence gathered, to develop a toolkit for policy makers that provides decision-trees on selecting both edtech for continuous (remote and distance learning models including the use radio, TV, Print, Online/Mobile systems) and accelerated learning systems (such as adaptive, intelligent tutoring, self-paced etc) learning including how-to implement guides, examples, how to buy and case studies. This toolkit will have two main parts:
  - a. Technical guidance notes or knowledge packs include standards, evidence, how-tos, examples and how to integrate into the education system to build resilience
  - b. Interactive web-site that draws on the decision tree and local country databases to provide recommendations on remote learning options for countries
- iii) Piloting and testing of the toolkit in selected countries
- iv) Building capacity of UNICEF and WB operational teams on using the toolkit

Deliverables will be:

- **Toolkit** that consists of technical guidance notes and an interactive website

#### **4.2.1.2 Learning Passport (Lead UNICEF)**

Based on existing multi-country initiatives, the Learning Passport content will be expanded with private sector (Microsoft) and academia (Cambridge).

An existing multi-country initiative, the Learning Passport will be scaled to deploy in five additional countries, while supporting a first wave cohort of three countries with implementation support, supplementary and skill-based content packages, and local and global project management capacity. While concurrently expanding a global content base for use in countries and facilitating localization, the

Learning Passport will further refine and deploy its offline model, utilizing robust hardware packages to continue learning, even in the most remote and unconnected communities.

The Learning Passport is a partnership between UNICEF, Microsoft, and the University of Cambridge to bring digital learning experiences to any learner, anywhere. It provides countries a flexible platform with the ability to serve national curriculum and/or supplemental content, with online, mobile, and offline models.

Content will be expanded with private sector (Microsoft) and academia (Cambridge). In support of continuous learning, helpdesks will be created to support caregivers, teachers, and students while existing and new tools for teachers on remote, asynchronous learning and assessing learning in this context will be made available. Specific emphasis will be placed on supporting the use of existing low-tech and no-tech (including offline) solutions while also supplemental guidance and support on how to use and access remote learning content will be developed and made available to students, caregivers, and teachers.

For instance for TV, this will include sourcing, curating and obtaining intellectual property rights for existing edutainment content that is either local, regional or international in the form of Live broadcasts (recordings of effective teachers delivering a live lesson) that can be aligned to the curriculum for grade levels and subjects, On-demand Content (educational TV programs or from online education providers that can be accessed 'on-demand') through websites or YouTube, and Edutainment programs (such as Sesame Street, Ubongo, National Geographic and Discovery channel for children).

#### **4.2.1.3 Supporting Student Learning at Home (Lead: World Bank)**

Students and parents, as well as teachers, need support to ensure that learning takes place when children are at home. The World Bank will develop and test tools to support home-based learning using mobile phone technologies. Research will be carried out including on potential platforms (including RapidPro developed by UNICEF), content, and processes for carrying out formative assessment activities, formative assessment principles and methodologies, and effective virtual parent, student, and teacher support. Testing of the solutions will be focused on Read@Home where appropriate. In particular, 3 interventions will be carried out:

- **Text/SMS-based quizzes** (via applications such as RapidPro) to check for delivery and usage of materials and for understanding of learning content. This would include behavioral nudges to encourage more frequent use and text-based guidance to appropriate learning content.
- **Phone-based live connection to teachers** (for example through organization of phone helplines that connect children and parents to virtual call centers of teachers). This would be activated:
  - By teachers in a virtual call center calling students or parents either in cases of non-response to text/SMS-based quizzes or in case the responses to SMS-based checks for understanding are demonstrating that materials used are not targeted at the right level or are being sub-optimally used.
  - By students and/or parents calling a virtual teacher call center whenever they need assistance with the materials being provided.
- **Interactive Voice Response (IVR) materials** and quizzes targeted at families with illiterate or low-literate parents or children who cannot independently use the reading materials being provided or

respond to text/SMS-based quizzes. The addition of this feature would enable parents to access a read-aloud feature for provided materials by calling a toll-free number and being led by voice prompts to select the relevant book in the relevant language, and then be prompted to turn pages during the read-aloud. The read-alouds would be followed by voice-prompted quizzes to check for children's understanding of the materials.

