

Reimagining Girls' Education

Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies

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Acknowledgements

This publication was initiated and coordinated by the UNICEF Education Section, Programme Division. Its publication benefitted from the expertise and guidance of Ingrid Sanchez-Tapia, Takudzwa Kanyangarara, Omar Robles, Wongani Grace Taulo, Linda Jones, Sagri Singh and Robert Jenkins.

Sincere gratitude goes to our technical partner, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and our financial partner, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), without which this publication would not be possible.

The writing team included Silvia Guglielmi, Nicola Jones, Susan Nicolai, Paola Perezniето, Georgia Plank and Nhung Vu (ODI); Ingrid Sanchez-Tapia (UNICEF); and Alasdair Mackintosh (FabInc).

We are grateful to the Technical Reference Group for providing invaluable insight and detailed comments which have shaped this publication. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Adriana Vogelaar (UNICEF); Aisling Falconer (UNICEF); Alison Joyner (Plan International); Cecilia Baldeh (UNICEF); Chrissy Hart (Together for Girls); Christelle Cazabat (IDMC); Dana T. Cristescu (UNICEF); Ellen Al Daqqa (UNHCR); Emilie Rees Smith (UNGEI); Fabiana Maglio (UNHCR); Farida Aboudan (Educate A Child); Giulio Andrea Franco (UNICEF); Jackie Strecker (UNHCR); Jennifer Roberts (UNHCR); Jorge Ubaldo Colin Pescina (GPE); Lauren Gerken (INEE); Lisa Ewertson (Plan International); Manan Kotak (ECW); Mario Spiezio (ECW); Noemi Robiati (UNICEF); Peter Darvas (World Bank); Rebecca Telford (UNHCR); Sébastien Hine (Consultant); and Laura Davison (INEE). Additionally, gratitude is due to Dominic Muntanga, Farida Aboudan and Kateryna Shalayeva, who gave their time to discuss experiences of girls' education in emergencies from UNICEF Zimbabwe, Educate a Child and UNICEF Cameroon, respectively.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Paul Atherton (FabInc) for his strategic review and input. In addition, we thank the following members of the ODI team: Joost Vintges for research assistance; Ajla Nebi and Malgorzata Pollard for editorial support; Natasha Wright for project management; and Ottavia Pasta for initial infographic design.

The report was copyedited by Mary Jo Frederick and designed by Roberto Rossi, whom we thank for their tireless work.

Published by UNICEF
Education Section
Programme Division
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

www.unicef.org/education

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

February 2021

Cover photo: © UNICEF/UNI366077/Bos

ISBN: 978-92-806-5212-3



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I. Orientation and Introduction

1. Why focus on girls' learning opportunities during emergencies

Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies presents an empirical overview of what works to support learning outcomes for girls in emergencies. Research¹ shows that girls in emergencies are disadvantaged at all stages of education and are more likely to be out-of-school than in non-emergency settings.¹ Girls are also struggling to learn: in fact, it is estimated that **by 2030, one in five girls in crisis-affected countries will not be able to read a simple sentence.**²

This solutions book seeks to highlight promising evidence-based actions in education for decision makers who are designing and implementing interventions to support girls' education in low and

middle-income country humanitarian settings and settings where education has been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It documents practical examples of approaches that have been or are being tested, and from which lessons can be drawn.

The overarching aim is that this evidence be used to inform programming in crises and support diverse stakeholders in mitigating the impact of emergencies on girls' education.

2. Document organisation

Part II of *Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies* has four sections. The first three sections align with the foundational programming principles of education in emergencies. These programming

principles, which promote learning outcomes for girls, have been adapted for use in the COVID-19 pandemic and complement other education-in-emergencies resources (see also Part IV, Complementary Standards and Resources). A fourth section offers real-life examples of programme costs and value for money.

The four sections provide a sequenced package of considerations and promising practices in the planning, design and implementation stages to support the continuity of girls' learning in emergency settings.

Each section provides a concise, user-friendly review of the evidence, along with critical area and essential actions checklists.

i. In 2019, approximately 20% of primary school-age girls in crisis-affected countries were out of school, compared to 16% of primary school-age boys and 3% of girls in non-crisis countries. This worsens as girls age, with 52% of adolescent girls of upper secondary school age in crisis-affected countries out of school, compared with 46% of boys and 29% of girls living in non-crisis contexts.

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1. Promoting gender-responsive and inclusive planning

Section 1 focuses on considerations to ensure equitable and gender-responsive education during the planning of emergency preparedness, response or recovery activities. It also highlights how girls' meaningful participation in planning educational responses can provide opportunities for change.

2. Strengthening gender-responsive distance education provision and learning outcomes

Section 2 examines distance learning modalities and highlights evidence-based programmes, differentiating between no-tech, low-tech and high-tech approaches to promote continuity of learning for girls in emergencies.

This section illustrates how, unless carefully planned, distance education can exacerbate gender inequality and highlights key steps to mitigate this possibility. Section 2 also reveals how a gender-responsive curriculum can address discriminatory gender norms that impede girls' learning and includes approaches to support digital literacy and STEM.

3. Leveraging social protection strategies to reduce financial barriers to ensure that girls remain learning during emergencies and can eventually return to school

Section 3 explores social protection approaches, especially "cash plus" approaches, that address financial and other social barriers and enable girls to continue learning in emergency settings. While the evidence of direct effects on learning is limited, there is evidence that these approaches enable continuation of learning opportunities, a necessary pre-requisite for learning.

4. Understanding programme costs and how to get value-for-money

Section 4 focuses on how information on costs from successful programmes is vital for equitable targeting.

3. How can you make the most of this solutions book?

The solutions book *Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies* distills a wide range of evaluation literature evidence into a user-friendly format with accessible summaries of key aspects and drawing on evaluations of past and ongoing successful girls' education in emergencies programmes. It provides a menu of evidence-based solutions to support learning outcomes and continuity of learning for pre-primary, primary, and adolescent-aged girls in a variety of emergency contexts. In essence, this solutions book supports users to identify elements for making decisions that effectively respond to the needs of girls in emergencies and prioritize their learning. The promising practices presented here are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they are intended as illustrations of what has worked at certain junctures in the education cycle for different groups of girls in diverse low and middle-income emergency contexts. Features that have enabled the success of these interventions are highlighted, and each section provides references to a wide range of sources and guidance materials.

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4. Methodological approach

The methodological approach of *Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies* is akin to a rapid evidence review. For each section, we identified a cross-cutting set of dimensions to explore in both grey and peer-reviewed evaluation literature. A range of practices were identified that either provide robust evidence of impact or show promise and innovation. Given that there is always a publication lag with robust evaluation evidence, the authors also consulted UNICEF country offices as well as a reference group of girls' education experts from UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, NGOs and researchers for suggestions of additional promising practices, including emerging practices in the COVID-19 context.

As the evaluation evidence emerges in the coming years from these experiences, the intent is that this solutions book be approached as a living document and periodically updated.

For the purpose of this solutions book, a "promising practice" is defined as a practice that is relevant and effective and has shown either successfully documented impact or evidence of potential for advancing girls' education in emergencies. In documenting promising practice, evidence of impact on girls' learning outcomes is the priority. While not all practices target girls exclusively, all provide evidence of positive impact on girls' education in emergencies. The solutions presented in this solutions book are not comprehensive, but they provide a good sample of initiatives that have shown positive effects on girls' learning outcomes from both low-income and middle-income countries.

Iraqi pupils wearing protective masks walk to school on the first day of the new academic year in the northern city of Mosul, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



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5. Key terms

The following list of key terms can be used to navigate the three sections of this solutions book.

| Key terms | Definitions |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Asynchronous teaching | Teaching and learning that happens at different times and in different places (e.g., recording lectures and having students respond on their own time). |
| Blended learning | When traditional classroom teaching and learning approaches are complemented by self-directed (often remote) learning, where learners can practice and progress at their individual pace, on their own time and in different places. |
| Cash plus | Interventions that combine cash transfers with one or more types of complementary support. Types of complementary support can consist of (i) components that are provided as integral elements of the cash interventions, such as the provision of additional benefits or in-kind transfers, information or behavioural change communication or psycho-social support, and (ii) components that are external to the intervention but offer explicit linkages and/or referrals to services provided by other sectors. |
| Cash transfers | A transfer (either regular or one-off) corresponding to the amount of money a household needs to cover, fully or partially, a set of basic and/or recovery needs. The multi-purpose cash can contribute to meeting a Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) or other calculation of the amount required to cover basic needs but can also include other one-off or recovery needs. Cash transfers may be unconditional or conditional, i.e. provided on the basis of a household fulfilling certain stipulations, such as ensuring children's school attendance. |
| Child marriage | Any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties is under 18 years of age. |
| Disaggregated data | Statistical and qualitative information that is separated and nuanced into multiple dimensions including by sex, age group, geographic location, migratory status, disability, etc. |
| Distance education | An educational process where all or significant proportions of the teaching is carried out by someone or something physically removed from the learner. Distance education requires structured planning, well-designed courses, special instructional techniques, and organizational and administrative arrangements. |
| Distance learning | A system and process that connects learners to learning resources. Distance learning can take a variety of forms, but all distance learning is characterized by (1) physical separation between instructor and learner and among learners; and (2) interaction between the learner and the instructor, among learners, and/or between learners and learning resources conducted through one or more communication channels. |
| Education technology (EdTech) | Technologies that are used in education – in ministries, schools, communities and homes – and includes digital technologies and processes as well as non-digital technologies such as radio and television. |
| Data-driven gender analysis | The process of using qualitative and quantitative data disaggregated by sex and other factors to identify and understand existing gender disparities as well as gender-biased norms and practices related to access and learning for girls and boys. Data-driven gender analysis provides more disaggregated and nuanced data regarding what is happening and why it is happening. Data analysed through a gender lens provides critical evidence that can be used to inform programme design, implementation, partnerships, monitoring and reporting to accelerate results in gender equality in education. Gender analysis should be integrated into education sector assessments and responses. |

5. Key terms (cont.)

| Key terms | Definitions |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Gender norms | “Rules” and expectations about how men and women should be and act that are learned and internalized early in life, setting up a life-cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping. Some gender norms may serve to enable certain children, based on their gender, to be enrolled in school, attend school regularly, complete their schooling and learn effectively when in school, while other gender norms may serve to hinder or prevent certain children, based on their gender, from ever being enrolled, from attending school regularly if they are enrolled, from completing their schooling and from learning effectively when in school. |
| Gender-based violence (GBV) | The most pervasive yet least visible human rights violation in the world, it includes physical, sexual, mental or economic harm inflicted on a person because of socially ascribed power imbalances between males and females. GBV also includes the threat of violence, coercion and deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private. In all societies, women and girls have less power than men over their bodies, decisions and resources. Social norms that condone men’s use of violence as a form of discipline and control reinforce gender inequality and perpetuate GBV. Across the globe, women and girls, especially adolescents, face the greatest risk. ³ |
| Gender-responsive | Programmes and policies that acknowledge and consider women’s and men’s specific needs. ⁴ Gender-responsive programming includes two critical processes: 1) identifying gender norms, roles, and relations; and 2) taking actions to reduce the harmful effects of these gender norms, roles, and relations. ⁵ |
| Gender equality | The concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. |
| Gender equity | The process of being fair to women and men, girls and boys and importantly, the equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination. It refers to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms or differences between the sexes. |
| Gender neutral | Anything – a concept, an entity, a style of language – that is unassociated with either the female or male gender. Unfortunately, the nature of systemic, embedded or internalized bias is such that what is often perceived as gender neutral is in fact gender blind. |
| Gender transformative | Approaches that address the causes of gender-based inequalities and work to transform harmful gender roles, norms and power relations, tackling the root causes of gender inequality and moving beyond self-improvement among girls and women to redress power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gender inequalities. |
| Labelled cash transfer | The process by which humanitarian agencies ‘label’ or ‘name’ a cash intervention in terms of the outcome they want to encourage, e.g. cash for shelter, or cash for food but without enforcing compliance. This may be accompanied by behavioural change communication activities to influence how recipients use their cash assistance. |

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5. Key terms (cont.)

