# BRITISH COUNCIL

**English language teaching and Covid-19**

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# A global snapshot of Ministries of Education responses during the period of school reopening, in the state primary and secondary sector

October 2020

# Contents

# Aim

In late April/early May this year we produced an initial snapshot of how Ministries of Education were responding to the challenges of the educational crisis in respect of English language teaching and learning. This was part of our overall insight gathering into the impact of Covid-19.

With reference to the first snapshot, and as schools begin to reopen, this **September/October snapshot** is designed to:

- see how the situation has evolved

- investigate in more depth some of the insights gathered from the first review

- understand more about how Ministries of Education are approaching the reopening of schools and addressing loss of learning

- support the British Council's leading role, through its work in English in Education Systems, in providing external partners and organisations with global insight into English language teaching

- inform the British Council's continuing response to the impact of Covid-19

- inform the work of the British Council in supporting teachers, teacher educators and Ministries of Education with interventions in the blended and remote delivery environment in the future

# Approach

The April/May data was gathered and uploaded using an online survey by British Council offices around the world from a review of Ministry of Education plans and communication available in the public domain; this was followed where possible by a structured interview with a representative of the Ministry of Education with responsibilities for English language teaching and learning.

The **September/October snapshot** put an emphasis on the voice of the Ministry of Education. Over three-quarters of submissions were the result of direct conversations with the Ministry of Education, with ten submissions based only on a review of plans and communication available in the public domain.

# Research ethics

The structured interviews were conducted in line with the following condition: *The data shared externally will not reference individual countries, other than what is already in the public domain, or responses from any named individuals.*

# Structure of the survey

In relation to English language teaching and learning, we were interested to understand more about how Ministries of Education had been responding to the impact of Covid-19 since the first snapshot and how they are approaching a return to face-to-face (F2F) teaching. The survey had five parts:

**Part 1:** The current situation regarding:

- school reopening
- approaches to catching up on loss of learning
- current quality of and future priorities in remote delivery

**Part 2:** Most significant challenges from the start of the crisis to now

**Part 3:** Factors influencing the effectiveness of the response to school closures

**Part 4:** How the remote delivery of English is different from the remote delivery of other subjects

**Part 5:** Future challenges

# Scope and timing

The data for the September/October snapshot comes from 44 countries and territories and was gathered between 21 September and 26 October 2020:

*Table 1:Countries and territories contributing to September/October snapshot. Countries and territories highlighted in blue also took part in the April/May snapshot*

| Afghanistan | Algeria | Argentina | Armenia |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | Colombia |
| Cote d'Ivoire | Cuba | Djibouti | Ethiopia |
| France | Gabon | Georgia | Germany |
| Hungary | India (state of Karnataka) | Indonesia | Iraq |
| Jordan | Lebanon | Malaysia | Mexico |
| Morocco | Myanmar | Namibia | Nepal |
| Nigeria | Occupied Palestinian Territories | Pakistan | Peru |
| Philippines | Poland | Rwanda | Senegal |
| South Africa | Spain | Sri Lanka | Turkey |
| Uruguay | Uzbekistan | Vietnam | Zambia |

Responses to the September/October snapshot were received from all regions. Figure 1 shows the contribution of each British Council region to the global total of submissions:
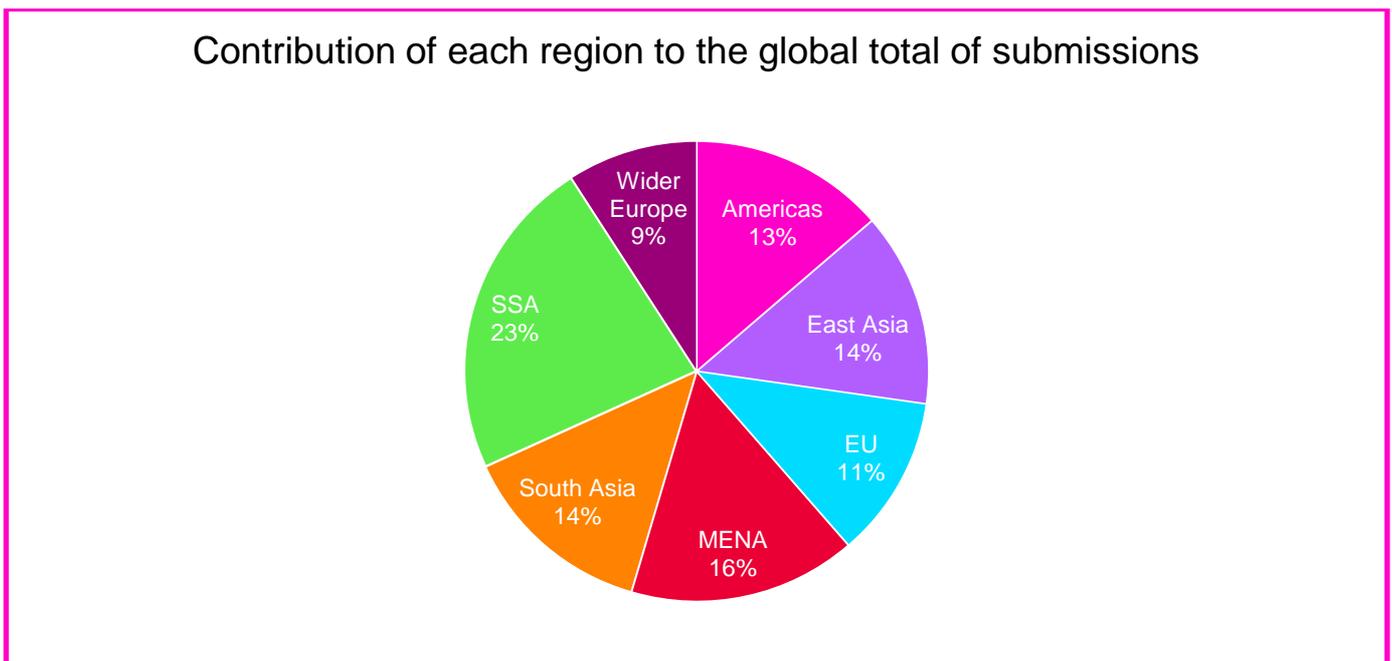


*Figure 1: Country/territory responses by region*

Table 2 compares the number of country responses from each British Council region with the submissions in April/May:

*Table 2: Completeness of snapshot data*

| Region | Countries British Council works in | Landscape review 1: Country responses | Landscape review 1: Regional coverage | Landscape review 2: Country responses | Landscape review 2: Regional coverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Americas** | 13 | 1 | 8% | 6 | **46%** |
| **East Asia** | 14 | 7 | 50% | 6 | **43%** |
| **European Union** | 28 | 7 | 25% | 4 | **14%** |
| **MENA** | 17 | 10 | 59% | 7 | **41%** |
| **South Asia** | 6 | 5 | 83% | 6 | **100%** |
| **Sub Saharan Africa** | 19 | 15 | 79% | 10 | **53%** |
| **Wider Europe** | 15 | 7 | 47% | 4 | **27%** |

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank representatives of Ministries of Education and our colleagues from across the British Council for taking the time, during a period of competing priorities, to compile the responses.

# Insights

Insights are provided in five sections in line with the survey structure and our aims. They are centred around the current situation as schools begin to reopen; what the experience of school closure means for current and future priorities; how the learning of English remotely might be different from the learning of other subjects; and an evaluation of future challenges.