#### **4.2.2 Continuous Learning: Read@Home: (Lead: World Bank)**

Read@Home is an unprecedented effort to get reading, learning and play materials into homes (along with support for parents to engage in their children's learning), targeting the last mile families who are unlikely to be reached with the remote learning approaches being rolled out by many ministries of education (illiterate or semi-literate parents and families with no internet, no smart phones, but possibly some access to radio or TV). The effort will be aligned and complementary to virtual learning efforts and tech resources where possible to ensure a wrap-around approach (including those described in workstream #1).

Read@Home will target children age 3-12. This global and regional approach will allow us to capitalize on economies of scale and benefit from procurement innovations and massive purchasing power, while at the same time, operating through a demand-driven, country-specific approach that allows for capitalizing on local solutions. Not all countries have all the same needs, but every country has some of the same needs and this effort will generate a global approach that yields more efficient and effective ways to get reading, learning and play materials to families in need.

The approach will leverage the \$100 billion + COVID-19 Emergency Response approved by the World Bank Board as well as the plans to reprogram existing World Bank or GPE-financed projects. Scale-up within individual countries will be primarily financed through country-level financing from this or other sources.

Partnerships will be key to deliver the initiative. Within each country, we expect to work closely with the appropriate civil society partners for that country context and of course to ensure partnership with key international NGOs and other UN institutions including the Education Global Coalition members. Cross-sectoral approaches within countries, supply chains, delivery mechanisms, and workforces will be leveraged, as well as strong relationships with Governments. Partnerships with reading and materials experts to help assemble the package of materials. The Global Book Alliance, Room to Read, Rotary, People's Action and others are examples of potential global or regional partners. Corporate partnerships on distribution to leverage non-traditional channels will be explored while leveraging the resources and expertise of the DFID-World Bank-BMGF supported EdTech Hub to support the curation of learning content, alignment with curricular objectives and the exploration of multi-modal content adaptation and delivery will also be explored.

#### **Deliverables**

The funds from GPE will be used for cross-country and global purposes, and will deliver the following outputs:

- Design and evaluating of prototypes, including client-centered design approach to test out packages within target populations to improve the packages and guidance that will go to home.
- Global and regional approaches to prepare packages of high quality reading, learning and play materials for use in homes, along with support for parents to engage in children's learning at

- home
- Global, innovative approaches to procure and deliver goods
- Monitoring and evaluation

#### **4.2.3 Support to the most marginalized. (lead: UNICEF)**

This includes: i) Continuity of learning through operationalizing global tools and innovation for girls' education, the most vulnerable children and youth; (ii) Support to psychosocial support (emotional wellbeing) programs, including parenting and social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions for parents, teachers and caretakers to respond to anxiety, stress and depression among children and youths; (iii) Proactive prevention of student dropout through communication, and identification and tracking of at-risk children and youth (including students who do not take advantage of the distance-learning opportunities or those who fail to benefit from them) to proactively target them for reenrollment support;

Scaling up of the Learning Passport for girls: Girls will be particularly at risk and the scaling up of the existing Learning Passport program for girls will allow continuity of learning. The LP will be deployed to additional countries to support girls to access LP/connectivity/devices as necessary. Girls' participation will be monitored and lessons learned will be documented to allow scaling up of what works.

Development of a girls' education toolkit will include the best practices to support girls/adolescent young women continuity of education in emergencies examples such as 1) modalities and alternative pathways to reach remote and poorest girls, 2) remote learning gender responsive curriculum, 3) Strategies to reduce dropout among girls and get them back to school, e.g. fees waiver, cash transfers.

Learning strategies for vulnerable groups. Tools will be identified and rolled out of remote learning strategies that have proven effective in reaching the most vulnerable children (children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, children on the move). These can include sign-language for children with disabilities and translations into ethnic minority languages as well as applications with off-line or low-bandwidth requirements, and provision of assistive devices. In addition, accessible digital textbooks (ADT) to reach children with disabilities will be scaled up and made available by working with partners/governments to adapt textbooks into ADT which will be linked into the learning passport platform for accessibility at scale. Specific (sub)-regional based initiatives through a multi-country approach will be implemented to reach a sub-regional population with unique language, socio-cultural or other characteristics, including refugees, that result in barriers to access or learning. One example is to support production, translation and provision of learning materials for indigenous populations, ethno-linguistic minority groups, children with disabilities and migrant/refugee/undocumented children in Southeast Asia (eg. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar)

Resources and tools for parental/caregiver support for remote learning. Easy to use existing handbooks for parents/caregivers to support continuity of learning for children with disabilities/ethnic minorities/ mother tongue language will be made available. Where no materials exist for specific target groups, new materials will be developed and made available.