| Key terms | Definitions |
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| Learning outcomes | Learning outcomes are statements of what students are expected to know, understand, and be able to do and the values they are expected to develop. Learning outcomes are an important foundation for the assessment and examination system and help clarify what students should learn based on national and international standards. ⁶ |
| Learning teams | Collaborative teams focused on improving education outcomes in the classroom, within schools, and at all levels in the system to result in more effective teaching and better support for inclusion, on-the-job learning, and motivation. |
| Transferable skills | Also known as life skills, 21 st century skills, soft skills, or socio-emotional skills allow young people to become agile, adaptive learners and citizens equipped to navigate personal, academic, social, and economic challenges; transferable skills include problem solving, negotiation, managing emotions, empathy, and communication. They support crisis-affected young people to cope with trauma and build resilience in the face of adversity and work alongside knowledge and values to connect, reinforce and develop other skills and build further knowledge. ⁷ |
| Social protection | The range of policies and programmes needed to reduce the lifelong consequences of poverty and exclusion. Cash transfer programmes, for example, include child grants, school meals, skills development and more to help connect families with health care, nutritious food and quality education to give all children, no matter what circumstances they are born into, a fair chance in life. ⁸ |
| STEM skills | Subject-specific skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, as well as a broader skill set including thinking laterally, problem solving, innovating, using and creating technology and science-based solutions. ⁹ |
| Synchronous teaching | Teaching and learning that occurs simultaneously but not in the same place. It often refers to online learning that happens in real time via digital, video, audio or online forums. |

II. Key Considerations, Promising Practices and Checklists

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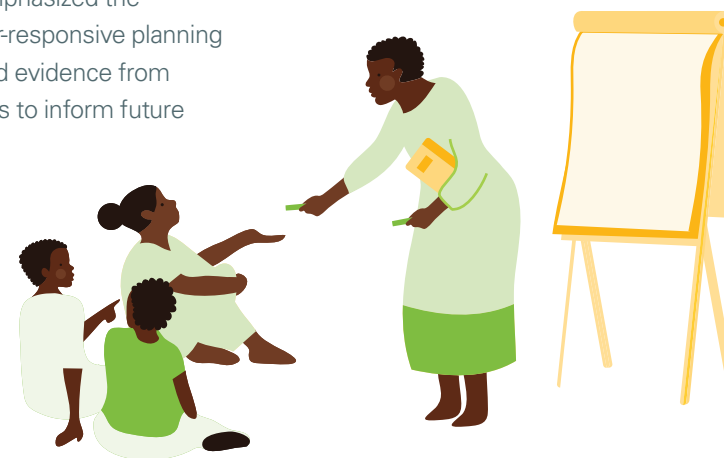
1. Promoting gender-responsive and inclusive planning of emergency response in education

a. Overview

This section includes mechanisms to ensure equitable and gender-responsive education during the planning of emergency preparedness, response or recovery activities in any low and middle-income country (LMIC) setting. It highlights how the participation of girls and communities in education in emergency response planning provides essential insights to develop interventions that are relevant, that elicit engagement, and that are sustainable over time.

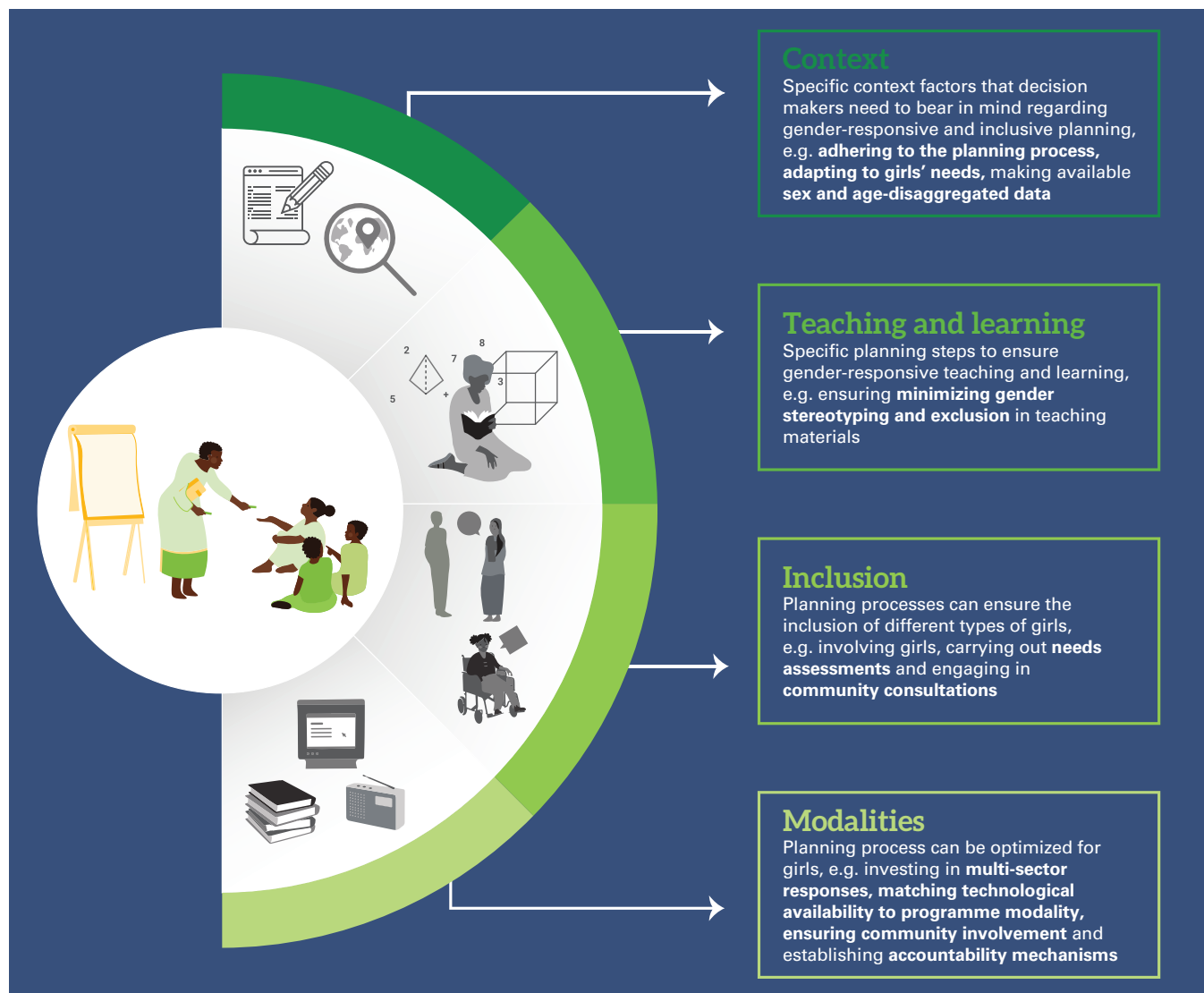
Given the dearth of case study evidence related to gender-responsive planning of emergency response to ensure continuity of learning for girls during emergencies, this section presents relevant insights that inform different levels of planning during emergency response and preparedness. Particular focus is given to the key considerations for local decision-makers and planners, although some decisions underpinning effective responses need to be undertaken as part of national level planning.

This section draws on several policy guides¹⁰ that have emphasized the importance of gender-responsive planning and have incorporated evidence from previous emergencies to inform future interventions.



b. Key considerations

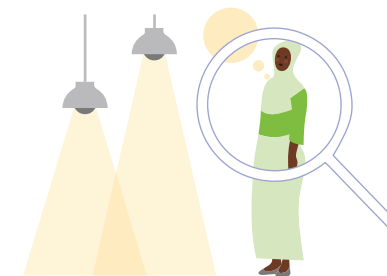
Throughout this solutions book, we address four key dimensions when presenting programmes and good practice on gender-responsive and inclusive planning of emergency response to ensure continuity of girls' learning.



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| Context | Gender-responsive planning tools should be structured around the planning process in emergency contexts. | Planning needs to be adaptable to needs emerging in crises contexts, e.g. heightened time, poverty facing girls, and higher risks of some forms of GBV. | It is critical to collect and use disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data (sex, age, school grade, ethnicity, socio-economic, and disability barriers) to inform planning. | In the Somali Girls' Education Promotion Project (SOMGEP), ¹ CARE's monitoring and evaluation system explored gender-focused disaggregated data, identified data "blind spots" and invested in qualitative research and community-led tracking of over 1,200 girls to understand patterns and appropriate responses. |
| Teaching and learning | Analysis and planning must include an explicit aim to minimize stereotyping and exclusion in teaching materials and practices. | | | In Uganda, resistance to girls' education was challenged by working with refugee and host communities through the project Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (ERP), ² which improved facilities at schools for girls and worked with female teachers, increasing awareness of safeguarding issues. |
| Inclusion | Gender-responsive planning that incorporates evidence and girls' own voices on girls' diverse vulnerabilities is important. | Invest in gender-responsive vulnerability assessments in consultation with girls to ensure a focus on girls' diverse needs (e.g. migrant girls, rural vs urban, in-school and out-of-school) | Experts and community leaders/ groups and girls themselves, need to be consulted to inform planning and minimize risks to girls. | Sierra Leone's Pikin to Pikin Tok ³ radio education programme had a gender-responsive planning approach, drawing on contextual evidence of girls' increased vulnerabilities. It included educational content to inform girls, their families, and the community about the risks girls face, how to overcome them, and the importance of ensuring girls continue school. |
| Modalities | Approaching challenges faced by girls through multi-sector responses is essential, not optional. | Based on a needs assessment and an understanding of barriers to access high- tech modalities, diverse, low- tech modalities, such as radio, and printed material can address gender biases. | Ensure all stakeholders are engaged and aligned with objectives and aims. Clear commitments to gender equality in the design of interventions, including indicators to measure results for girls, must be prioritized. Gender-responsive budgeting and accountability mechanisms must be considered. | The Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) ⁴ in Afghanistan engaged with the government to ensure principles and practice were aligned with guidance. This helped address traditional cultural practices that prevented girls from attending state school, such as domestic work and/or perceptions that girls do not need education. The financial support of global donors was critical to AEPs' success. |



1. Care. (2020). *Somali Girls' Education Promotion Programme – Transition (SOMGEP-T)*. Care. www.care.org/our-work/education-and-work/education/somali-girls-education-promotion-programme-transition/

2. Plan International. (2019). *Left Out, Left Behind: Adolescent girls' secondary education in crises*. Plan International. www.planinternational.nl/uploaded/2019/06/Left-out-Left-behind-report.pdf?x65987

3. Child to Child & the Pikin-to-Pikin Movement. (2016). *Final evaluation of the Project: Increasing Access, Retention and Performance in Primary Education*. Child to Child & the Pikin-to-Pikin Movement www.childtochild.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/FINAL-Evaluation-Report-21April2017-Institute-for-Development.pdf

4. Ritesh Shah. (2017). *Case Study Report: Children in Crisis Afghanistan*. AEWG. www/inee.org/system/files/resources/AEWG-Case-Study-Report-Afghanistan-Children-in-Crisis.pdf

c. Promising practices

Below, we highlight promising practices showing the variety of issues for consideration when planning for girls' education in crisis. Foresight is crucial: when gender guidance is already in place, gender-responsive education programmes are attainable as part of emergency response.

The examples emphasize the need for flexibility on the ground to adapt to the local context when providing education to girls during times of crisis.

Gender-responsive emergency response planning to address girls' low participation at school.

To ensure that school participation is improved, interventions must be sustainable, flexible, and create circumstances that enable new behaviours and norms. Involving girls and communities at the planning stage can allow their concerns and narratives to inform emergency response planning and help address the barriers that may be preventing girls from continuing in school during emergencies.

The first promising practice, KEEP from Kenya, works closely with the girls

and the community to champion girls' education. In the second example, from Uganda, planners work closely with schools and communities to identify and address needs.

Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP)

Implementer: World University Service Canada (WUSC) and Windle International Kenya (WIK)

Funding: DFID provided funding of 18.3 million USD¹¹

Country and target population: Marginalized girls aged 14–20 including refugees and female head of household in Dadaab and Kakuma, Northern Kenya

Intervention type: Community engagement through a network of 52 community mobilizers

School level: Upper primary and secondary

Type of context: Refugee, COVID-19

The KEEP¹² network involves full-time staff to communicate with families and the wider community on the importance of girls' learning. KEEP staff were also trained to engage with male religious and local political leaders to sensitize them on girls' education and with the aim of encouraging them to champion the girls' agenda. KEEP trains role models, including young Kenyan refugee women who relocated to Canada to pursue higher education. Role models dedicate their time to returning to refugee camps to share their experiences and recount their educational journeys.