**Section 1:** Aggregated global responses in relation to the current situation regarding:

- schools reopening

- approaches to catching up on loss of learning

- current provision and future priorities of remote delivery

**Section 2:** A comparative evaluation of the most significant challenges as seen now (six months on) in comparison to the most significant challenges reported in April/May

**Section 3:** An evaluation of the relative significance of the factors that influenced Ministry of Education response to the impact of school closure

**Section 4:** Perceptions of the remote learning of English in comparison with the remote learning of other subjects

**Section 5:** A ranking of current challenges

# Key insights

We have selected and prioritised the key insights below from an aggregated review of the global landscape. They should be seen as indications of trends and challenges in the responses to the continuing impact of Covid-19 and are intended to inform rather than determine the focus of any support for Ministries of Education, as well as informing future research avenues. For the detail of the results and further analysis, see the insights in detail section that follows.

## 1. School reopening

**KI1: 61% of Ministries (27/44) reported their schools were open at least to some extent, across a variety of configurations. Of those, ten reported that learners were following a pre Covid-19 timetable**

## 2. Catching up on loss of learning

**KI2: 72% of countries have at least some programme in place for some students compared to 28% who have either no programme in place or have yet to begin their planned programme**

## 3. Ongoing remote delivery – availability and quality of provision

There are few significant distinctive trends that can be aggregated. A ranking of the various aspects of remote delivery in relation to their availability and quality of their provision shows: *support from other organisations*, *the use of non-digital alternatives to F2F instruction*, and *the use of asynchronous platforms* as the three most highly ranked in terms of being in place, extensive and of high quality – but by a small margin.

*Guidance for parents to help support learning at home, guidance for online safety*, and *the assessment of remote learning being carried out* are the least highly ranked in terms of being in place to at least some extent – again by a small margin.

Of interest but requiring much further investigation:

**Very few Ministries of Education reported high quality and extensive provision in the various aspects of remote delivery surveyed**; the highest in this category (support from other organisations) was reported as high quality and extensive by only eight countries/territories (18%).

## 4. Future priorities

**KI3: The highest ranked priority (53%) was *Programmes to help teachers acquire remote delivery skills***

**KI4: The lowest ranked priority (35%) was *Guidance to help parents support learning at home***

5.  **Factors affecting the response to the impact of school closures**

**KI5: Less than half (44%) of Ministries of Education had alternatives to F2F instruction in place prior to school closures**

**KI6: Only 16% of Ministries of Education reported that teachers had the skills to deliver remotely prior to the crisis**

**KI7: Three out of the top four factors which significantly affected a Ministry of Education's response, whether positively (because they were in place) or negatively (because they were not in place), were the same. These were:**

- **Having a response plan**

- **Having alternatives to F2F instruction**

- **Having communication channels to engage with stakeholders**

6.  **Challenges identified at the start of the school closure period compared to challenges identified looking back on the period of school closure**

**KI8: The three most significant challenges identified at the start of the period of school closures are the same as the challenges identified retrospectively as being the most significant for this period:**

| April/May ranking | September/October ranking |
|---|---|
| Access/equity – connectivity, availability of device, cost of data | Ensuring access/equity (connectivity, availability of device, cost of data) |
| Teacher support | Level of teacher competence (remote teaching skills, digital materials development) |
| Teacher competence – remote teaching skills, digital materials development | Providing teacher support |

7.  **Learning English remotely compared to learning other subjects remotely**

**KI9: 79% of Ministries either agreed or strongly agreed that aspects of the remote learning of English posed more challenges compared to other subjects**

**KI10: 79% of Ministries either agreed or strongly agreed that parents were more challenged to support their children to learn English compared to other subjects**

8.  **Support required to facilitate new ways of teaching, learning and assessing English**

**KI11: Top four cited:**

- **Teacher training programmes for remote delivery skills**

- **Support for systems and processes: assessment mechanisms**

- **Digital content for learners**

- **Support for systems and processes: materials development**


9. **Current challenges for Ministries of Education**

**KI12: The top four aggregated responses in order:**

1. **Preparation for a second wave of school closures**

2. **Catching-up on lost learning**

3. **Ensuring access for all learners**

4. **Measures to protect against Covid-19 infection**


# Summary of key insights

A small majority of countries/territories reported their schools are open. The configuration of F2F provision is varied, beyond the four options that we provided as possible descriptions of this configuration. Approximately 75% of countries/territories report they have at least some provision to catch up on the loss of learning caused by school closure. *Programmes to help teachers acquire remote delivery skills* was the highest ranked future priority in relation to ongoing remote delivery.

In relation to aspects of provision in place, 16% of Ministries of Education reported that teachers had the skills to deliver remotely prior to the crisis. Three factors significantly influencing an effective response to school closures, or their absence being barriers to an effective response, emerge: *pre-existing alternatives to F2F alternatives*; *response plans*; and *communication channels*. The three most significant challenges identified at the beginning of the period of school closures (*access, teacher competence, teacher support*) are identical to those identified retrospectively at the end of the period.

In relation to the learning of English remotely, there were high levels of agreement that the learning of English remotely, compared to the learning of other subjects, posed a great challenge overall, and posed a greater challenge for parents in support of their children's learning. The highest ranked future priority reported by Ministries of Education in respect of support for effective learning of English was *teacher training around remote delivery skills*. The highest ranked future challenge overall was *preparation for a second wave of school closures*.

For a comprehensive review of the evolution of the impact of Covid-19 on education, visit https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse

# Limitations and conclusions

We are cautious about drawing concrete conclusions from the above summary of key insights. More data and more analysis than is provided through a snapshot is required. The sample size was small, the interpretation of the questions was mitigated and therefore open to difference, the margin of difference within rankings in some cases was small.

However, overall we would suggest that the responses indicate the **importance of teacher competence** (and of teacher support) for Ministries of Education in delivering an effective response during periods of school closure – appearing as significant in relation to response factors, challenge and priority. We would also suggest that this overall tentative conclusion provides further support to the **relative importance of the teacher to learner attainment in both the F2F classroom setting** *and* **the remote learning environment.**