#### **4.2.4 Safe school re-opening and management and accelerated learning programs (joint lead: World Bank – UNICEF)**

Experience with the Ebola crisis showed that many of the most marginalized children will not return to school when schools re-open. It is therefore critical, especially for the most marginalized, that safe reopening of schools is well prepared and that there is need for a specific targeting of ensuring the most marginalized children return to school.

Once schools begin to reopen, the priority becomes reintegrating students into school settings safely and in ways that allow learning to pick up again through comprehensive supply and demand side interventions. This will include support to policies to achieve those goals. It also applies today in the small number of countries where some schools are still open. Ensuring schools are prepared and ready to re-open requires investment now.

Key lines of actions would include:

**4.2.4.1 Health and Hygiene campaigns (Lead: UNICEF).** A first priority should be to keep students healthy and safe, and to keep them from contracting or transmitting the virus. Education systems with inherent networks to reach large number of families directly and quickly can be the ideal platforms for such campaigns. Head-teachers and teachers, as trusted community leaders, can also be trained and leveraged for coordinated community response.

**4.2.4.2 Accelerate learning programs.** As of April 2nd, schools have closed in 188 countries, with many countries announcing extension of closures through the end of April. These school closures are impacting approximately 89 percent of the world’s student population. Even though students in many low- and middle-income countries learn far less per year of schooling than in the highest-performing countries, some learning does take place in even the poorest-performing systems. Each month out of school therefore represents learning loss for children and youth who sorely need a good education. There will be an imperial need for programs to offset the loss in cognitive domains—such as literacy, numeracy, and reasoning skills— as well as likely losses in socioemotional domains. Recognizing the reality of the global learning crisis, the re-opening of schools provides an opportunity to address gaps in age-specific reading levels. A multi-country campaign to implement related catch-up reading approaches with the objective to improve reading with comprehension will be implemented.

**4.2.4.3 Supporting teachers (Lead: World Bank):**

With mandated school closures due to COVID-19, there is a unique window of opportunity to help teachers and school leaders upgrade their skills as well as support teachers to accelerate learning when schools re-open. In complementing the work being done through Read@Home, the World Bank will support teachers by developing structured lesson plans for teachers to use upon the reopening of schools. The professional development will focus on how to use lesson plans, and will also introduce teachers to the principles of effective pedagogy, in a context where it will be critical to reduce expanded learning gaps as a consequence of the pandemic. This would facilitate teachers’ transitions back to teaching once schools reopen and lay the groundwork for future teacher professional development initiatives, including remote learning activities. The scope (e.g., subjects, grades, languages) of both these arms of work will be dependent on the amount of funding available.

**Development and delivery of a Compendium of Structured Lesson Plans** and Tools for Improvement of Early Grade Reading Instruction. The key activities will include:

- Development of Evidence-Aligned Architecture for Early Grade Reading Instruction: The science of reading has established consensus on the key subtasks and process that all students who learn to

read in alphabetic languages should master. This activity will involve producing an explicit overall architecture or “model” for reading instruction where the connections to consensus milestones are explicit and the rationale for selection of scope, sequence, pedagogy, and assessment conform to that logic. The activity will draw on expertise of multiple reading scientists who work across a variety of languages in order to reflect a broad professional consensus and be amenable for implementation across multiple language. The key activities in this subtask are the identification of key developmental milestones that constitute the trajectory toward the ability to read independently. The stages/milestones will be identified from the initiation of formal reading instruction (systematic learning of the alphabet and the sounds of letters, etc.) through the first three years. This may constitute either K-2 or 1-3 grades depending on the school system.

- Instruction Design Principles for Structured Pedagogy. Alignment of evidence-based goals and developmental milestones occurs through specific series of lessons plans that select specific instructional activities. The rationale will be developed to inform teacher training and professional development for pedagogy in ways that make explicit why specific content is included and how content fits with pedagogy and lesson delivery. Similarly, instructional design provides information for selection of assessment goals and instruments so that assessment may focus on the appropriate challenges at any given point in the trajectory.
- Identification of key areas for Integration with Pedagogy and Assessment: This subtasks will identify areas of where content, pedagogy, and assessment activities require harmonization and alignment.
- Application of Architecture and Instructional Design Principles to Specific Scripts/Lesson Plans for Three Pilot Countries. Detailed analysis of the contents of lessons for three pilot countries will be undertaken to identify areas for modification and suggested improvement of the structured pedagogies used in the pilot country students

#### Expected Outputs/Outcomes

1. Development of Evidence-Aligned Architecture for Early Grade Reading Instruction
2. Instructional Design Principles for Structured Pedagogy
3. Identification of key areas for Integration with Pedagogy and Assessment
4. Application of Architecture and Instructional Design Principles to Specific Lesson Plans Three Pilot Countries.
5. Building an Overall Compendium of Effective Structured Pedagogy for Instructional Coherence.