Impact: At the project mid-point, there was already a 13 per cent increase in parents who believed in the transformative power of education for girls.

Context suitability: low-income contexts with restrictive gender norms

Providing Emergency Education to Refugee and Host Community Girls and Boys in Adjumani and Yumbe

Implementer: Plan International and Dubai Cares

Country and target population: Refugee families and host communities in Uganda

Intervention type: multi-factor school level support and community engagement

This programme¹³ addressed demand and supply side barriers faced by adolescent girls through engagement with schools and communities through a cross-sectoral response. Interventions included constructing sex-segregated latrines, providing teaching and learning materials and providing gender-responsive teacher training. Attention focused on engaging school management committees, parent/teacher associations and students to raise awareness in communities of the importance of girls' education, meaningful participation by girls, and developing girls' sustainable and applicable skills. This programme also included a component on engaging adolescent boys as advocates for gender equality.

Impact:¹⁴

- Improved school attendance of children, especially girls and marginalized children in primary schools
- Improved quality of educational environment of targeted primary schools
- community-based groups and management structures are gender equitable, aware and accountable

Context suitability: low and middle-income displacement contexts

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Gender-responsive planning tools

Programme managers must use appropriate and gender-responsive planning tools from the start. These tools need to incorporate data and information on the specific needs of girls in the emergency context and have mechanisms to identify additional and emerging needs through consistent assessments that are informed in part by girls themselves. The example below provides details of one such tool.

Girls' participation in planning emergency response

Girls' participation in informing the planning of emergency response is essential to ensure responses are effectively addressing their needs in a way that benefits them. Their voices should be systematically heard. There is a critical gap in the evidence base when it comes to promising practices that analyse girls' participation in education in emergencies.

Gender-responsive planning in practice

In some of the more extensive interventions, there can be many partners involved. To enable a two-way approach from the top-down and the bottom-up, there should be flexibility and engagement with all actors working on the ground to establish standard practices and address issues that could be preventing girls from accessing their education. The Girls'

Education Support Program illustrates how this works in practice.

Gender Equality Programming (GEP) in Emergencies in Education¹⁵

The GEP is a gender-responsive planning tool which seeks to systematically apply gender equality in the field with clearly communicated measurable actions to ensure effective evaluation. The needs assessment component ensures a safe and effective programme. Gender analysis identifies the barriers and gender gaps to ensure relevant actions. The results of assessment should be integrated into activities and the outcomes should capture all change, both equal and unequal, for all students.

Context suitability: low and middle-income contexts

Aga Khan Foundation Girls Education Support Program – Flexible Response Fund

Implementer: Aga Khan Foundation

Country and target population: Girls of school age in Afghanistan: Bamyan, Baghlan and Badakhshan provinces

Intervention type: Flexible funding improves girls' school attendance

This good practice¹⁶ illustrates the importance of flexibility at the point of planning to account for unforeseen issues when providing education to girls during times of crisis. The Flexible Response Fund (FRF) was designed to increase girls' access to school and create an encouraging environment to keep them in school through both supportive teaching practices and the commitment of their communities to further their education. Based on a needs analysis, the FRF was used to plan for the transportation, accommodation and hiring of teachers. In five years, 629 physical rehabilitation or improvement projects have been carried out in schools, 178 qualified teachers (including 70 women) have received an incentive bonus to teach in remote communities, and transportation has been provided for 334 qualified teachers (229 women) to teach in girls' schools and for 743 girl students to return to school. In addition, the FRF helped 2,215 students (1,799 girl students) prepare for the Kankor exam, a university entry exam taken after Grade 12.

The impact of the FRF can be divided into two categories: 1) generating outcomes, such as enhancing enrolment and graduation rates, enhancing success in the university entrance exam and discouraging school dropout; 2) reducing barriers through improved infrastructure, increased numbers of teachers (particularly female teachers), strengthened teacher engagement with students and improved learning environment for gender equality in education. Findings show that student enrolment increased by approximately 59,000, including 28,998 girls, from 2009 to 2013 in grades 7–12. The FRF empowered staff on the ground to think strategically and to consider the local context when making decisions. It enabled more classrooms, toilets and boundary walls to be built, resulting in students having access to better resources. Staff were also employed to work with the communities to increase awareness of girls' education and to appraise the existing situation, identify issues, work out solutions and rationalize their choices. The impact of FRF on girls' enrolment and dropouts meant that many girls continued their education up to high school level and graduated. At the start of the project, 225 girls graduated from 192 schools. In 2013, 2,313 girls graduated from 216 schools. On average, FRF supported 10 communities (CDCs) in each region and allocated between \$500 and \$5,000 per annum depending on the needs of the community.

Context suitability: Low-income and conflict-affected contexts with low attendance and retention rates for girls in education.

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d. Checklist

The checklist below builds on key considerations outlined above and key lessons learned from the promising practices and provides guiding questions to assist in programme design and planning phases:

| | Key actions | Guiding principles |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Context | Disaggregated data collection and use for planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative and qualitative data considers access to resources by gender, age, school level, disability and socio-economic constraints to guide planning <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed-methods tools (quantitative, qualitative and participatory) are used to collect data from girls for planning and monitoring gender-responsive interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Data and analysis acknowledges the specific needs of girls in emergencies |
| | Gender-responsive needs assessment, resources | <input type="checkbox"/> A gender-responsive needs assessment is conducted as part of emergency response <input type="checkbox"/> Needs assessments inform activities planned for the education response to the emergency. Programmes and their outcomes consider all potential changes for girls and are prioritized based on impact, sustainability and value for money <input type="checkbox"/> Planning draws on the expertise of local community organizations on gender-based barriers to girls' education and trusts in the community <input type="checkbox"/> Challenges faced by girls are identified in coordinated multi-sectoral responses (including education, e.g. access to technology, risk of early marriage, care burdens, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs assessment considers safety risks for girls |
| Teaching and learning | Support for teachers and changing stereotypes | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning resources are screened for gender stereotypes that could bias teaching <input type="checkbox"/> The chosen programmatic approach supports all education personnel, specifically female teachers and school administrators |
| | Participation of girls in education in emergencies planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Girls and the community, particularly women, are involved in important decisions concerning the school and in strategies to guarantee their participation |
| Inclusion | Girls' specific vulnerabilities identified and included in planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Girls are consulted in the process leading to strategies and plans to prevent risks, including the risk of GBV <input type="checkbox"/> The whole school community (students, all school staff, wider community, and education authorities) is engaged in the approach to reducing risks for girls, particularly School-Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) <input type="checkbox"/> Programmatic responses consider how to address the burden of unpaid care work, digital gaps and heightened GBV risks for girls <input type="checkbox"/> Information campaigns for returning to school/alternative forms of education (e.g. remote learning) are disseminated through channels accessible to girls |
| Modalities | Evidence-based gender responsive planning that incorporates girls' own perspectives | <input type="checkbox"/> Girls are consulted effectively and inclusively to address gender inequalities in distance learning plans and plans to reopen schools <input type="checkbox"/> Response plans include clear, practical and realistic gender commitments for interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention includes channels for communication and joint planning with all relevant government authorities to ensure that gender-responsive principles and practices are aligned <input type="checkbox"/> Response plans include channels for gender experts or relevant community members who can provide inputs |
| | Budgeting and accountability | <input type="checkbox"/> The intervention considers gender-responsive budgetary planning for the implementation of the intervention, including resources to address barriers faced by girls <input type="checkbox"/> Accountability mechanisms are considered that reflect the contextual reality and allow for the examination of a variety of responses to implement commitments to girls |

e. Conclusions

- Planning gender-responsive approaches that respond to contextual realities can improve access and demand for girls' education in emergency contexts. A gender lens should be applied at the beginning of any girls' education in emergencies planning process, regardless of crisis. Because times of crisis can create impetus for quick and efficient change, it is critical to maintain flexibility within planning, particularly in crisis contexts where many of the fastest responses must take place at the local level.
- Collecting and using disaggregated data that considers at least gender, age, school grade, disability status, ethnicity and socio-economic status is central to more effective, evidence-based planning as well as to monitoring processes and results. Data collection methods must be robust and adapted to contextual needs. The cost of conducting surveys and needs assessments that consider the needs and situation of girls must be factored into education response budgets.
- Mapping out all stakeholders (girls, all school staff, communities, authorities) to confirm that everyone is aligned with programme aims and objectives will promote acceptance of the intervention. Community buy-in is essential, so the time and cost of community and girls' engagement need to be accounted for in emergency response proposals, response plans and budgets.
- Engaging in gender-responsive education planning that meets girls' needs must be both top down and bottom up. Family and community-wide participation are essential to identify possible barriers and inform interventions, ensuring that they are contextually relevant, socio-culturally appropriate, and responsive to specific needs. Support from international actors with experience in flexibly implementing programmes on the ground can help implementation move forward in emergency contexts.

- Insisting that girls' voices are heard, engaged with and involved in programmes from the very start not only aligns with girls' rights, but it is also a central principle of effective and sustainable planning.

Jyotsna Ben tries to help her daughter Hinal to cope up with online studies while schools are shut during COVID-19 in Khodiyarnagar, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.



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2. Strengthening gender-responsive distance education provision and learning outcomes

a. Overview

The growing interest in distance education accelerated in March/April 2020 when school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic sparked an unplanned and immediate transition to remote learning for over 1.6 billion children and youth worldwide.

Although distance education has existed for decades, new technologies such as offline digital tools and online and multimedia technologies present the possibility of more innovative methods to reach the “hardest to reach.”¹⁷

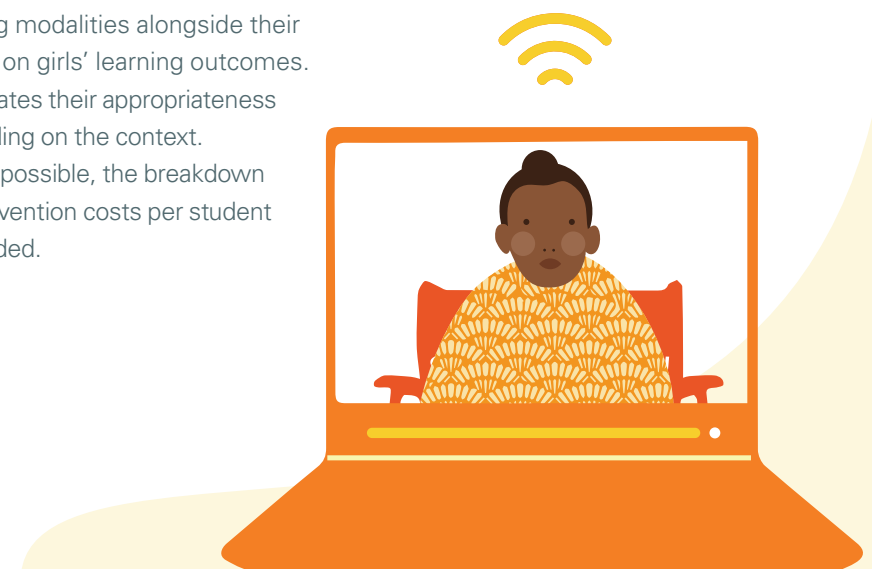
Distance learning modalities are not limited to emergencies and have the potential to improve learning outcomes and promote continuity of learning for girls.¹⁸ However, unless carefully planned, distance education can exacerbate educational inequalities,¹⁹ and result in ‘hardware dumping’,²⁰ despite evidence²¹ showing that tech-hardware interventions alone do not enhance learning outcomes.

In designing and implementing distance education, programmes must also account for the barriers that girls face in accessing this type of education. A gender-responsive remote learning curriculum will need to be at the core of distance learning, address gender norms²² often precluding girls from accessing education, and provide safe remote psychosocial support to girls.