# Insights in detail

## Section 1: Aggregated global response in relation to the current situation

**1a) Are schools open?**



### Are schools open?

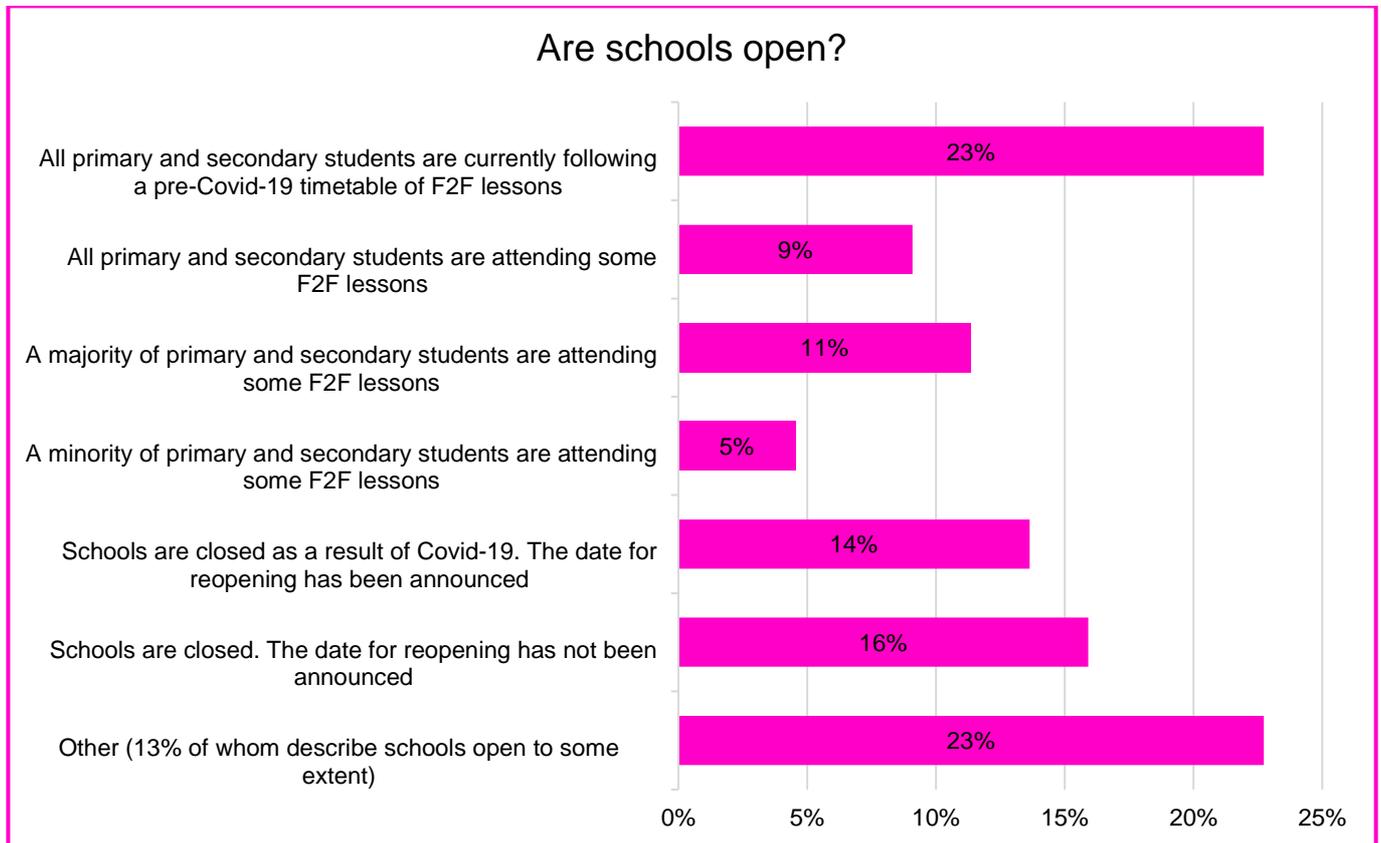| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| All primary and secondary students are currently following a pre-Covid-19 timetable of F2F lessons | 23% |
| All primary and secondary students are attending some F2F lessons | 9% |
| A majority of primary and secondary students are attending some F2F lessons | 11% |
| A minority of primary and secondary students are attending some F2F lessons | 5% |
| Schools are closed as a result of Covid-19. The date for reopening has been announced | 14% |
| Schools are closed. The date for reopening has not been announced | 16% |
| Other (13% of whom describe schools open to some extent) | 23% |

*Figure 2: Are schools open?*

In April/May all countries/territories except one reported that schools were closed. The situation in September/October is much more varied. **A majority (61%) of Ministries of Education report that schools are open at least to some extent** but with significant variety in the configurations of school reopening in relation primarily to different year groups and different geographical areas within the country/territory.

**Ten Ministries (23%) reported that all learners are following a pre Covid-19 timetable**.

About a quarter of respondents (23%) reported configurations that did not correspond to any of the situations described in the survey. The following selection of comments, from Ministries of Education reporting 'Other' as well as those where some F2F learning is taking place, demonstrate the variety of configurations currently in place:

*Only 11th and 12th standard classes are attending F2F in government schools. Private schools are attending F2F normally now for all classes.* [Country in South Asia]

*Schools are open in all provinces except for [one]. Schools in [that province] will open on the 2nd of November.* [Country in the Americas]

*Pre-school students (aged between 3-5) and first-year primary students, 8th and 12th grades are attending face to face classes. All other levels have online education.* [Country in Wider Europe]

*Both primary and secondary schools in villages and rural areas to open from 19 October. Schools in zonal and regional towns to start from 26 October. Schools in … the capital and its vicinities to start from November 9.* [Country in Sub Saharan Africa]

*The decision to open schools is made only by regional and district public administration.* [Country in Wider Europe]

*There are a variety of responses across the country. ... In some regions all students will be receiving F2F lessons unless in temporary isolation …, while in others students may rotate between F2F and remote as schools limit numbers on premises.* [Country in the Europe Union]
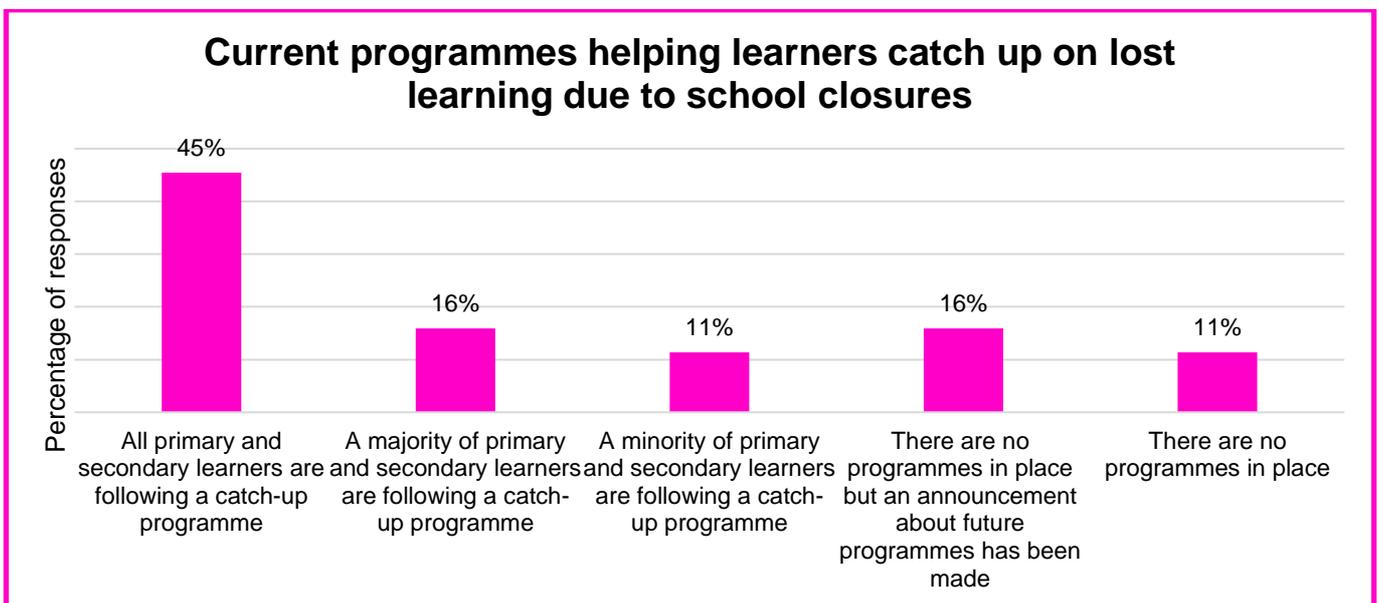
**1b) Loss of learning**



*Figure 3: Current programmes helping learners catch up on lost learning due to school closures*

**About three-quarters of Ministries of Education (72%) have at least some programme in place for students to catch up on loss of learning**.