#### **Technology for Teaching (TforT)**

Technology for Teaching (**TforT**) is an effort to improve teaching quality by harnessing technological solutions to enhance teacher professional development systems. While technology alone is not the solution to the learning crisis, when used wisely, it has the power to identify and quickly spread positive outliers, with the potential to improve both teaching and learning.

**TforT** is a multi-pronged intervention tailored to the specific needs as well as the technological and human infrastructure of countries in the Global South. Its menu of options includes: (i) methods of connecting teachers to support networks such as help desks and WhatsApp groups and remote professional development, (ii) a software to automatize coaching that helps school leaders or peers

provide high quality feedback to teachers, and (iii) a system for high-frequency monitoring that helps systems gather and act on data.

**TforT** will be grounded in 4 basic principles for effective teacher professional development to transform teacher-students' interactions. First, high quality in-service professional development must be **tailored** to teachers' needs. Just as effective teaching should include adjusting to the learning needs of students, similarly, effective professional development should be targeted to the areas in which teachers need the most support. Second, it must be **practical**, not just theoretical. Traditional professional development tends to be lectured-based, with teachers as passive listeners. Evidence indicates that active learning strategies, which involve hands-on application, are more successful in improving learning and retention. Third, it must be **focused**. Teacher professional development, particularly in-service professional development, needs to be selective and strategic in scope. Finally, it must be **ongoing**. One-off professional development is not effective; teachers need to receive continuous support over a sustained period to ensure that new skills and knowledge are consolidated and internalized.

**TforT** has the power to help both, during the pandemic by connecting teachers to support networks and providing remote professional development but also has strong value post pandemic. In particular, **TforT** has three main mechanisms to help accelerate learning as schools reopen: (i) provide a way to enhance the quality of support teachers received using the existing personnel, (ii) provides a way to make tailored and ongoing support for teachers feasible at scale, (iii) allow systems to reach teachers in remote areas, (iv) provide a way to monitor progress and target support to those that most need it.

The resources will be used to fund in-country work in 3-5 countries, as well as to fund the development of global public goods that will aid scale up beyond the initial 3-5 countries. The approach will leverage COVID-19 Emergency Response approved by the World Bank Board as well as the plans to reprogram existing World Bank or GPE-financed projects.

4.2.4.5 Opening Up Better: Regional and Global advocacy and related campaigns and templates for action plans for re-opening schools and flexibility in applying policies or changing policies to ensure the most vulnerable children can enroll back in schools (ie automatic promotion into secondary schools, pregnant girls allowed back into school). The crisis will function as a catalyst to reduce out-of-school numbers and improve quality of education in accordance with SDG 4 goals. Environmental health and operational safety will be a significant area of focus, following the IASC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools.

4.2.4.6 Psychosocial Support and Child wellbeing: Protection of the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of children during school closures and on returning to school through the provision of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) with the goal of reducing stigmatisation, teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse, violence against children and other forms of abuse. Specific support will be provided to:

- Adapt/amplify online and offline platform to access PSS, including referral networks for ongoing support
- Curate a set of 12 to 15 of the most promising SEL/PSS strategies currently being used in evidence-based programs +and create 'kernels' in all UN languages. This will include adaptation of tools for teachers, parents, peer support networks for MHPSS
- Mass training for Teachers on PSS – tool development tailored to the teachers/educators of different age groups using a range of platforms and tools, eg. leveraging on existing MOOCS, Learning Passport and others.

Finally, as schools reopen, many systems will be working to ensure that teachers are able to meet students at current learning levels (as opposed to pre-COVID theoretical/curricular levels). The above activities will combine to support country-tailored initiatives in these areas. For instance, the accelerated learning programs, supporting teachers, psychosocial support, and strengthening system response will all work in this direction. How each specific country chooses to do this will differ, altering the relative importance of each of the above in any given country context. For many countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, Teaching At the Right Level-types of approaches will take on more importance, and will be predicated on the capacities of teachers to assess where students are at (through pre-existing initiatives that will continue to be rolled out by countries).