Gender-responsive pedagogies adapted for distance learning can help girls develop the breadth of skills²³ they need to challenge gender norms, fuel their empowerment, and participate in their communities on equal footing. Evidence²⁴ of distance education approaches targeted towards gender-transformative interventions suggests that programmes should take an integrated approach, incorporating both digital and non-digital elements. Interventions that include some communication components and blended modalities achieve stronger

impacts.²⁵ Effective programmes address both the barriers in accessing distance education and quality aspects, such as creating spaces for interaction and virtual safe spaces for reflection to engage girls and their gatekeepers, as well as men and boys and the broader community.

This section includes an overview of high-tech, low-tech and no-tech distance learning modalities alongside their impact on girls’ learning outcomes. It evaluates their appropriateness depending on the context. Where possible, the breakdown of intervention costs per student is included.

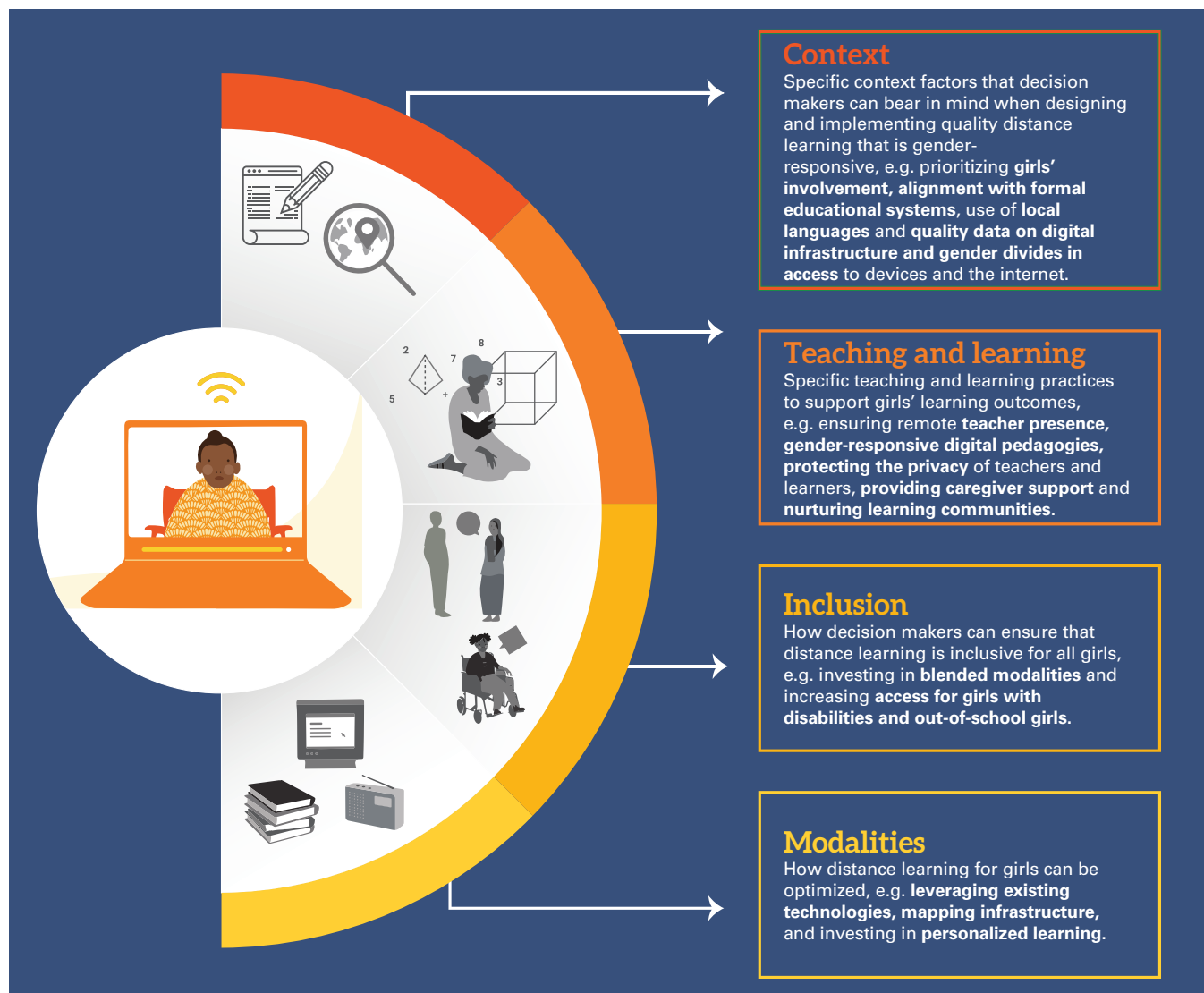


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b. Key considerations

Experience and evidence point to four key dimensions of effective distance education for girls in crisis contexts:



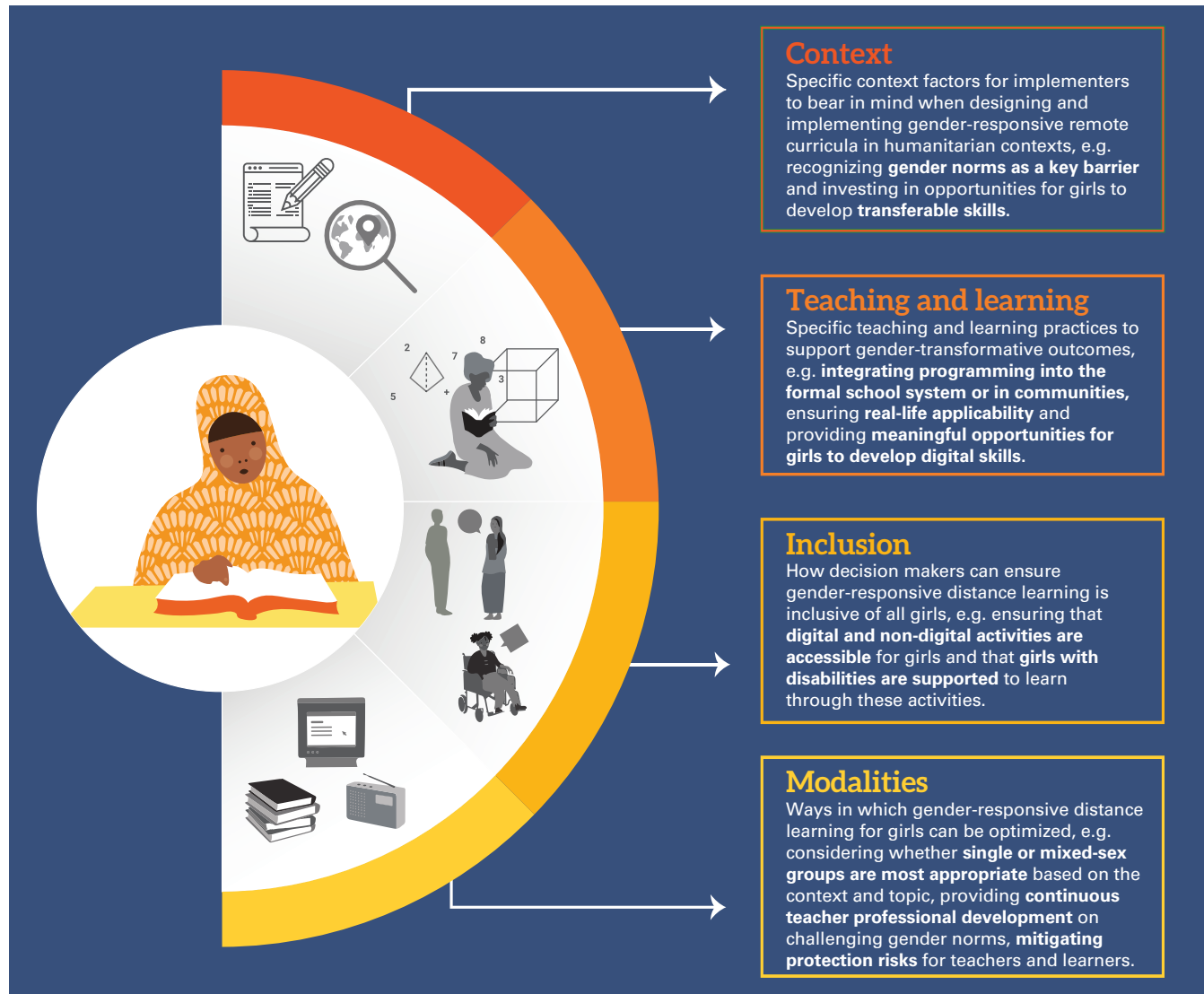
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| Context | User involvement in design can ensure that learner needs and specific contextual features are accounted for. | Embedding programming within existing formal education systems and aligning it to the national curriculum is the best way for distance education to reach girls, take programming to scale and support teacher professional development. | Use of local languages can help in contexts where minority ethnic languages are used. | Quality and disaggregated data regarding all parts of the system, from learners to infrastructure, is important in designing appropriate and equitable interventions. | In Lebanon, Jordan, Sudan, Uganda, Chad and Bangladesh, the game-based learning initiative Can't Wait to Learn ¹ is aligned to the national curricula and designed with children who write some of the content. An evaluation of the Mathematics Can't Wait to Learn programme in Lebanon showed that math mastery scores improved by 7% within 12 weeks. | |
| Teaching and learning | Distance teaching presence, including feedback between teacher and learner, promotes stronger learning outcomes and builds social and emotional skills. | Continued teacher professional development in gender-responsive digital pedagogies is key to ensure that planning and assessments are effective. The presence of female teachers is linked to improved learning for girls. | Protect privacy of teachers and learners in digital environments by securing data that is password protected and only viewable by programme staff. | The importance of parent and caregiver support to prioritize girls' learning is magnified when learning becomes home-based. | Cultivating learning communities that are nurturing and playful is especially important in the context of distance learning, where learners can feel isolated. | In Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia during COVID-19, through the Play Matters ² programme, refugee and host community children, caregivers and teachers have access to a 'play library', which includes image-based instructions to support learning through play. Play-based learning for pre-primary and primary learners can support building the skills for holistic development and mitigate trauma. |
| Inclusion | Mixed or blended models, including high, low and no-tech modalities, can address inequality and build resilience | Distance education approaches have the potential to increase education access for children with disabilities and further potential for distance education to reach out-of-school children (OOSC). | | | In 13 countries across sub-Saharan Africa, eKitabu ³ provides inclusive, educational content such as storybooks and edutainment videos. eKitabu improved accessibility for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and was able to pivot during COVID-19 by developing sign language videos to support early grade literacy for learners with disabilities. | |
| Modalities | Leveraging existing technologies is a better starting point than procuring new hardware. A mixed modality approach is likely to be most effective, combining elements of 'high-tech' and 'low-tech' with a safety net of 'no-tech' provision. | Map infrastructure and connectivity to determine appropriate distance modalities. | Adapt to learners' needs through personalised learning that delivers content to support particular characteristics and needs of learners (e.g. through mobile apps). | Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) ⁴ has been shown to produce significant gains in learning outcomes by teaching pupils based on learning needs rather than on age or grade. The TaRL approach adapted to the COVID-19 context in Botswana by delivering remote instruction by phone and simple SMS texts, and was found to result in cost-effective learning gains. | | |

1. War Child. (2020). *Can't Wait to Learn*. War Child Holland. www.warchildholland.org/projects/cwtl/
2. IRC and LEGO Foundation. (2020). *Play Matters*. IRC. www.rescue.org/playmatters
3. Ekitabu. (2020). www.ekitabu.com
4. TaRL. (2020). *Teaching at the Right Level*. www.teachingattherightlevel.org/

Key considerations in the same four dimensions also need to account for the barriers that girls face in accessing education in emergencies. The following domains should be considered for distance education programmes and gender-responsive remote curricula that aim to challenge gender norms, to provide girls with the breadth of skills needed to participate in learning equally, and to enable girls to continue their education safely:



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|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Context | Gender norms constitute key barriers for girls, including lack of investment by families, discriminatory treatment and pressures to marry as children. | Life skills programming, catch-up education activities and media campaigns tailored to the emergency context can help tackle gender norms that prevent learning. | | The Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) ⁵ project provided safe spaces in the form of out-of-school clubs for girls aged 11-21, including school dropouts and girls at risk of pregnancy. Within the context of the Ebola pandemic, ELA clubs offered fun spaces to socialize and receive life skills training and credit support and act as a partial substitute for school learning during closures. |
| Teaching and learning | Programmes can be integrated into the formal school system at primary and secondary levels or be community-based, depending on the target group. | Ensure teaching is grounded in real-life problems and issues, with real-life solutions. | Provide community-based digital skills training for girls through existing groups or new STEM clubs for girls; leverage devices they or their community have access to in order to increase digital empowerment. | During COVID-19, the Ghana Back to School national campaign ^{6,7} promotes girls' school return. The campaign disseminates guidelines on pregnancy prevention and re-entry of young mothers; provides communities with information on prevention of gender-based violence while schools remain closed; and provides psychosocial training to ensure the return of all children when schools re-open. |
| Inclusion | Ensure that both digital and non-digital activities are held at convenient times and accessible locations for girls, boys, and parents. | | Ensure that programming is informed by disability inclusion considerations, including empowering language (e.g. learners with disabilities), accessible medium of instruction and materials. | The Every Adolescent Girl Empowered and Resilient (EAGER) ⁸ project in Sierra Leone consists of a national radio show with BBC Media Action designed to transform harmful gender norms about girls' capabilities and to disseminate GBV prevention messaging to mitigate its anticipated increase during COVID-19. The project is aimed at marginalized adolescent girls, including girls who are pregnant, young mothers, married girls and those affected by Ebola. |
| Modalities | Decide on the context-appropriateness of girls-only, mixed-sex sessions, or a hybrid approach to maximize gender-transformative outcomes. | Investing in training of teachers or safe space facilitators is critical to support gender transformational change, as is identifying potential role models to act as mentors. | Mitigate protection risks linked to distance modalities, such as cyber-bullying or online sexual abuse. | Girl Shine ⁹ was developed specifically for use in humanitarian settings. It has an additional focus on safety, identifying risks and dangers and ensuring protective mechanisms are in place. A core component of the model emphasises establishing GBV response services before implementation to ensure there is a supportive environment for girls. |



5. Bandiera, Oriana et al. (2018). *The Economic Lives of Young Women in the Time of Ebola: Lessons from an empowerment program*. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31219>

6. Rachel Chuang, Tom Kaye, Caitlin Moss Coflan, Björn Haßler (2020). *Back-to-School Campaigns Following Disruptions to Education*. (EdTech Hub Helpdesk Response No 12).

7. Cover Note for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Request (2020). www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2020-04- COVID-accelerated-funding-Ghana%20Updated%20Proposal%20May%202020%20final.pdf

8. Emily Boost (GEC), Nicola Jones (GAGE) and Christina Kwauk (Brookings Institution). (2020). *Life Skills for Adolescent Girls in the COVID-19 Pandemic*. GEC. <https://www.odi.org/publications/17296-life-skills-adolescent-girls-covid-19-pandemic>

9. IRC. (2018). Girl Shine. Save the Children. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/girl-shine>

c. Promising practices

The following section provides illustrations of promising practices in distance education in emergencies, categorized according to their technology needs, which are relevant and effective to support girls' learning outcomes and tackle gender norms.

While not all of the case studies target girls exclusively, all include gender-disaggregated evidence of impact or gender-responsive considerations useful for both decision makers and practitioners. While we categorize the interventions based on technology use, real-world programming will be a mix of these, with many using a blended approach.

Open Educational Resources (OER) are an example of a blended approach, where learning content is made available in repositories designed for different user interfaces. This includes basic content repositories, such as OER Commons,²⁶ Global Digital Library²⁷ and African Storybook Library;²⁸ content repositories, which offer more structure and scaffolding, such as Rumie;²⁹ and more interactive and adaptive platforms such as the Learning Passport,³⁰ Khan Academy³¹ and Moodle.³² Any of these can be used to some extent across different levels of technology by teachers and learners.

i. No-tech practices:

Print and paper-based education programming

Printed or paper-based distance education solutions remain a foundational approach for delivering effective, low-budget remote learning to girls in emergencies in places where girls do not have access to digital devices. For learners who do not have access to either the hardware, charging capacities and/or network connections required for low- and high-tech interventions, paper-based materials can serve as the primary resource for remote learning. Where there is partial access, paper-based materials can supplement resources in combination with TV, radio, mobile phone and other digital interventions. This applies to all levels of education.

It is feasible to develop and take to scale a core package of printed materials³³ that supports continuity of learning for primary-age and adolescent girls at different stages of their learning, provided that the intervention caters to specific barriers faced by girls during emergencies and that the materials are easy for teachers or facilitators to adapt to the specific learning levels and needs of girls.

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Children at the Bibi Amina Girls High School in Panjshir, a province in the North of Afghanistan, are excited with their new UNICEF school kits.



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Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Educational Success II (STAGES II)

Implementer: Aga Khan Foundation, Save the Children UK, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Aga Khan Education Services and AEPO/

Target population: 25,000 marginalized girls in primary and lower secondary

Intervention type: Paper-based learning

School level: Primary and lower secondary

Type of context: COVID-19

Population: approximately 25,000 marginalized girls

The STAGES II³⁴ project began providing printed materials to girls for self-study, and remotely trained teachers with skills and strategies to support struggling students. Teachers liaised with parents and set up weekly check-in calls with girls to support their learning and help them study challenging topics. Additional support to children with disabilities has promoted access to remote learning material and ensured that adapted approaches are inclusive.

Impact: Working in close collaboration with girls, parents and teachers, continuity of learning was ensured during COVID-19. As a result of the programme adaptations, rapid assessments³⁵ found 99% STAGES II supported girls continued to engage with learning during the pandemic. The high rates of adherence to remote learning shows that there is demand for remote learning adapted to the needs of girls and that the programme was successful in meeting this demand by providing simple printed material for home-study. Teachers and school committees were also engaged in providing guidance and motivation for girls to continue their foundational learning. Moreover, results demonstrate that the safe distribution of printed material during school closures along with gender norm programming prioritizing girls' education in the home space was beneficial to marginalized girl learners. 97% of parents interviewed by CARE indicated that their adolescent daughters would return to school once schools reopen.³⁶

Context suitability: low-income countries, fragile state contexts, very restrictive gender norms

Keeping Girls in Education through COVID-19

Implementer: Educate A Child (EAC) in partnership with Plan International Canada and Strømme Foundation

School level: primary – early secondary

Type of context: Ongoing crisis, now in the context of COVID-19

Geographic region: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger

Population: children in primary schools (aged between 8 and 12)

Type of intervention: Paper-based learning

Following COVID-19 school closures in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, the well-established PASS+ programme was adapted to the COVID-19 context with a learning pack and support from facilitators. PASS+ has two threads. The first thread uses the Speed School model, a nine-month long accelerated learning programme designed to provide a pathway back to education for out-of-school children between 8 and 12 years who have been out of school for more than two years. The second thread identifies a region with a high number of primary-school-age students who are not in school and establishes a Second Chance classroom of no more than 25 students and a teacher/facilitator in that region. In response to COVID-19, gender-responsive self-guided booklets were developed to provide learning continuity for girls enrolled in Speed Schools.³⁷ The booklets focused on reinforcing what children had already learned pre-pandemic rather than on teaching new content, with a focus on literacy and numeracy exercises and the inclusion of complementary educational games and activities aimed at psychosocial support.

Impact: Over 9,600 Speed School learners were able to benefit from this intervention that proved instrumental in learning continuity and avoiding/minimizing dropouts. 75% of learners successfully completed all booklet exercises. 90% of students (91% girls, 89% boys) took the end of year primary school placement exam and are on their journey to (re)integrate into the formal primary school system.

Context suitability: low-income countries, fragile state contexts, very low human development indicators, out-of-school children

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ii. Low-tech practices

Radio-based education programming

Interactive radio instruction (IRI) is an educational tool designed to deliver learning via interactive pedagogies in short audio segments, typically 30 minutes in duration. The learning clips can either be broadcast live on radio (IRI) or through Interactive Audio Instruction (IAI), where they are pre-recorded and delivered through a suitable medium (e.g. CD/MP3). The interactions are activities, games, songs, role-play and exercises that require participation and are supplemented by teacher guides and printed material (books, workbooks, posters and storyboards) to enrich the learning environment. Although IRI and IAI are more affordable than other technology-supported education, access to a radio or a CD player can still present a barrier to accessing this modality of learning for the poorest girls. In contexts of very restrictive gender norms, girls are not always able to access a radio at the key time, since they often must prioritize domestic chores. This needs to be accounted for when trying to reach the most marginalized girls in low-income countries and communities.

Evidence suggests³⁸ that educational radio can improve student learning outcomes in foundational subjects – including literacy, mathematics and social studies – when used to supplement formal classroom-based teaching and target out-of-school children, conflict-affected children and marginalized children.³⁹

Evidence⁴⁰ suggests that radio is likely to be more effective in teaching language-related topics than mathematics and is more engaging for younger children and those learners and parents who cannot read. Both girls and boys benefit from IRI and IAI, and girls with disabilities (visual or physical impairment) especially benefit from IRI. Though limited data exists, an analysis of IRI programmes in fragile states demonstrates large effects⁴¹ on student learning in mathematics, English and local language literacy. Moreover, creating simple teacher lecture content in clearly articulated segments delivered on radio – best suited towards a secondary-grade audience – may also be a cost-effective and rapid response in emergencies.

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Adawona Machakwa doing her school work which is being aired on radio in Malawi.



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Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Program (SIRIP)

Implementer: USAID and Education Development Center (EDC)

School level: Primary grades 1–5

Type of context: Conflict, natural disaster and fragile state

Population: Girls and boys in formal, non-formal, religious, and community schools, as well as out-of-school and displaced children

Type of intervention: Radio-based learning

Evaluations⁴² show that SIRIP advanced gender equity⁴³ through its outreach, training, and learning materials and was able to reach 131,901 girls (approximately 40% of beneficiaries).⁴⁴ Participating schools and learning centres were required to seek gender equity in enrolment, which meant raising awareness of the importance of girls' schooling. In IRI programme design, both characters and teaching objectives were explicitly named and designed to model girls' ability to do well in school and to encourage further study or potential careers. Teaching objectives required teachers to involve girls in classroom interactions, and the radio modeled teaching strategies aimed at improving girls' education. The cost of IRI programming is considered low compared to sourcing and delivering textbooks, constructing schools, or investing in ongoing teacher training.⁴⁵ Under the conditions of Somalia during SIRIP implementation, the cost difference between IRI and conventional classrooms was even greater.

Impact: First graders in SIRIP centres obtained higher post-test scores in Somali literacy and mathematics than first graders who did not take part in the programme in a 2007 assessment. In 2010, a study of the programme concluded that out-of-school learners in SIRIP centres grades 1–3 achieved equal or greater learning gains compared to children in formal schools.⁴⁶

Context suitability: low-income countries, fragile state contexts, countries in conflict where schools are limited, and access may be dangerous.

Supporting the Education of Marginalized (STEM II) Girls in Kailali, Nepal

Implementer: Mercy Corps, Good Neighbors International, UK's Girls Education Challenge

School level: Secondary

Type of context: COVID-19 school closures

Population: Marginalized girls

Type of intervention: Radio-based learning

As school closures and lockdown hit Nepal in March 2020, assessments⁴⁷ revealed that uncertainty related to exams and the lack of revision due to school closures were among the major causes of stress in girls and boys attending school. Partners quickly mobilized to provide radio-based revision classes⁴⁸ disseminated through three local FM stations due to lack of Internet, WiFi, computer or smartphone coverage. Although too early to measure the full impact of the radio class, anecdotal evidence⁴⁹ from students showed positive effects in helping them study during school closure. Girls were able to access the radio classes, which facilitated both exam revision as well as new content learning. The radio-classes were able to reach over 500,000 learners.

Context suitability: low and middle-income contexts necessitating a rapid escalation of distance learning (i.e. COVID-19 school closures)

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COVID-19 response, Malawi

Implementer: Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), UNHCR, Plan International, Yetu Radio

School level: primary, secondary and TVET education

Type of context: COVID-19 school closures

Population: Refugee and asylum-seeking girls

Type of intervention: Radio-based learning

This intervention⁵⁰ targeted refugee and asylum-seeking school-going girls aged 10 to 25 years living in and around Dzaleka refugee camp (Malawi) and tried to provide continuity of learning, health, protection, and overall well-being for girls during COVID-19 school closures. Teachers were trained to use different modes of distance learning, including radio, social media, and online platforms. Having identified an issue with girls' access to devices, JRS procured 24 smartphones and provided data bundles for secondary girls to continue their learning online. JRS also installed solar infrastructure in its Naweza Office to ensure a free and safe place for girls to charge their laptops and phones and study as needed. This led to an upfront cost of \$195 per girl, with \$30 a month running costs; however, these costs will fall noticeably if the scheme is extended or scaled up, as the cost-drivers of preparing the solar panels and buying the office desktops can be shared over more girls.