There are different approaches to providing catch-up programmes as the following selection of survey comments illustrate:

*Schools were instructed to identify students who were not properly involved in distance learning. Based on this information additional attention will be paid to these students after the start of their studies.* [Country in Wider Europe]

*The catch-up programme is last semester's content for both primary and secondary schools.* [Country in Sub Saharan Africa]

*The government is following multiple approaches to help learners catch up on lost learning. For example, the materials are designed, and activities are listed out, to conduct lessons to particular groups of students according to their level access to technology.* [Country in South Asia]

*For grade 8 and 12 students who were supposed to take regional and national exams respectively… they will receive a 45-day revision/catch-up class before the exam. For other grades, the first two months will be largely dedicated for catch-up. When possible, schools will be encouraged to explore other arrangements for catch-up such as after class tutorials.* [Country in Sub Saharan Africa]

*To ensure that catch-up learning is in place across the board a system to evaluate the specific needs of pupils through national assessments is being carried out and an increased focus on personalised learning is being favoured. In secondary schools, homework groups are being supported to help the most vulnerable pupils and ensure that pupils are back on the learning track.* [Country in the European Union]

*Remediation and enrichment classes were conducted during summer through distance learning.* [Country in East Asia]

*The Ministry of Education issued guidance for all schools to add learning content which was reduced in the last school year to the new school year. Schools organised entry assessment at the beginning of the new school year to identify gaps in students' knowledge then provide remedial teaching, especially for students at primary level and weaker students to help students to acquire core knowledge.* [Country in East Asia]

## 1c) Extent and quality of ongoing remote delivery provision

Ministries of Education selected one of the following options for each area described in Figure 3 that best described ongoing provision:

- There is no provision in place

- There is limited provision in place

- There is extensive provision in place

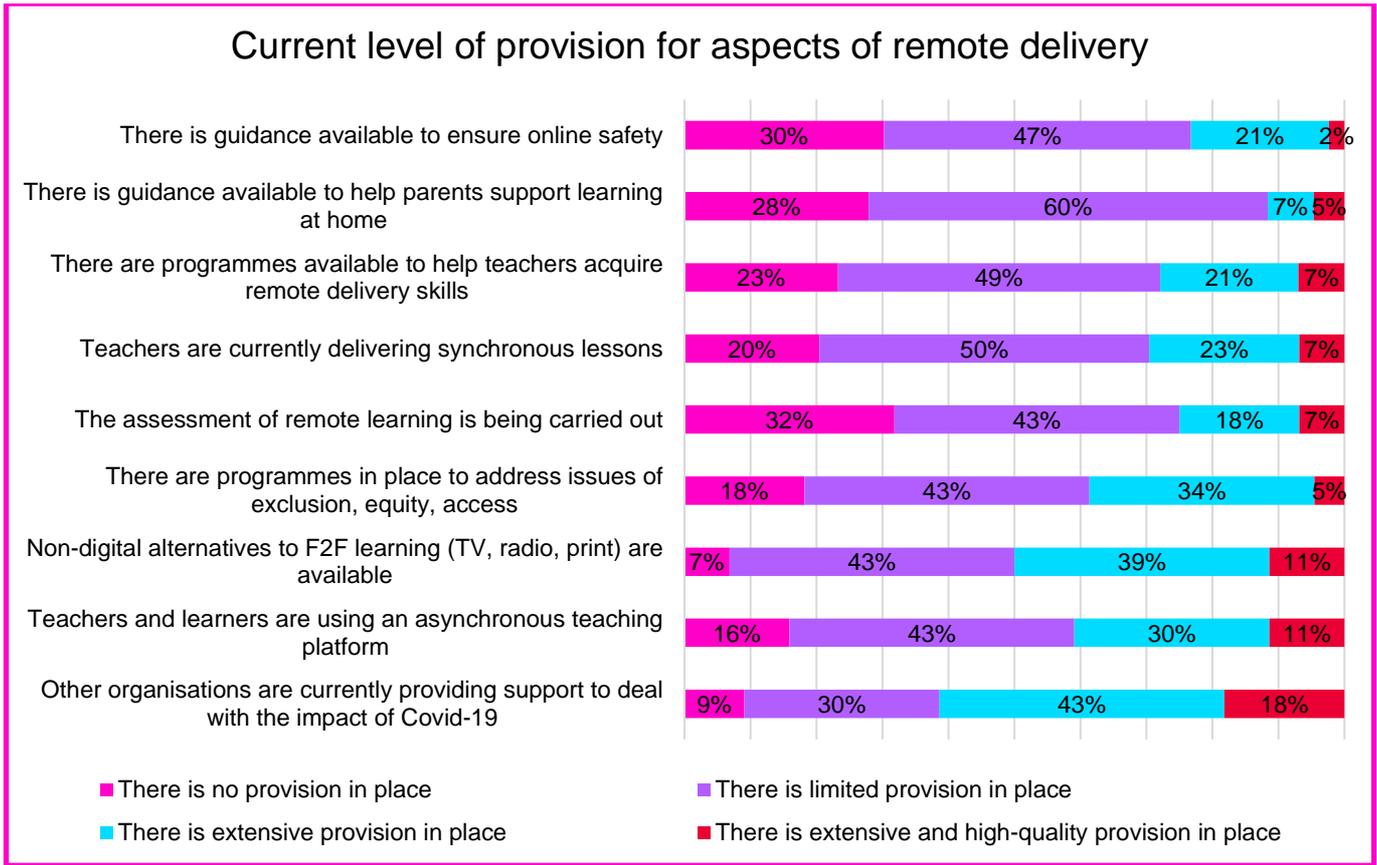- There is extensive and high-quality provision in place

Figure 4: Current levels of provision - extent and quality

**Very few Ministries of Education report high quality and extensive provision in the various aspects of remote delivery surveyed;** the highest in this category (*support from other organisations*) was reported as high quality and extensive by only eight countries (18%).

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of Ministries of Education report that other organisations are providing support to manage the impact of Covid-19.

50% report having non-digital alternatives to F2F instruction available.

Two out of five Ministries (41%) report teachers and learners using asynchronous platforms while just under a third (30%) report the use of synchronous lessons. Extensive and high-quality provision of teaching and learning through these channels is very low (11% and 7% respectively), but not significantly lower in comparison with the other aspects of remote delivery surveyed.

A third of countries (32%) do not have any provision for assessment of remote learning, 30% do not have any guidance for ensuring online safety and 28% do not have guidance available for parents.

**1d) Future priorities**

The September snapshot asked Ministries of Education to consider the future priorities in regard to nine areas of ongoing remote delivery. For each area Ministries reported it as a low, medium or high priority.

*Table 3: Future priorities in regard to ongoing remote delivery*

| Future priorities in regard to remote delivery | Considered a high priority |
|---|---|
| Programmes to help teachers acquire remote delivery skills | 53% |
| Availability of non-digital alternatives to F2F learning (TV, radio, print) | 49% |
| The assessment of remote learning | 49% |
| Teachers delivering synchronous lessons | 47% |
| Programmes to address issues of exclusion, equity, access | 44% |
| Teachers and learners using an asynchronous teaching platform | 44% |
| Guidance to ensure online safety | 37% |
| Other organisations providing support to deal with the impact of Covid-19 | 37% |
| Guidance to help parents support learning at home | 35% |

The aspects of provision that were reported to be high priorities most often were providing programmes to **help teachers acquire remote delivery skills** (53% of Ministries of Education considered it to be a high priority), the **availability of non-digital alternatives to F2F learning** and the **assessment of remote learning** (49% consider these to be a high priority).

Only around a third of Ministries of Education considered **providing guidance to help parents**, providing **guidance to ensure online safety** and **working with other organisations** as high priorities at the current time.