### **4.3 Monitoring, Evidence, Learning and Preparation for Future Emergencies (UNESCO)**

Knowledge generation, curation, brokering, and mobilization are essential to support governments in responding to the current context of social, economic and educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Robust data, evidence and evaluation are key to understanding the variety of education responses to Covid-19 in different contexts and draw lessons learned in order to build more resilient education systems, better prepared for the future. This is a sound long-term investment.

Within this stream of work the Consortium will support the following, focusing on both the short-term as well and medium to long-term.

#### **4.3.1 Data, Monitoring and Knowledge Sharing (short-term impact)**

Better and more disaggregated data is required to inform policy responses and measures targeted at the most vulnerable learners and their families.

**Education systems have responded to Covid-19 in different ways** and with diverse measures with respect to school calendar adaptations and reopening plans; distance learning solutions; support to teachers, students and parents; or the administration of examinations to mitigate the impact of school closures. A comparative assessment of national/local contexts can highlight solutions that merit sharing. The crisis will also have an impact on **countries' ability to report data on returning to school**, with some learners not returning due to health and safety or increased poverty. Education management information systems need to be able to monitor the situation in real time, with many lacking the resources and tools to do so. Moreover, the crisis will affect **countries' ability to monitor and report on education**, with government agencies under strain due to new working arrangements, capacities or finances, and the international community potentially unable to measure the pandemic's setback to achieve SDG 4. It is therefore necessary to understand how the crisis, even after returning to school, will affect capacities on data collection on key indicators.

A coordinated approach to **collecting information in these three areas is needed** to allow efficiency gains and reduce burden on reporting by Ministries of Education. The main goal of this sub-component is to monitor the **short-term** responses to the immediate impact of the pandemic. The collection and analysis of comparable data will help guide governments and development partners to strengthen measures to mitigate the impact of closures on learning and equity, to put in place appropriate remedial measures and policies and to draw lessons towards more resilient and inclusive education systems.

The work is based on three tracks:

- 1. Global monitoring the evolution of education system responses** – to be captured through a data collection instrument (survey), developed by the three partners to minimize the burden on countries. It will capture basic, comparable information to monitor the evolution of responses, focusing on school calendar adaptations and reopening plans; distance learning opportunities; support for teachers,



students, and parents; support for those at risk of exclusion; examinations, assessments, and promotions . The survey will be shared on a regular, monthly basis for updates and will be made available in an accessible format through UIS channels. Based on the results, a report will be produced (target date Q3 2020) and updated every quarter as relevant. Furthermore, a platform will be created to communicate and share the data to all countries and partners.

**2. Rapid impact assessments in two regions** – building on activities already initiated and the initial body of evidence collected by each of the three partners through their respective channels. This includes the UNESCO survey of [national education responses across 60 countries](#), the UNICEF survey on [promising practices for equitable remote learning](#) conducted its 128 country offices, as well as the World Bank study on [shocks to education and policy responses](#). It will also build on the results of the joint UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank survey to monitor the evolution of education system responses (Activity 3.1). The regional impact assessments will examine national education responses to COVID-19 and strategies to mitigate the adverse impact of school closures. A selection of country case studies, covering five GPE countries in each region, will help expand on responses, in view of better understanding key issues across the variety of national and/or local responses.

The regional impact assessments will focus on the following two regions:

West and Central Africa – UNESCO Regional Bureau in Dakar together with UNICEF West and Central Africa office to undertake an impact assessment study looking into the secondary impacts of Covid-19 on education systems in the West and Central Africa regions. The regional study will include 5 country or subnational case studies, diving deeper into specific national/local contexts.

Asia and the Pacific – UNESCO Regional Bureau in Bangkok and Cluster Office in New Delhi with UNICEF South Asia (ROSA) and East Asia and Pacific (EAPRO) offices are undertaking a study on impact assessment. The aim is to look into the secondary impacts of Covid-19 on education systems in the region, including three sub-regional reports – for South Asia, South East Asia and East Asia – each of which will have case studies diving deeper into individual countries.

**3. Documenting national responses on data availability** – this strand of work will document in detail how the pandemic affects the capacity of countries to report on standard education indicators and to assess the quality of data collected to help correctly interpret the data reported in 2020 and 2021. This for example, will include estimated school dropout and other key data for monitoring SDG 4. The effects will vary depending at what time in the school year each country was hit by school closures and the severity of the epidemic.