In conjunction, UNHCR provided 500 radios to candidate students at primary and secondary levels, and lessons were offered via radio. Homework and feedback were provided using WhatsApp with limited face-to-face sessions while observing strict COVID-19 protocols. JRS convened ongoing listening sessions with girls to understand their unique challenges, needs, and risks – including poverty, early marriage, unpaid care and chore burdens and gender-based violence – and how these risks were elevated because of COVID-19. As a result of understanding their daily challenges, the girls were supported by social workers, psychosocial counselors and a Mother Group to mitigate the barriers the girls faced in continuing education. The Mother Group was present when

the secondary school girls received smartphones to learn about internet safety. The Mother Group also conducted routine check-ins on girls' learning and well-being, distributed dignity kits and reinforced COVID-19 mitigation strategies.

Impact: Though not yet fully evaluated, this intervention was able to provide continuity of learning for girl beneficiaries during the 7-month COVID-19 school closure. Upon the reopening of schools, all the girl beneficiaries returned to school. Moreover, the COVID-19 sensitizations, PPEs distributed and observed bio-safety protocols were effective since none of the students tested positive for COVID-19.

Context suitability: low-income countries and isolated rural communities in middle-income countries necessitating a rapid escalation of distance learning (i.e. COVID-19 school closures); low and middle-income contexts with solidified partnerships willing to expand multi-modal digital learning.

Television-based education programming

Despite higher production costs compared to radio-based programming and less global reach⁵¹ than radio, television-based education programming has a successful history⁵² of offering distance learning. There are three major categories of TV-based education programming: live broadcasts, pre-recorded broadcasts, and edutainment. All three can be utilized to supplement and complement in-class learning in contexts where there is a lack of formal schools or during school closures.

Evidence⁵³ suggests that television-based educational programming can support learning in literacy and numeracy in low-income contexts. Programmes can encourage⁵⁴ children's letter

recognition, vocabulary and syllabification, as well as counting, number recognition and shape knowledge.⁵⁵ The most successful educational television programmes create clearly articulated, aligned, narrative and academic content for the learner.

Moreover,⁵⁶ several studies confirm that educational television also has the capacity to promote⁵⁷ learning outcomes beyond foundational skills, including gains in transferable skills such as cooperation, conflict resolution, positive attitude towards school and learning and peer relationships. For example, TV programmes that create or use characters with disabilities have been shown to promote positive attitudes towards individuals with impairments.

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Ubongo Kids

Implementer: Ubongo

Geographic region: 31 countries across Africa

School level: Primary and secondary education

Population: both in-school and out-of-school children

Type of context: COVID-19 school closures

Intervention type: Television-based and multi-modal programming

Using media and technology to promote educational content, NGO Ubongo⁵⁸ has created Ubongo Kids, catering to learners aged 7-14, and has reached more than 17 million viewers in 31 African countries. By creating high quality and contextualized edutainment, Ubongo traditionally delivers content via three diverse modalities: TV, radio and mobile phones. Ubongo Kids teaches STEM, transferable skills, gender rights, and creativity through stories and music. As part of Ubongo Kids, a series of financial literacy shows for girls were aired.

In the context of COVID-19, Ubongo has leveraged its existing partnerships and networks to ensure continuity of learning during school closures by tapping into a multitude of technologies to reach the majority of learners. In Tanzania, Ubongo Kids has partnered with the Tanzania Institute of Education to enable content for TV, community and national radio stations and online to expand outreach and maximize uptake in the country's most remote areas. In other contexts, Ubongo has been offering its content free of charge as well as coupling its edutainment with COVID-19 life-saving messaging. Daily home-based lesson plans and toolkits to structure learning have also been made available via Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as flash drives and WhatsApp. Ubongo is also procuring whole-family radio shows promoting play-based home learning as well as creating new content for marginalized learners, including refugees.

Impact: Although COVID-19 specific programming is yet to be fully evaluated, Ubongo's edutainment shows promise in learning outcomes, including 12% higher school readiness scores than

peers in control groups as well as major caregiver engagement in schooling. Ubongo programmes have been shown⁵⁹ to improve children's understanding of STEM subjects, financial and digital literacy, and gender equality. Qualitative research⁶⁰ studies found the series to successfully encourage girls' wellbeing, increase their confidence and promote a broad, applicable skillset.

Context suitability: Contexts with high rates of television ownership but limited in other devices/low internet coverage.

Children attend television classes in their home, in the village of Namborobakama, North of Côte d'Ivoire.



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II. Key Considerations, Promising Practices and Checklists

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Basic mobile phone education programming

The most common technology a household has access to is a basic mobile phone. Using basic mobile phones to improve learning outcomes and teaching practices has rapidly spread in the last decades, particularly in low to no-tech contexts and crisis contexts.⁶¹ The affordability of mobile phones, coupled with their increasing penetration into rural and conflict-affected areas, has enabled distance education interventions across the globe. Nearly every person in the world lives within reach of a mobile signal.⁶² Unlike TV and radio broadcasts, basic mobile technology can enable two-way interaction and facilitate teaching assessments and feedback between learners and educators.⁶³ However, both opportunities and constraints exist in terms of mobile phone access and equity, and these should be considered during programme design. While 71% of global refugee households own a mobile phone,⁶⁴ girls⁶⁵ are much less likely to have access, with caregivers acting as key gatekeepers.⁶⁶ Rather than consulting national aggregate statistics, disaggregating data by gender, age, location and migratory status will be critical in ensuring that no one is left behind.

Basic mobile phone features such as SMS texting and calling can be useful to nudge learners to continue their learning via other modalities,⁶⁷ for example by reminding learners and caregivers of scheduling times for radio or TV-based programming. During emergencies, leveraging existing SMS or phone call tutoring services can promote learner continuity, as can scaling down more high-tech environments to be adaptable to basic mobile technology. Finally, phone calls and texts can help to assuage feelings of learner isolation.

ENEZA Shupavu291 – SMS Study Tool

Implementer: World University Service of Canada (WUSC), Windle International Kenya (WIK), Xavier Project and ENEZA Education

School level: primary and secondary school

Type of context: conflict affected

Population: refugee girls in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps

Type of intervention: SMS study tool

ENEZA Shupavu291 is an SMS-based study tool that enables students to access revision material for all subjects via basic mobile phone technology. Users gain access to the full Kenyan curriculum, lessons, assessments and term papers, chat with a live teacher and search on Wikipedia via SMS. A personalized dashboard provides data on the progress of each student, enabling feedback. ENEZA Shupavu291 acts as an incentive to draw children to school, promotes continuity of learning

during school closures and provides after-school study. Using the platform does not require Internet connectivity. The ENEZA platform costs \$1.40 per student per month. This covers the cost of the SMS packages and implementation, such as travel costs for staff and stipends for community workers.⁶⁸ Impact results from the WUSC and Windle 2018/19 pilot implementation show that there is a positive impact of ENEZA when the exposure to the platform is high among girls and remedial teachers. Qualitative and observational data collected in 2019-2020 also highlights that parents' perception of the use of EdTech for girls has shifted, with reduced fears of learners using phones to access inappropriate content. Independent results from the Xavier Project and Eneza, who piloted the SMS tool in 2016 with 2,250 refugee boys and girls in Dadaab and Kakuma, demonstrated better performance on average than the other refugee primary school students.

Context suitability: low-income and conflict contexts where access to education for refugee children is low.

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iii. High-tech practices

Online e-learning education programming

Online e-learning education programming has the potential to simulate an in-person classroom experience most closely and allow for student and teacher interaction and multi-modal content delivery. Equity and access to infrastructure, however, are significant hurdles for far-reaching online learning environments. While 71 per cent of refugee households worldwide own a mobile phone,⁶⁹ only 39 per cent have internet-enabled phones, and the vast majority are covered by a 2G mobile network. Moreover, the proportion of men using the Internet is higher than the proportion of women using the Internet in about two-thirds of countries worldwide.⁷⁰ Rural households are also marginalized. For example, in Ethiopia, four of five rural children have never used the Internet.⁷¹ In most humanitarian contexts, online learning will exclude large groups of disadvantaged learners.⁷² Unless planned interventions account for and bridge access and equity challenges – addressing connectivity and devices – online learning may not always be a scalable modality in low and low–middle-income countries.

Learning Passport

Implementer: UNICEF, University of Cambridge, Microsoft

Countries: Somalia, Jordan, Ukraine, Timor Leste, Zimbabwe, Honduras, Lebanon; forthcoming in 20 countries

Target population: 5-18-year-old learners

Intervention type: Online learning platform

The Learning Passport⁷³ is a new e-learning platform that seeks to supply personalized, quality education for children and youth in emergencies who are either unable to access school or face a severe risk of not learning. The Learning Passport adopts a lightweight curriculum model for three core subjects (mathematics, science, literacy) as well as a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) component. The platform includes gender-responsive content in age brackets (starting as early as 5 years old), predominately in the following domains: gender equality, comprehensive sexuality education, preventing GBV, STEM for girls, financial literacy and economic empowerment. Targeting both girls and boys in its delivery, the Learning Passport is gender-transformative in scope. The Learning Passport supports Ministries of Education to curate open-source quality digital content that is age and context appropriate, gender responsive and conducive to learning, as well as to digitize and adapt local curricular content aligned with the national curriculum. A global library of resources is available which countries may use and customize within their own Learning Passport country websites. Within the tool, an intersectional approach⁷⁴ to accessibility that prioritizes gender, special educational needs and cultural considerations are ensured by numerous partnerships with content owners to identify and mitigate barriers to education while addressing learners' needs. The Learning Passport is currently piloting offline functionalities within the Rohingya community in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh to cater to low to no connectivity contexts.

Impact: Although the Learning Passport's impact is yet to be evaluated (launched in 2020), the detailed and comprehensive attention⁷⁵ to quality education in emergencies that fed into its design shows great promise. The costs of this are explored in more detail in Section 4.

Context suitability: low, middle and high-income contexts where access and quality barriers prevent refugee and migrant populations from gaining proficiency in foundational skills and learning continuity

Unlocking Learning digital course, Greece

Implementer: Akelius Foundation, UNICEF

Target population: Primary and secondary level refugee girls and boys

Intervention type: Blended course

The Unlocking Learning digital course uses technology in a blended way by combining digital modalities with face-to-face lessons to teach Greek to refugee and migrant children and youth transiting through Greece. Using a blended approach reaps benefits, especially in classrooms with learners from various levels who benefit from the personalized and self-paced use of the digital language course along with face-to-face interaction with teachers. Unlocking Learning was completely adapted for remote learning during COVID-19⁷⁶ and provided 6,412 learners across the country the possibility to continue their education. The digital component can be accessed online through a web browser or on a tablet or mobile phone, both online and offline.

Impact: A recent programme evaluation⁷⁷ found that the intervention successfully improved beneficiary learning outcomes compared to non-users: there was an 8% improvement in listening, 9% in reading, 25% improvement in speaking and 34% in writing. There were no statistically significant differences between boys and girls. The evaluation also found improved attendance and retention rates and improved confidence in learning for both genders.

Context suitability: low, middle and high-income contexts where language barriers prevent refugee and migrant populations from assimilating into host education systems

Smartphone education programming

As smartphones become more prevalent,⁷⁸ their use in distance teaching and learning becomes more appealing. Once the infrastructure is in place and devices are available, the biggest advantage of this technology is that it can be used anywhere and anytime, freeing up learning from rigid scheduling. That said, the infrastructure required can be onerous: learners must have access to smartphones, steady phone signals and Internet data or Wi-Fi to connect. Unless equity is carefully considered, a simplistic reliance on smartphones can deepen the gender digital divide.⁷⁹ In low and middle-income countries, women are 20 per cent less likely than men to own a smartphone, and in many countries also have less autonomy to purchase apps and navigate freely. Although digital literacy is also an important consideration, the poorest girls rarely have meaningful opportunities to develop these skills.