## Section 2: A comparative ranking of the most significant challenges during the previous six months as seen now in comparison to the most significant challenges reported in April/May

*Table 4: Ranking of challenges during the Covid-19 crisis*

| April ranking | September ranking |
|---|---|
| **Access/equity** – connectivity, availability of device, cost of data<br><br>*(51% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Ensuring access/equity** (connectivity, availability of device, cost of data)<br><br>*(Average ranking of 2.73)* |
| **Teacher support**<br><br>*(31% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Level of teacher competence** (remote teaching skills, digital materials development)<br><br>*(Average ranking of 4.36)* |
| **Teacher competence** – remote teaching skills, digital materials development<br><br>*(27% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Providing teacher support**<br><br>*(Average ranking of 4.52)* |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Learner motivation**<br><br>*(27% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Availability, access to and quality of a digital content platform**<br><br>*(Average ranking of 4.73)* |
| **Digital content platform** – availability/access, quality<br><br>*(26% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Level of learner motivation**<br><br>*(Average ranking of 4.93)* |
| **Assessment of learning** – online assessment, uncertainty over public exams<br><br>*(21% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Providing support for vulnerable groups**<br><br>*(Average ranking of 5.75)* |
| **Non-digital alternatives to F2F teaching** – content, delivery<br><br>*(19% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Assessing learning** (online assessment, uncertainty over public exams)<br><br>*(Average ranking of 6.18)* |
| **Communications**<br><br>*(16% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Providing non-digital alternatives to F2F teaching** (content, delivery)<br><br>*(Average ranking of 6.64)* |
| **Parental support**<br><br>*(14% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Providing parental support**<br><br>*(Average ranking of 7.57)* |
| **Vulnerable groups**<br><br>*(10% of Ministries reported this challenge)* | **Communicating with teachers, learners, parents and school leaders**<br><br>*(Average ranking of 7.59)* |

The April snapshot ranked challenges, aggregated by the frequency of citation, in response to an open-ended question. For the September snapshot, we asked Ministries of Education to look back over the previous six months and, with the benefit of hindsight, rank the list of challenges established in April.

In April, when school closures were most widespread, **ensuring access**, **teacher support** and **teacher competence** were reported to be the most significant challenges while **communications**, providing **parental support** and **access for vulnerable groups** had the lowest assigned values, in relation to challenge.

In September, when asked to rank these challenges with hindsight there was a high correlation with Ministry initial impressions earlier in the year. At both timepoints ensuring access and equity were reported to be the most significant challenge by a high margin (51% citing it in April and 41% ranking it number one in September); and the top three challenges – **access, teacher support** and **teacher competence** – retain the same relative ranking at both timepoints.

The ranking of challenge as perceived at the beginning of the school closure period remains approximately the same as the ranking of challenge for this six-month period as perceived at the end of the school closure period, i.e. **that challenges identified at the outset remained the challenges most visible throughout this period.**

Confirmation of the challenges described, and additional challenges, are exemplified through the following selected comments from the survey:

*A further challenge is the power issue in remote areas. There is no reliable electricity from the government and poor connectivity issues which create a major hurdle in reaching the urban and marginalized areas.* [Country in South Asia]

*The capacity of schools to include new students coming from private sector.* [Country in MENA]

*A lot of schools had income generating activities but during the lock down between March and September most lost this capacity and this has caused a challenge when school need the resources to set up mitigation measures.* [Country in Sub Saharan Africa]

*Motivation of the team & team building (safety concerns regarding Covid-19).* [Country in South Asia]

*Another concern for the government is the drop-out rate once schools reopen. There is no specific data on this available yet, but this is a priority area that the Department will be looking into to ensure children are back in school when things stabilise.* [Country in South Asia]

*Stringent copyright regulations on learning materials.* [Country in East Asia]

*Many teachers still focus on giving lots of materials and exercises instead of projects so many students are overwhelmed. This is the most common challenge faced.* [Country in East Asia]

*Two main challenges have been identified: 1. The digital divide – how to support pupils without the necessary equipment or disaffected pupils who 'drop-out' of the system. 2. Lack of digital literacy or digital exclusion (i.e. lacking sufficient skills to use digital technology for learning). More generally, policy for developing platforms, educational resources and digital solutions; support and training for teachers and skills assessment; development of innovative digital solutions linked to the EU economic recovery plan.* [Country in the EU]

For more insight into priorities during the Covid-19 crisis from the beginning of the school closure period read the article: *School-system priorities in the age of coronavirus,* produced by McKinsey and Company, 21 April 2020

## Section 3: A ranking of the factors that affected Ministries of Education response to the impact of school closure and their relative significance

For each factor below the survey asked Ministries of Education to report on what was in place and to report on the impact that each factor (absent or present) had on their response to the crisis. The options were: No impact, A limited impact, Some impact, A significant impact.



**Factors that impacted response: What was in place?**

■ Yes, this was in place   ■ No, this wasn't in place

| Factor | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did other organisations provide support during the crisis? | 91% | 9% |
| Did parents become more involved in supporting their children's learning during the crisis? | 89% | 11% |
| Did you have communication channels to engage with teachers, learners, parents and school leaders? | 82% | 18% |
| Did you have a response plan? | 80% | 20% |
| Were you able to utilise tools and learning platforms for remote delivery and assessment? | 80% | 20% |
| During the crisis did you have systems of professional development to support teachers in the acquisition of skills… | 68% | 32% |
| In general, were you able to provide access to remote learning for disadvantaged groups? | 66% | 34% |
| In general, were learners motivated to engage with remote learning? | 66% | 34% |
| Did you have alternative systems to F2F instruction prior to the crisis? | 43% | 57% |
| Were teachers already competent in remote delivery skills, prior to the crisis? | 16% | 84% |

*Figure 5: Factors in place that impacted Ministry of Education responses*

**Only 16% of Ministries of Education reported that teachers had the skills to deliver remotely at the beginning of the crisis.**

Less than half (43%) had alternatives to F2F instruction in place, prior to the crisis.

During the crisis, Ministries of Education overwhelmingly reported that other organisations were able to provide support (91%) and that parents become more involved in their children's learning (89%)

*Table 5: Factors in place that had a significant impact*

| Factors affecting Ministry of Education response | In place | Had a significant impact |
|---|---|---|
| Did you have communication channels to engage with teachers, learners, parents and school leaders? | 36 | 67% |
| Did you have a response plan? | 35 | 57% |
| Did you have alternative systems to F2F instruction prior to the crisis? | 19 | 53% |
| Did other organisations provide support during the crisis? | 40 | 43% |
| Were teachers already competent in remote delivery skills, prior to the crisis? | 7 | 43% |
| Did parents become more involved in supporting their children's learning during the crisis? | 39 | 41% |
| Were you able to utilise tools and learning platforms for remote delivery and assessment? | 35 | 40% |
| In general, were learners motivated to engage with remote learning? | 29 | 38% |
| During the crisis did you have systems of professional development to support teachers in the acquisition of skills required for remote delivery? | 30 | 37% |
| In general, were you able to provide access to remote learning for disadvantaged groups? | 29 | 34% |

The ranking of the factors as having a significant impact when in place shows **communication channels, response plans** and **alternative systems to F2F instruction**.