A series of regional webinars will be carried out on how the crisis affects country data collection. In addition to analysis of survey responses, comparable household survey data generated by partners such as the World Bank (with LSMS) and UNICEF (with MICS and RapidPro) will be further exploited, in particular as they adapt their data collection to provide real time evidence, including on continued access to distance learning opportunities during school closures and potentially on dropout after school reopening, with emphasis on the most vulnerable. These are key sources to cross-check the accuracy of information national Education Management Information Systems produce on whether learners are going back to school.

The aim is to develop a first report on the effects of the crisis on regular national education data and scenarios about measuring dropout (Q3 2020), followed by a strategy to address the adjustments required on data reporting.

**The following deliverables are anticipated:**

- A monitoring report on the evolution of education system responses (target date: Q3 2020), based on the results of the survey developed by the three partners and first administered to countries (Q2 2020). The results will be updated every quarter as necessary based on the monthly interval of the surveys and made available.
- Two regional impact assessments (target date: Q4 2020) based on multiple data sources, including multiple quantitative and qualitative survey data, comprehensive review of literature, including 5 country case studies/deep dives in each region.
- An assessment of impact on data reporting (target date: Q2 2021), documenting how overall education data reporting is affected in GPE countries, and how some of the data series necessary for GPE results and SDG 4 monitoring are likely to be affected and what strategy is needed to adjust national education data reporting.

**4.3.2. Analysis of longer-term impact of Covid-19 on learning, equity and educational financing**

This strand of activities will focus on research and evidence-based policy recommendations to assess impact of school closures and responses and build resilience and long-term transformation of education systems, learning from the crisis.

Prolonged school closures expose students, especially the most disadvantaged, to **learning losses** at a time when many countries were already falling short of their SDG4 commitments. In most GPE countries, learning was abruptly interrupted as countries struggled to provide distance learning, often compromised by lack of connectivity or devices, as well as through alternate TV or radio broadcasting, and even print material. There is little experience in measuring such losses, although some measure of impact may be gleaned during summer school closures or equivalent.

Moreover, school closures are likely to have exposed vulnerable children to more risks and deprived them of some of the benefits of school attendance. This is particularly true for girls and youth women. Evidence tells us that public health outbreaks have distinct gendered impacts, and that preparedness and response efforts must understand the gender dimensions of these crises to avert widening inequalities. The COVID-19 pandemic is no different. COVID-related school closures across 188 countries have the potential to **exacerbate existing gender inequalities in education or create new ones** unless measures are taken to understand and address the gender dimensions.

All countries will suffer the consequences of **the financial crisis** on their education systems, which threatens to roll back the progress made over decades in expanding education. Building on a review of evidence on education disruption in past crises, information on the expected impact on public and external financing, and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on national education responses to the current crisis, scenarios are needed to anticipate the potential impact of the crisis on countries' ability to finance their education systems. In parallel, coordinated advocacy is needed in order to maintain financial and

political commitment to education and make evident the potential long-term consequences of underinvesting.

This sub-component will focus on the **longer-term impact** of the crisis for education system planning and management to draw lessons for future responses to mitigate the impact of school closures focusing on the three areas; impact on learning; on equity and inclusion and on finance.

**1. Impact on learning** – a study focusing on six initial countries will collect evidence on learning and the effectiveness of measures taken to support learning during school closures. These include Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Tanzania, which are GPE developing country partners, IDA-eligible and low-income or fragile and conflict affected states. The study will take into account whether classes were interrupted close to the end of the school year or as school was starting, whether the curriculum was reduced and how participation levels evolved when schools reopened. There is currently little experience in most GPE countries of assessing progress in student learning on a regular basis and of measuring the impact of distance education modalities.

The aim is also to introduce a **new method of developing a learning assessment** in the target countries based on the study, also drawing on the recent efforts by UNESCO’s UIS and the World Bank to pool items from different assessments in order to create a test that measures globally referenced competency levels and develop the capacity of countries to monitor learning after the crisis. Emphasis will be on learning progress over time, and it will be sought that the tool may also allow comparisons between countries. This approach could lead to significant financial and time savings in the process of test development and the item bank is a global public good that countries will be able to use to administer learning assessments efficiently to monitor progress. It can be scaled up to others, which is especially important as many GPE countries lack tools to monitor learning or their tools are of low quality.