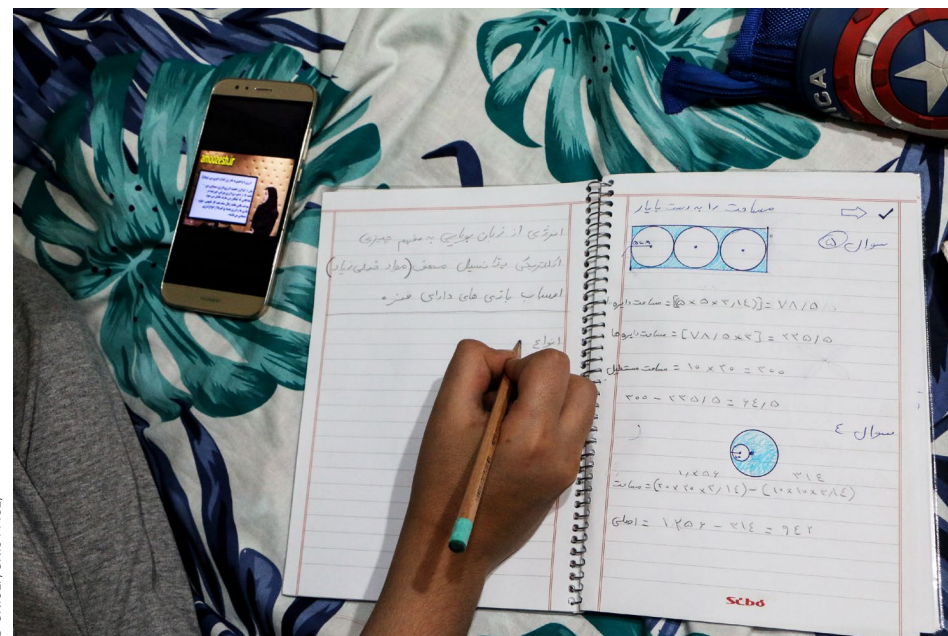
Smartphone programming can be particularly relevant for supplementing or complementing curricula and can cater to synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning. The major categories in this modality include sharing electronic teaching and learning materials, digital

educational apps and games, social media teaching and learning, and distance tutoring and coaching – the latter also a viable option for basic mobile phone programming. Research demonstrates that highly developed educational apps can help students learn foundational numeracy and literacy skills, and there are apps available⁸⁰ for nearly all curriculum subjects. Although some educational apps have positively impacted student learning outcomes,⁸¹ this has primarily been studied in blended-learning contexts,⁸² where educational apps complement traditional in-person learning. Research⁸³ also shows that the peer and teacher networks made available via social media through smartphones are vital components in supporting education outcomes in refugee contexts.

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Barbod, a 12-year-old, sixth grader in Ahvaz, Iran, downloads educational videos to a mobile phone and uses them to do his homework.



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Feed the Monster

Implementer: Curious Learning

Countries: Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq

School level: primary education

Context: conflict affected children in context of human mobility

Target population: Syrian children, out-of-school children

Intervention type: Smartphone game app

Feed the Monster⁸⁴ is an opensource digital gaming app that incorporates educational content or learning objectives into smartphone or tablet computer apps. Children enter the game by choosing an animal avatar who navigates the game based on small clusters of five to six letters each. Learners are introduced to a single letter, letter/vowel combinations, syllables, and letter sequences and are provided a series of learning games on each step. The monster offers feedback on correct and incorrect answers, and learners can progress to subsequent stages. The high degree of smartphone proliferation and connectivity across Syria means the uptake of literacy apps such as Feed the Monster is significant.

Impact: A 2018 impact evaluation⁸⁵ resulted in positive learning outcomes across all age groups and genders with a relatively low exposure of 22 hours. Absolute gains were more significant in foundational literacy (letters and syllables) and less in reading fluency. Children of all ages and genders were able to easily play with minimal or no adult supervision, giving them a sense of control and achievement. Both learners and parents liked the game and believed it appropriate to learning needs. Although boys scored higher than girls on all subtasks in the treatment group, in terms of overall gains, girls read more words per minute on the subtask at endline, while boys achieved higher gains on letter sound. The rate of change for girls was higher than boys on three out of four subtasks: Syllable Reading, Invented Word, and Oral Reading Fluency.

Context suitability: middle-income countries hosting a large proportion of out-of-school refugees and affordable 4G connectivity.

Worldreader

Implementer: Worldreader

Countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; plus, readers in a total of 53 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America

School level: Primary, secondary, post-secondary education

Intervention type: pre-loaded content multi-modal

Worldreader is a digital literacy programme delivered through e-books to students, teachers, and their families both in school via low-cost e-readers and preloaded tablets, as well as outside school via a dedicated Worldreader Smartphone mobile app. The programme has reached over 13 million learners from 2010 to 2019.⁸⁶ Through partnerships with organizations such as the Population Council and Pussycat Foundation, Worldreader supports marginalized women and girls with limited access to technology in East and West Africa. Through these initiatives, girls have shown increases in reading ability and self-reliance, giving voice to critical issues such as gender violence, family planning, and women's autonomy.⁸⁷

Impact: Evaluation evidence⁸⁸ shows the multi-faceted impact that Worldreader has had since 2010. In the classroom, Worldreader's e-reading solutions have helped to improve teacher capacity and pedagogy by providing them with access to books and supplemental teaching materials that they did not previously have. Although larger studies are necessary to draw conclusive findings, smaller-scale studies show that Worldreader has improved literacy outcomes among school-going pupils. Worldreader has also demonstrated positive results in creating a culture of reading. A study by UNESCO⁸⁹ found that Worldreader mobile users were reading more compared to non-users. However, the same study found that significantly more boys and men use the tool compared to women and girls, yet the women and girls who did access the library read almost three times more than their male counterparts. The cost per reader was \$2.83 in 2019. By cultivating relationships with local and global publishers, Worldreader has been able to procure e-books for its school and library programmes at tremendous cost savings – an average cost of US\$0.50 per digital book.^{90,91}

Context suitability: low-income contexts facing a significant supply shortage of textbooks and reading books in classrooms

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Tablet / preloaded content education programming

Not all high-tech solutions require a continuous Internet connection. Increasingly, new learning technologies and approaches allow pre-loading learning content on to tablets, smartphones or computers using an initial Internet connection to be later accessed offline. Therefore, learners will no longer have to depend on a steady and reliable Internet connection to access learning content. Often, these interventions also provide learners with tablet hardware equipped with pre-loaded learning content. In these cases, it is crucial to recognize the security risks⁹² associated with having tablets within homes and establish a plan for mitigating the risks of loss or damage to the device. Pre-loading educational content on tablets can provide out-of-school learners, learners in conflict and crises, and learners with insufficient learning resources with quality learning material.⁹³ While more research is required to confirm positive outcomes as well as its viability to reach scale, this modality seems particularly relevant⁹⁴ for marginalized learners.⁹⁵ The main objective of preloaded content is to compensate⁹⁶ for the lack of textbooks, resources, qualified teachers, classrooms or learning spaces.

Pop-Up Learning, Bangladesh

Implementer/ country: International Rescue Committee (IRC)

School level: primary – early secondary

Type of context: early onset crisis

Geographic region: pilot study conducted in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Population: out-of-school children (girls and boys) in crisis settings

Type of intervention: pre-loaded content / tablet-based learning

IRC Airbel Impact Lab developed and piloted Pop-Up Learning⁹⁷ in collaboration with partners Enuma (Kitkit School) and War Child Holland (Can't Wait to Learn). Pop-Up Learning is a tablet-based, interactive digital education programme to enable marginalized children to gain foundational numeracy and literacy skills according to their development potential without the need for a skilled teacher to guide them.

Impact: An observational mixed-methods study⁹⁸ found improvements in literacy, numeracy and social and emotional learning outcomes.

- **Literacy outcomes:** After four months of using Kitkit School, there was a positive increase of 0.21 ASER levels on average. The percentage of children unable to read words (Levels 0 and 1) decreased by 24 per cent. Further increases include 40.81 per cent of children reading words correctly (Level 2), 4.04 per cent of children reading a short Grade 1 paragraph correctly (Level 3) and 7.62 per cent reading a Grade 2 passage correctly (Level 4).
- **Numeracy outcomes:** Positive changes of 0.46 ASER numeracy levels on average were observed for children who used Can't Wait to Learn. At baseline, 80.3 per cent of children using Can't Wait to Learn could not identify

double-digit numbers (Levels 0 and 1). This percentage decreased by 46 per cent at endline, as children moved to Level 2 and successfully identified the numbers 10–99 correctly. A positive change of 0.33 ASER numeracy levels on average for children who used Kitkit School was also observed. At baseline, 83.3% of children using Kitkit School could not identify double-digit numbers (Levels 0 and 1). At endline, 46% of children moved to Level 2 and successfully identified the numbers 10- 99 correctly.

- **Social and emotional learning results:** Positive improvements in children's hope and agency after participating in 4 months of AL were observed. At endline, the percentage of children with low levels of hope and agency decreased by 5 percentage points and the percentage of children reporting high levels increased by 9 percentage points.
- **Impact on girls' learning:** Qualitative interviews with caregivers demonstrated that Pop-Up learning respected community gender norms, particularly that girls stay close to home and boys and girls learn separately. When Pop-Up learning sessions were scheduled in line with cultural norms and values, attendance was very high. Qualitative interviews with children, caregivers, facilitators and community members reported appreciating the home-based model for its ability to i) enable small group learning that is visible by caregivers ii) enable women and girls to stay close to home and iii) enable quiet and clean learning environments.

Initial scale projections estimate a cost per child of \$151 on a scale of 32,000 children reached, excluding indirect costs which will not be incurred during the scale-up phase.⁹⁹

Context suitability: low and middle-income conflict-affected contexts hosting large numbers of stateless or refugee children and adolescents and where access to formal education is limited

TIGER Girls (These Inspiring Girls Enjoy Reading), Jordan

Implementer: Open Learning Exchange, UNHCR Innovation, International Relief and Development

School level: Secondary

Type of context: Conflict-affected

Geographic region: Zaatari Camp, Jordan

Population: Adolescent Syrian refugee girls – in school and out-of-school

Type of intervention: Pre-loaded content / tablet-based learning TIGER Girls is a programme for adolescent Syrian girls in Jordan's Zaatari Camp launched in 2015 to decrease drop-out and encourage stronger academic performance and project-based collaboration. TIGER Girls is a community-based approach to learning that builds on Open Learning Exchange's (OLE) Planet Learning,¹⁰⁰ a digital system accessed through community learning centres that enable personalized learning for its users. Hardware costs to be factored in include approximately US\$35 OLE Raspberry Pi servers, US\$60 tablets and keyboards, all powered by low-cost solar panels.¹⁰¹

Impact: Harvard Graduate School of Education conducted a process evaluation¹⁰² of the TIGER pilot programme. Through qualitative interviews with programme staff and a focus group discussion with girl beneficiaries and observations, TIGER Girls was found to increase girls' motivation to attend and stay in school and study and increase generalized optimism. The provision of direct academic support to learning outcomes centered on practical community-based projects, coupled with strong relationships between coaches, the girls, and their families, has led to the intervention's success.¹⁰³

Context suitability: middle-income conflict contexts where implementing partners can count on strong EdTech partnerships and technical capacity in place; contexts with implementing partners who have the capacity to promote digital skills.

Can't Wait To Learn

Implementer: War Child Holland

School level: primary school

Type of context: conflict affected, COVID-19

Geographic region: Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Uganda, Chad and Bangladesh

Population: in-school and out-of-school refugee children and host-community children

Type of intervention: Pre-loaded content / tablet-based learning

Can't Wait to Learn (CWTL)¹⁰⁴ reaches hard-to-reach learners who are often marginalized and without access to traditional education methods. CWTL offers certified curriculum level content through a personalized gaming modality with the aim of improving foundational literacy and numeracy skills via tablet-based learning. Robust research and the inclusion of learner feedback in the design make CWTL a singular interface that offers co-created material. The gamified approach is based on the national curricula and tries to reinforce the skills needed to transition to secondary education successfully. CWTL offers personalized self-paced learning monitored by CWTL-trained teachers. CWTL adapted its programme to facilitate home-based learning during COVID-19 school closures.¹⁰⁵ Children were allowed to take home one tablet per household and access a one-time download link. SD cards were used to avoid reliance on the Internet. Teachers provided support via WhatsApp where available.