*Table 6: Factors not in place that had a significant impact*

| Factors affecting Ministry of Education response | Not in place | Had a significant impact |
|---|---|---|
| Did you have alternative systems to F2F instruction prior to the crisis? | 25 | 68% |
| In general, were you able to provide access to remote learning for disadvantaged groups? | 15 | 67% |
| Did you have a response plan? | 9 | 67% |
| Did you have communication channels to engage with teachers, learners, parents and school leaders? | 8 | 63% |
| In general, were learners motivated to engage with remote learning? | 15 | 60% |
| Did other organisations provide support during the crisis? | 4 | 50% |
| Were teachers already competent in remote delivery skills, prior to the crisis? | 37 | 43% |
| During the crisis did you have systems of professional development to support teachers in the acquisition of skills required for remote delivery? | 14 | 36% |
| Were you able to utilise tools and learning platforms for remote delivery and assessment? | 9 | 33% |
| Did parents become more involved in supporting their children's learning during the crisis? | 5 | 20% |

The ranking of the factors as having a significant impact when not in place were **not having alternatives to F2F instruction, an inability to provide access to remote learning for disadvantaged groups** and **not having a response plan.**

Across both tables, three out of the top four factors which significantly affected a Ministry of Education's response, whether positively (because they were in place) or negatively (because they were not in place), were the same. These were: **having a response plan, having alternatives to F2F instruction** and **having communication channels to engage with stakeholders.**

## Section 4: Perceptions of the remote learning of English in comparison with the remote learning of other subjects



*In your view, is the remote learning of English different from the remote learning of other subjects?*
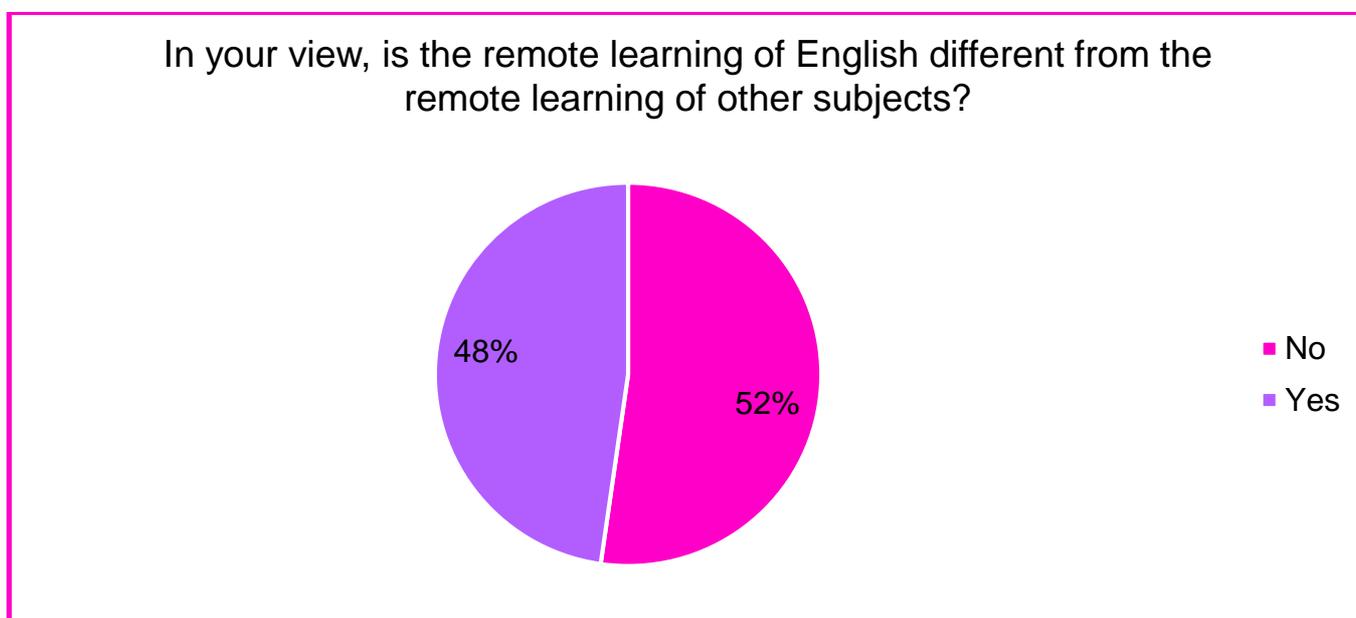
- No
- Yes

48%

52%

*Figure 6: Is the remote learning of English different from the remote learning of other subjects?*

When asked whether the remote learning of English was different from the remote learning of other subjects, a slight majority (52%) of Ministries of Education considered this not to be the case.

In your view, are different kinds of support required for teachers, learners and parents to help develop effective remote learning of English, compared to other subjects?
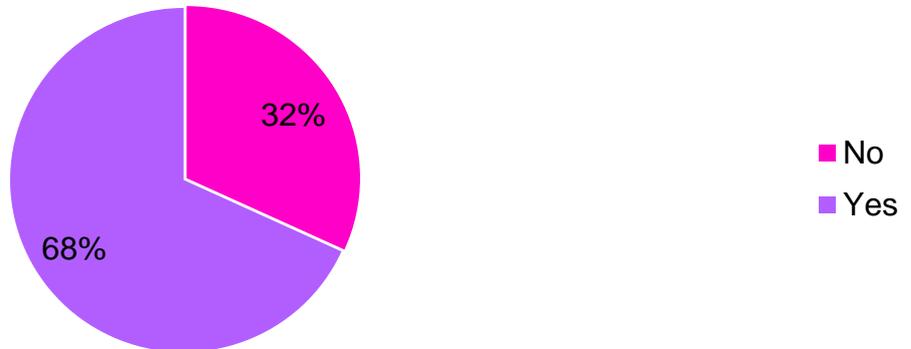
- No
- Yes

32%

68%

*Figure 7: Are different kinds of support required for effective remote learning of English, compared to other subjects?*

However, **a large majority (68%) reported that different kinds of support were needed** in respect of teachers, learners and parents for the remote learning of English.



## English language teaching and learning: challenge

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

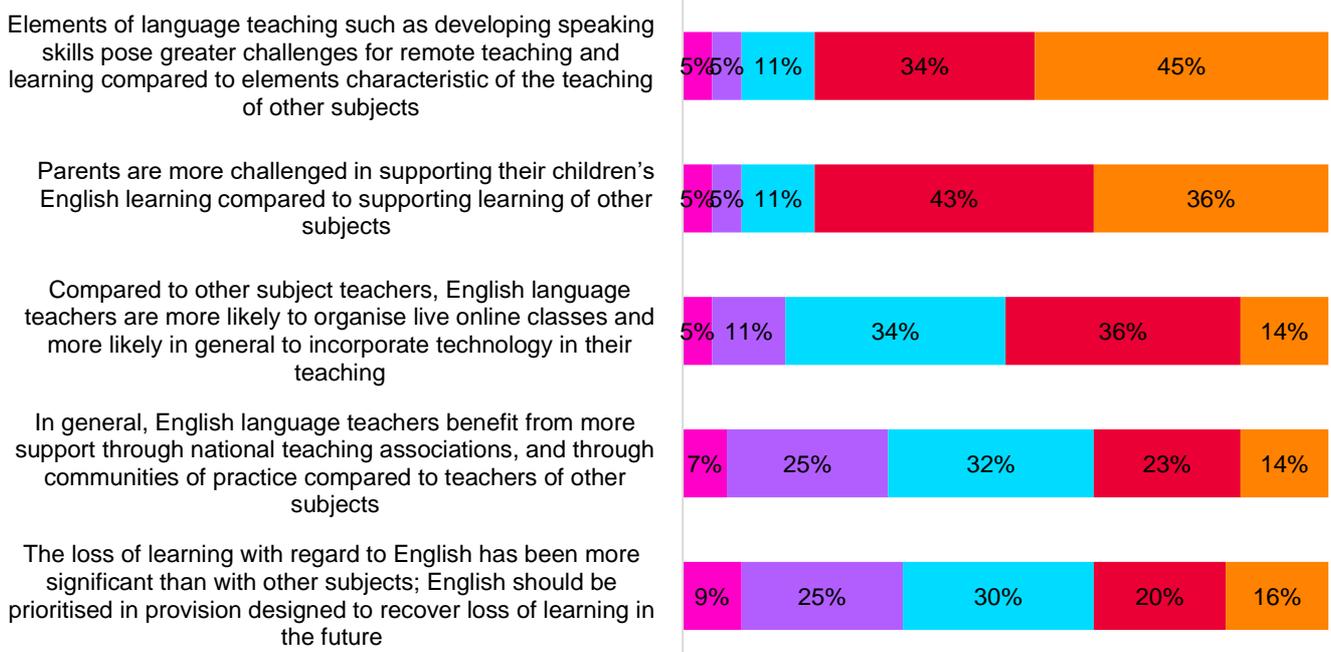| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elements of language teaching such as developing speaking skills pose greater challenges for remote teaching and learning compared to elements characteristic of the teaching of other subjects | 5% | 5% | 11% | 34% | 45% |
| Parents are more challenged in supporting their children's English learning compared to supporting learning of other subjects | 5% | 5% | 11% | 43% | 36% |
| Compared to other subject teachers, English language teachers are more likely to organise live online classes and more likely in general to incorporate technology in their teaching | 5% | 11% | 34% | 36% | 14% |
| In general, English language teachers benefit from more support through national teaching associations, and through communities of practice compared to teachers of other subjects | 7% | 25% | 32% | 23% | 14% |
| The loss of learning with regard to English has been more significant than with other subjects; English should be prioritised in provision designed to recover loss of learning in the future | 9% | 25% | 30% | 20% | 16% |