**2. Gendered impact of educational disruption** – building on analyses of data from the study on learning in the six target countries, as well as from other sources including interviews and focus group discussions, the study will analyse the gendered impact of school closures and the loss of access to services delivered in schools on: health and nutrition; mental health and social-emotional well-being; safety and security of students; violence against girls and women; child labour; disengagement and drop out; as well as on learning outcomes.

**3. Impact of the crisis on financing** – a study will assess the consequences of pressures of domestic and international public financing for education, building on ongoing work of the Global Education Finance Platform recently launched by the World Bank in cooperation with IMF and key stakeholders, including UNESCO. The study will update information on the cost of achieving universal pre-primary, primary and secondary completion in GPE countries and the extent to which these costs may be increased by the additional challenges posed by the pandemic. These costs are a combination of the challenge posed, first, by the potential negative effects on enrolment and learning and, second, the fiscal challenges due to lower rates of domestic resource mobilization and external financing. Different scenarios will be outlined depending on each of these factors. The study (target date: Q4 2020) will estimate the impact on projected costs for achieving SDG 4 targets in GPE countries, and also solicit the contribution of Global Education Coalition partners.

Drawing on the study, UNESCO will coordinate advocacy and outreach at global, regional and national levels around the value of education for well-being and socio-economic recovery, gearing investments around equity and resilience. It will bring together partners from the Global Education Coalition to rally around common messages, top-line data and materials to protect education financing during and after the pandemic and to make education systems more inclusive, flexible and prepared to cope with future shocks. This will be done through an advocacy and outreach campaign, featuring calls from opinion leaders, role models and youth, including through key moments/events, and drawing on the power of top-tier media outlets and social media channels. The aim is also to connect education to other sectors, including health, employment and the climate crisis, to inspire wider societal awareness on the need for adequate financing and preventing the emerging recession from rolling back the progress made over decades in expanding education.

**The following deliverables are anticipated:**

- A simplified bank of test items extracted from national and international assessments; a test of reading and mathematics at the end of primary education (target date: Q3 2020) with test construction guidelines.
- Report on the impact of learning published and disseminated (target date: Q2 2021)
- Report on gendered-impact of COVID-19 educational disruption prepared and disseminated (target: Q2 2021)
- Study published on the impact of the crisis on education financing (Q4 2020) and related advocacy starting in Q2 2020

## **5. Workplan and monitoring plan**

An adaptive approach will be used during implementation and actual use of resources will be closely monitored and adjusted in response to context and changes in the programming environment. Based on real-time reviews of progress in the implementation of initiatives and the identified needs of countries, the Consortium will further leverage resources from partners to expand specific aspects of the programme.

The timeframe for implementation will be a maximum of 18 months but with a strong emphasis on immediate response and implementation which will require frontloading utilization of funds.

As regards the engineering of the implementation process, the Consortium will proceed as follows.

Where relevant partnerships will be established with other implementing partners. The lead agency for each of the streams, will develop a higher level workplan, including identification of key milestones in the delivery of the activities relating to each key intervention area and subsection. An implementation plan, indicating core activities over this period, is presented in annex 1. It will evolve and be presented to GPE at the coordination meetings.

Furthermore, in order to be as reactive as possible to the evolution of the crisis, an iterative process will be adapted. Today, we do not know when schools will be re-opened in most countries. Activities related to responding to the immediate continuity of learning, through diverse forms of distance learning, will

therefore continuously need to be adapted to the situation in each of the countries, and respond to for example new waves of infection or emerging needs.

At the first coordination meeting, the results framework will be further presented to the GPE secretariat, with a set of core indicators for each of the outcomes and outputs. This will also entail disaggregation by gender, as well as other disaggregation of data to the extent available. Means of verification will be specified.

Every other month (bi-monthly), the grant agents will present a short update on the implementation of progress of each of the 3 components including reporting against a set of core indicators (as data becomes available).

## **6. Budget - see annex 2 in excel**

Budgets will be managed by the three agencies using each agency's organizational rules and regulations. Joint reporting based on disbursement will be prepared.

Noted that proposed activities have budget implications beyond the current resource envelope. GPE funds will be prioritized for jump-starting activities, establishing proofs of concept, and filling critical resource gaps. Additional funding, including domestic resources, will be required to expand interventions and deepen the reach. This will be reviewed and communicated through an iterative and adaptive approach involving partners and in consultation with GPE.

Agreements will be signed between GPE and each of the consortium members based on standard organizational agreements, including standard overhead charges.