*Figure 8: English language teaching and learning*

Focusing further on English language teaching and learning, there was **strong agreement that the remote learning of English posed more challenges**, compared to other subjects (34% agreed and 45% strongly agreed with the statement) and that **parents were more challenged to support their children to learn English** (43% agreed and 36% strongly agreed with the statement).

About half of Ministries of Education (48%) agreed or strongly agreed that English language teachers were more likely to organise online classes and incorporate technology into their teaching than other subject teachers.

Selected comments from the survey provide further insight on challenge and support:

*Especially for younger learners, they learn best when they interact and talk to each other. This helps them with pronunciations and confidence for the learner as most of them use their native languages at home.* [Country in Sub Saharan Africa]

*Learners or parents who may have very low levels of English will need additional support and input in terms of how to approach the remote learning of English.* [Country in Americas]

*We received a lot of support from the English Connects programme (British Council) and Africa TESOL. Other subjects did not receive this support.* [Country in Sub Saharan Africa]

*The support for teachers, learners and/or parents different for English compared to other subjects is different. For example, teachers need special support in giving instructions, designing interactive tasks of English, adapting tasks, assessing students' understanding, engaging students. However, lesson management is similar to other subjects.* [Country in South Asia]

*Overall, the ELTs have wider teacher development opportunities equipping them with more up to date transferable skills and competencies. However, the support mechanisms for the learners and parents are more or less the same for all subjects.* [Country in Wider Europe]

*For example, parents usually are not able to support their children with English as they can with other subjects when they can't read or speak the language.* [Country in the Americas]

*There is a need for more synchronous online teaching if f2f teaching isn't possible and the teaching skills necessary to teach productive skills online. Parental support may be harder for some parents to provide.* [Country in the EU]

## Section 5: Current challenges

Ministries of Education were asked to rank their top four challenges as they saw them at the time of taking the survey.

*Table 7: Current challenges for Ministries of Education*

| Average rank | Current challenges |
|---|---|
| 1.80 | Preparation for a second wave of school closures |
| 1.94 | Catching-up lost learning |
| 2.18 | Ensuring access for all learners |
| 2.32 | Measures to protect against Covid-19 infection |
| 2.50 | Student well-being |
| 2.80 | School timetabling |
| 2.87 | Assessing students |
| 2.92 | Integrating new ways of teaching and learning developed during school closure |
| 3.20 | Engaging with parents and caregivers |
| 3.45 | Teacher well-being |

*Catching-up on lost learning* and *ensuring access for all learners* were most often ranked as the top challenge (by 13 and 12 Ministries respectively).

When the top four challenges for each Ministry of Education were averaged out the top four challenges, in addition to **catching up on lost learning** and **ensuring access**, included the health management challenges of **preparing for another wave of school closures** (the top challenge on average) and putting in place **measures to protect against Covid-19 infection** (the fourth most highly ranked challenge on average).

For more insight on responses to the impact of school closure read, *Evidence on Efforts to Mitigate the Negative Educational Impact of Past Disease Outbreaks.* Hallgarten, J. Education Development Trust, 31 March 2020

# Appendix 1: Survey questions

## INTRODUCTION

**Country**

**Please confirm that this survey was conducted with a representative of the Ministry of Education and a representative of the British Council.**
- Yes
- No

## PART 1: THE CURRENT SITUATION

**Are schools open?**
*Please ==highlight== the most appropriate statement*
- All primary and secondary students are currently following a pre-Covid-19 timetable of F2F lessons
- All primary and secondary students are attending some F2F lessons
- A majority of primary and secondary students are attending some F2F lessons
- A minority of primary and secondary students are attending some F2F lessons
- Schools are closed for the vacation. The date for reopening has been announced
- Schools are closed as a result of Covid-19. The date for reopening has been announced
- Schools are closed. The date for reopening has not been announced
- Other (*please give a brief statement that summarises the current situation*)

**Comments**
*If you have any other information relevant to school opening (eg dates of reopening, different provision for different age ranges/groups of students) enter it here.*

**Current programmes helping learners catch up on lost learning due to school closures**
*Please ==highlight== the most appropriate statement*
- All primary and secondary learners are following a catch-up programme
- A majority of primary and secondary learners are following a catch-up programme
- A minority of primary and secondary learners are following a catch-up programme
- There are no programmes in place but an announcement about future programmes has been made
- There are no programmes in place

**Comments**
*What is your approach, what are your priorities and what are the major challenges? If you have any other information relevant to catch up, accelerated learning, remedial teaching programmes, please enter it here.*

**Ongoing remote delivery: describing provision**
*Please copy and paste the most appropriate of the four provision statements next to each of the delivery statements.*
  - There is no provision in place

o There is limited provision in place
o There is extensive provision in place
o There is extensive and high-quality provision in place

- Teachers are currently delivering synchronous lessons
- Teachers and learners are using an asynchronous teaching platform
- Non-digital alternatives to F2F learning (TV, radio, print, asynchronous digital content) are available
- The assessment of remote learning is being carried out
- There are programmes available to help teachers acquire remote delivery skills
- There is guidance available to help parents support learning at home
- There are programmes in place to address issues of exclusion, equity, access
- There is guidance available to ensure online safety
- Other organisations are currently providing support to deal with the impact of Covid-19

**Ongoing remote delivery: future priorities**
*Please copy and paste the most appropriate of the three priority statements next to each of the delivery statements.*
o Low priority
o Medium priority
o High priority

- Teachers delivering synchronous lessons
- Teachers and learners using an asynchronous teaching platform
- Availability of non-digital alternatives to F2F learning (TV, radio, print)
- The assessment of remote learning
- Programmes to help teachers acquire remote delivery skills
- Guidance to help parents support learning at home
- Programmes to address issues of exclusion, equity, access
- Guidance to ensure online safety
- Other organisations providing support to deal with the impact of Covid-19

## PART 2: BIGGEST CHALLENGES SINCE APRIL

**These were the most visible challenges reported globally during the landscape review in May. Looking back on the period from April to now, how would you rank them in order of level of challenge for the Ministry (in terms of difficulty to address and having high impact).**
*Please reorder these statements so that number 1 is the most challenging and number 10 is the least challenging*

1. Providing teacher support
2. Ensuring access/equity (connectivity, availability of device, cost of data)
3. Level of teacher competence (remote teaching skills, digital materials development)
4. Level of learner motivation
5. Availability, access to and quality of a digital content platform
6. Providing non-digital alternatives to F2F teaching (content, delivery)
7. Assessing learning (online assessment, uncertainty over public exams)

8. Providing support for vulnerable groups
9. Communicating with teachers, learners, parents and school leaders
10. Providing parental support

**Were there any other challenges, important during this period, not mentioned above?**

## PART 3: FACTORS THAT HAD AN IMPACT ON YOUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

For each of these questions please <mark>highlight</mark> your answer.