In sync with the conditions of the catalytic funding managed by UNICEF, each of the consortium members will allocate a maximum of 10% of the funds to management-related expenses including operational support, supply and procurement-related functions.

**Annex 1 - implementation plan in excel attached**

**Annex 2 - budget in excel attached**

**Annex 3. a list of Indicative core indicators (to be updated)**

An agreed set of indicators will be presented at the first coordination meeting.

Access :

- Number of children (and % of children in the relevant age-group across the 67 countries) in the program area supported with distance/homebased learning/tutoring programs
- Number (and %) of children who return to school once the school system is reopened
- Number of radio stations/TV programs/ online platforms broadcasting emergency distance learning programs

Protection & wellbeing:

- Number of children (and % of children across the 67 countries) provided access to programs and sensitization campaigns that aim at minimizing the negative impacts of school closure like psychological impacts, gender-based violence, and issues related to unequal social norms

Teachers:

- Number of teachers (and % of teachers across the 67 countries) trained in using distance learning methods and/or provided materials to support distance learning
- After school reopening: number of teachers trained to provide accelerated programs to mitigate loss of learning during school closure

Learning:

- Number (and % of children in program across the 67 countries) of children whose learning was assessed to evaluate loss of learning during school closure
- Percentage of children assessed during school closure who meet relevant minimum learning standards
- Number of countries, where parents and caregivers reached through mechanisms to inform parents and community leaders of distance learning content and teaching methods

Gender equality

1. Number of girls, youth groups and community groups including women's rights organizations reached and supported to strengthen education response efforts

<b>SUMMARY BUDGET</b>			
Component / sub-component	Year 1	Year 2 (6mths)	TOTAL
<b>1 Component 1: Global and Regional Coordination</b>	<b>3,624,000</b>	<b>1,152,000</b>	<b>4,776,000</b>
1.1: Subregion: Francophone West Africa and Sahel countries	1,700,000	335,000	2,035,000
1.2: Sub region: Anglophone West Africa	620,000	250,000	870,000
1.3: Pacific Small Island Developing States	440,000	320,000	760,000
1.4: Asia: Asia – meeting the learning needs of children with disabilities	680,000	155,000	835,000
1.5: Global coordination and Programme supervision and management	184,000	92,000	276,000

Component 2: Learning continuity at scale that reaches the most marginalized	10,446,133	4,563,742	15,009,875
2.1 Strategic Guidance to countries on remote learning delivery models	1,164,688	665,312	1,830,000
2.2 Read@Home	1,750,000	1,750,000	3,500,000
2.3 Teacher Support for Accelerated Learning	1,301,445	878,430	2,179,875
2.4 Expansion of Learning Passport	1,260,000	540,000	1,800,000
2.5 Readiness Agenda / Learning Mission	1,200,000	300,000	1,500,000
2.6 Remote learning measurement and assessment	350,000	150,000	500,000
2.7 Learning passport for girls	890,000	0	890,000
2.8 Girls' education in emergencies toolkit	200,000	0	200,000
2.9 Learning strategies for vulnerable groups	720,000	180,000	900,000
2.10 Parental and caregiver support	460,000	0	460,000
2.11 Opening up better	740,000	100,000	840,000
2.12 Psychosocial Support and Child Well-being	410,000	0	410,000



<b>Component 3: Monitoring, evidence, learning and preparation for future emergencies</b>	<b>3,399,000</b>	<b>1,825,000</b>	<b>5,224,000</b>
<b>Component 3.1: Short term monitoring, evidence, learning and preparation for future emergencies</b>	<b>530,000</b>	<b>305,000</b>	<b>835,000</b>
Sub-component 3.1.1: Global monitoring the evolution of education system responses	145,000	155,000	300,000
Sub-component 3.1.2: Two Regional short term impact assessments of crisis	255,000	0	255,000
Sub-component 3.1.3: Documenting national responses on data availability	130,000	150,000	280,000
<b>Component 3.2: Analysis of longer-term impact of Covid-19 on learning, equity and educational financing</b>	<b>2,869,000</b>	<b>1,520,000</b>	<b>4,389,000</b>
Sub-component 3.2.1: Impact on learning	2,113,000	1,225,000	3,338,000
Sub-component 3.2.2: Gendered impact of educational disruption	100,000	150,000	250,000
Sub-component 3.2.3: Study on financing impact and related advocacy	400,000	120,000	520,000
Component 3.3: evaluation	256,000	25,000	281,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,469,133</b>	<b>7,540,742</b>	<b>25,009,875</b>