**Did you have alternative systems to F2F instruction prior to the crisis?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**Did other organisations provide support during the crisis?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**Did you have a response plan?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**Did you have communication channels to engage with teachers, learners, parents and school leaders?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact

- A significant impact

**In general, were you able to provide access to remote learning for disadvantaged groups?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**During the crisis did you have systems of professional development to support teachers in the acquisition of skills required for remote delivery?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**Were teachers already competent in remote delivery skills, prior to the crisis?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**Were you able to utilise tools and learning platforms for remote delivery and assessment?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**In general, were learners motivated to engage with remote learning?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**Did parents become more involved in supporting their children's learning during the crisis?**
- Yes
- No

**How much of an impact (positive or negative) did this have on your response?**
- No impact at all
- A limited impact
- Some impact
- A significant impact

**Were there any other factors which impacted on your response to Covid-19? How much of an impact did these factors have?**
*Please comment below*

**PART 4: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**
For each of these questions please <mark>highlight</mark> your answer.

**In your view, is the remote learning of English different from the remote learning of other subjects?**
- Yes
- No

**[If yes…] How is learning English remotely different from learning other subjects remotely?** *Comment*

**In your view, are different kinds of support required for teachers, learners and parents to help develop effective remote learning of English, compared to other subjects?**
- Yes
- No

**[If yes…] How is the support for teachers, learners and/or parents different for English compared to other subjects?** *Comment*

**To what extent do you agree with these statements?**
*Please copy and paste the most appropriate agreement statement next to each statement about English language and teaching*
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree

- o Neither agree or disagree
- o Agree
- o Strongly agree

- Elements of language teaching such as developing speaking skills pose greater challenges for remote teaching and learning compared to elements characteristic of the teaching of other subjects
- Parents are more challenged in supporting their children's English learning compared to supporting learning of other subjects
- Compared to other subject teachers, English language teachers are more likely to organise live online classes and more likely in general to incorporate technology in their teaching
- In general, English language teachers benefit from more support through national teaching associations, and through communities of practice compared to teachers of other subjects
- The loss of learning with regard to English has been more significant than with other subjects; English should be prioritised in provision designed to recover loss of learning in the future

**What kind of support is most needed to facilitate new ways of teaching, learning and assessing English?**
*Please copy and paste the most appropriate priority statement next to each potential support for English teaching, learning and assessment*
- o Not required
- o Low priority
- o Medium priority
- o High priority

- Teacher training sessions around remote delivery skills
- Support for teacher communities of practice
- Non digital (alternatives to F2F) content for learners
- Digital content for learners
- Support for parents and learning from home
- Support for systems and processes: in-service CPD
- Support for systems and processes: pre-service CPD
- Support for systems and processes: curriculum development
- Support for systems and processes: assessment mechanisms
- Support for systems and processes: materials development

## PART 5: SEPTEMBER ONWARDS

**Please only select and rank your top four challenges. The remaining six do not need to be ranked (they will not be analysed).**
*Please identify the top four challenges and delete the remaining six. The four should then be ranked from 1 (top challenge) to 4.*

1. Catching-up lost learning
2. Measures to protect against Covid-19 infection

3. Ensuring access for all learners
4. Assessing students
5. Engaging with parents and caregivers
6. Preparation for a second wave of school closures
7. Integrating new ways of teaching and learning developed during school closure
8. Student well-being
9. School timetabling
10. Teacher well-being

## PART 6: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

**We featured some brief examples of practice in response to the impact of Covid-19 in our May snapshot. If you would like us to include any examples of effective innovative practice from your context, could we contact you directly for more details?**

- Yes
- No

**[If yes…] Please give a brief line or two about innovative practice(s) in your context.**

# Appendix 2: Key insights from the April/May snapshot

**Education systems' general response to the crisis:**

**School closure**

- At the time of submission of individual country responses all primary and secondary school systems in the 52 countries reviewed were closed, with the single exception of Taiwan

**Variety of response**

- There is variety in response to the impact of Covid-19 within and across regions. There are some indications as to the underlying explanations of this variety that emerge from the surveys: the extent to which alternatives to F2F instruction existed or formed part of an existing policy and practice of transitioning to virtual delivery prior to the crisis; the ability of Ministries of Education to draw on support from other organisations; clear plans (30% of education systems in the review had not published Covid-19 response plans at the time their submission) and communication practices; effective centrally-led teacher support systems; effective networks of practitioners able to support each other with the skills most relevant to remote delivery; existing levels of teacher competence in relation to online delivery. As example indications they provide some insight into the relative positions of education systems in Europe, East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa compared to those in Middle East and North Africa, and provide the basis for a more targeted approach to the deployment of resources in support of remote delivery

**Synchronous and asynchronous learning, non-digital alternatives to F2F instruction**

- Only a quarter of the education systems reviewed were providing synchronous teaching of subjects, 80% were providing some form of asynchronous teaching, with a further 88% offering remote learning opportunities through TV, radio and print. The opportunity to interact in real time with a teacher appears as the most significant loss due to Covid 19, in this respect.

- With asynchronous teaching, TV and radio more widespread, evidence suggests that more focus on providing quality resources and guidance for these is needed not only to respond to future disruptions but also to carry forward benefits of home learning opportunities in combination with classroom learning

**Supporting teachers for virtual delivery**

- Although two-thirds of education systems were providing support for teachers to teach remotely, Ministries of Education have found it challenging to introduce teacher support systems to facilitate large-scale remote teaching. Education systems would seem therefore to need support in creating practicable teacher development opportunities and in creating a remote learning environment in which the systematic application of newly acquired skills can be effectively deployed

**Access**

- Despite 59% of Ministries of Education taking steps to address exclusion, half of the education systems reviewed reported challenges around access to and equity of education provision during the crisis. This was the most frequently reported challenge, with connectivity, cost of data and availability of device representing the factors impeding access. Support therefore needs to be directed towards a better understanding of these barriers and to solutions designed to overcome them, to include effective remedial teaching and accelerated learning once schools reopen for which 37% of Ministries of Education were planning for at the time of the submission of the response

**Assessment of learning**

- Assessment issues confront education systems in all regions. This suggests a need for a fresh look at forms of assessment that are more flexible; covering public exams, teacher assessment of learning and assessment in a remote delivery setting

**Online safety**

- Only one-third of respondents stated they provided online safety guidance. One possible conclusion from this is that faced with the necessity to respond quickly to minimise loss of learning, insufficient attention has been paid or insufficient understanding has been developed to quantify and mitigate risk associated with the digital learning environment

**English teaching and learning in the crisis**

English language teaching seems to be no more or less supported during the crisis compared to other subjects, with over 70% of Ministries of Education having no specific plans for the continuation of English language teaching and learning in particular.

However, there are suggestions in individual responses of trends and challenges that require further discussion and exploration:

- English language teachers benefit from more support through national teaching associations

- Compared to other subject teachers English language teachers are more likely to organise virtual live classes and more likely in general to incorporate technology in their teaching

- Elements of language teaching such as developing speaking skills pose greater challenges for remote teaching and learning compared to elements characteristic of the teaching of other subjects

- Parents are more challenged in supporting their children's English learning compared to supporting learning of other subjects – which confirms another trend from the review that more needs to be done to support and incorporate the role of parents during and beyond the Covid-19 crisis