In Sudan, the programme expects children to work through the content in the maximum of a year, so cost is determined per-child-per year. The costs to deliver CWTL include centre construction and set up costs, kitting out and training staff, devices, and staff salaries. Fixed costs are estimated at \$15,527.40 per e-learning centre, which can support 60 children per year for three years. The project estimates additional average costs of \$148.40 per child per year based on the assumption that the child will attend for a full

12-month year. The overall average cost per child depends on a number of accounting decisions, for example, how long the construction lasts and how long the tablets last. The project has been quite conservative in terms of construction and estimates over a three-year timeframe, with an average cost of \$234 per child per year over this period.

The gamified approach engages boys and girls equally and strives to promote a gender-transformative learning experience. Importantly, CWTL tackles entrenched stereotypes and gendered learning, frequently taking boys and girls out of traditional gender roles in the game animation, showing girls playing football and female characters as doctors or motorcycle taxi drivers.

Impact: In Sudan, the CWTL platform is called E-Learning Sudan¹⁰⁶ and is implemented with the direct management support of UNICEF Sudan. Positive impacts on learning outcomes have been measured among out-of-school learners.¹⁰⁷ In Jordan, evaluations¹⁰⁸ found equal learning gains among in-school children receiving CWTL and children receiving the standard curriculum. In Lebanon, a baseline and post-intervention study found significant improvements in numeracy and psychosocial outcomes for out-of-school children which key informants attributed to the intervention. In terms of psychosocial wellbeing, in Jordan, CWTL positively impacted children's hope, while in Sudan it improved children's self-esteem and psychological wellbeing. CWTL anticipates reaching 300,000 children by 2023 based on already having reached 170,000 in existing countries in 2020.¹⁰⁹

Context suitability: low and middle-income conflict-affected contexts where schools are closed, or the path to school is dangerous.

d. Checklist

The checklist below builds on key considerations outlined above, and key lessons learned from the promising practices and provides guiding questions to assist in programme design and planning

phases. The checklist is intended to assist in selecting the distance learning interventions that can target diverse groups of girls at scale to successfully access learning during emergencies.

| | Key actions | Guiding Principles |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Context | Design alongside learners | <input type="checkbox"/> Input or support is facilitated by girls, boys, teachers, caregivers and education officials for co-creation of distance education interventions |
| | Align with the local context | <input type="checkbox"/> Content review is conducted to determine whether the distance education intervention supports learning prioritized in the national curriculum (e.g. foundational literacy and numeracy skills) <input type="checkbox"/> Distance learning intervention supports re-entry into the national education system <input type="checkbox"/> Key stakeholders and partners in the distance education project are determined to avoid overlap and redundancy and maximize collaboration and reach <input type="checkbox"/> Work with content owners to ensure that the learners' mother tongue is used to deliver educational content or to scaffold content and support to facilitate learning |
| | Use data to understand and respond to needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable baseline data on girls' literacy and numeracy and attendance and retention rates disaggregated by gender, school level, disability, location and migratory status is established <input type="checkbox"/> Gender divides in access and use of technology and gender-discriminatory policies or practices that could be at the root of these disparities is revealed |
| Teaching and learning | Develop and maintain a teacher presence while Ensure on-going teacher professional development | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote teaching presence is available <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that female teachers have access to professional development opportunities to develop skills on digital and distance pedagogies, contributing to their retention and promotion <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher remote presence is enabled: teachers engage in active listening, organizing structured lessons, facilitating question-based seminars, facilitating critical reflection and small group work; prioritize inclusive dialogue to check for knowledge and misconceptions <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance on gender-responsive distance learning and digital pedagogies is shared widely among teachers, especially those serving marginalized populations |
| | Engage parents or caregivers in the teaching and learning process | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for families' differing abilities and capacities to support distance learning in the home is planned <input type="checkbox"/> Materials are created with simple tips for caregivers to structure learning and info on radio, TV and online opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Caregivers and community leaders are supported to develop positive perceptions of girls' education conducive to supporting their learning |
| | Align curricula and use a variety of pedagogical methods to foster personalized, gender-responsive learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical support is provided to MoEs and teaching training institutes to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and tools to differentiate learning based on individual learning needs and student levels rather than grade or age <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and costs necessary to include role models as mentors for girls are accounted for when designing distance learning interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities are created for teachers and facilitators to critically examine their own attitudes on gender and to develop to use participatory sessions to support transformational interventions |
| | Invest in learning communities that are nurturing and playful | When designing remote learning interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> create a structured routine that is flexible and allows time for individual and small group connections to be made; interactivity can be enhanced by combining modalities or through teacher, peer, or parent interaction <input type="checkbox"/> include feedback mechanisms so that learners and parents can ask questions and seek guidance |

d. Checklist (cont.)

| | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| Inclusion | <p>Deliver content through multiple modalities to address the digital gender divide and sociocultural norms</p> | <p>When conducting a needs assessment to inform emergency response, gather the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> modalities being used for distance education <input type="checkbox"/> IT infrastructure proliferation <input type="checkbox"/> specific challenges that girls face in this context <input type="checkbox"/> impact of harmful social or gender norms on girls' attendance and learning <p>When designing interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> use adequate approaches to mitigate barriers to girls' learning rooted in gender norms <input type="checkbox"/> give sufficient consideration to gender dimensions in the timing of distance education; for example, cater to girls' preferred time to learn amidst other household responsibilities they may have <input type="checkbox"/> use pedagogical approaches such as culturally-responsive learning, promote do-no-harm principles and do not reinforce harmful gender stereotypes |
| | <p>Prioritize accessibility for inclusive learning</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learning materials are reviewed and adapted with a lens to reach learners marginalized by language, disability, or displacement <input type="checkbox"/> An intervention including the distribution of either technological devices or other forms of learning material is perceived as fair and equitable by all beneficiaries <input type="checkbox"/> Choosing or designing an intervention as part of emergency response includes careful consideration of connectivity and charging capacities in the target community |
| Modality | <p>Make use of existing technologies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine if data is available on girls' ownership and use of devices and participation in technology-supported learning <input type="checkbox"/> If high-tech and low-tech infrastructure is not routinely available, work with government and communities to determine whether or not it is appropriate for hardware to be sourced and distributed <input type="checkbox"/> Interventions include mitigation plans for gender-divides in access and use of infrastructure |
| | <p>Select interventions and platforms most conducive to girls learning</p> | <p>Privilege interventions and learning platforms that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> allow for student-level differentiation <input type="checkbox"/> provide safe spaces where all girls feel safe (emotionally and physically) and can develop and exercise their leadership skills |
| | <p>Include changing gender norms as an objective in remote learning interventions</p> | <p>When designing and intervention and planning its implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> determine early how the specific planned transferable skills activities are expected to bring about changes in gender norms <input type="checkbox"/> make sure that the selected interventions combine different types of activities to improve girls' self-confidence and self-sufficiency, health including SRH, education and social connectedness <input type="checkbox"/> rely on research and programme evaluations to determine the adequate duration and intensity of girls' (and, if relevant, boys') participation to bring about changes in attitudes, gender norms and practice |

d. Checklist (cont.)

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Safeguarding | Protect individual privacy through how data are acquired, used, stored and shared | <input type="checkbox"/> Data about teachers and learners are adequately and safely collected, used, stored and shared; protecting children’s privacy and safety is the priority <input type="checkbox"/> Plans to manage data are clear and transparent to all users <input type="checkbox"/> The minimal amount of sensitive information is collected |
| | Mitigate protection risks, in person and online (e.g., cyber-bullying, online sexual abuse) | <input type="checkbox"/> Potential online and/or tech-related risks might be associated with the modality of remote learning that has been selected are determined early on, and measures are taken to mitigate identified risks <input type="checkbox"/> Interventions account for potential risks and backlash to targeting girls in distance learning programmes <input type="checkbox"/> A safeguarding policy exists that identifies reporting procedures if an incident occurs |
| Reach and effectiveness | Plan so as to maximize feasibility of rollout and scaling | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication is in place between government institutions, international agencies, schools, community groups, and families for the distribution of distance learning materials and monitoring channels <input type="checkbox"/> A supportive enabling environment for girls is created by engaging with girls’ families and the wider community <input type="checkbox"/> Resources and capacity required to scale up the project to the desired number of students and teachers are determined to maximize the benefits of gender-responsive learning interventions |
| | Do not forget to think through pathways for sustainability of outcomes | <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor costs from the planning stage through implementation to create a clear and transparent breakdown of project costs, essential to facilitate scale up and government buy in <input type="checkbox"/> ‘Hidden’ costs are considered and mapped, such as airtime, data bundles or device maintenance in the project budget <input type="checkbox"/> A medium to long-term plan is created to integrate the approach into the formal or non-formal education systems |
| | Include metrics linked to learning in MEL plans | <input type="checkbox"/> A plan is created for monitoring and maintaining equitable access to distance learning throughout the intervention’s duration <input type="checkbox"/> Different metrics in MEL plans are included, such as learning outcomes and number of learners reached |

e. Conclusions

- Distance learning can be implemented both during and beyond emergencies; however, while distance learning has the potential to promote learning outcomes for girls, there is limited application and evidence for its targeted use in strengthening girls' learning continuity.
- Unless carefully planned, distance education can exacerbate educational inequality given the various starting points, capacities and resources available for different groups; all efforts should be made to focus programming aimed at girls who are most marginalized in order to narrow gaps.
- There are a range of modalities that can be used in combination across no-tech, low-tech and high-tech approaches, including print-based learning, radio, television, mobile phone programming, online learning, smartphone and tablet-learning, and caregiver support.
- To bring about changes in gender norms, a gender-responsive remote curriculum must be at the core of distance learning.

- Engaging parents, communities, and boys and men, who have a big role in supporting girls' education and empowerment will be critical to ensure a lasting impact.
- The use of distance learning has dramatically increased with the COVID-19 pandemic, with an unplanned and immediate transition to distance education for over 1.6 billion children and youth worldwide. Significant levels of distance learning will likely continue following the end of the pandemic.

Primary school children in a learning centre where they use iPads for studying at Mchoka Primary school in Central Malawi.



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II. Key Considerations, Promising Practices and Checklists

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3. Leveraging social protection strategies to reduce financial barriers to ensure girls remain learning during emergencies and can eventually return to school

a. Overview

This section provides an overview of social protection strategies to reduce financial barriers to support girls' continuity of learning in emergency contexts during school closures and to facilitate their return to school when schools re-open.¹¹⁰ The starting premise is that overcoming financial barriers to ensure girls' continuity of learning is a necessary but not sufficient condition for promoting better learning outcomes for girls. Social protection strategies under consideration include cash transfers and "cash plus" approaches, school stipends and school feeding programmes, as well as linkages to multi-sectoral social protection (e.g. health insurance) and messaging to promote investments in girls' education.

Household income¹¹¹ is considered to be among the strongest predictors of

children's educational attainment, and while there is disagreement in the literature¹¹² regarding the potential of different forms of cash transfers (i.e. conditional, unconditional or labelled cash transfers) in fostering child and youth development, compelling evidence¹¹³ demonstrates a strong correlation between household receipt of cash transfers and/or school stipends and school enrolment and attendance. A recent meta-evaluation¹¹⁴ found strong evidence that cash transfers have robust links to girls' educational access: six of the ten most effective interventions with robust impact evaluation evidence involved some form of cash transfer or stipend.

Robust evaluation findings¹¹⁵ on the links between social protection interventions and learning outcomes is limited, especially in emergency contexts,¹¹⁶ and where it does exist, the picture is mixed.

A meta-evaluation of interventions to enhance girls' learning outcomes featured only one cash transfer programme (a gender-focused uniform subsidy programme in Pakistan) among the ten most effective interventions.

The evidence base on school feeding programmes¹¹⁷ and access is quite established, but the evidence linking school feeding and learning outcomes is very limited.¹¹⁸ For the purposes of this solutions book, we integrate school feeding programmes only into considerations of complementary programme interventions.

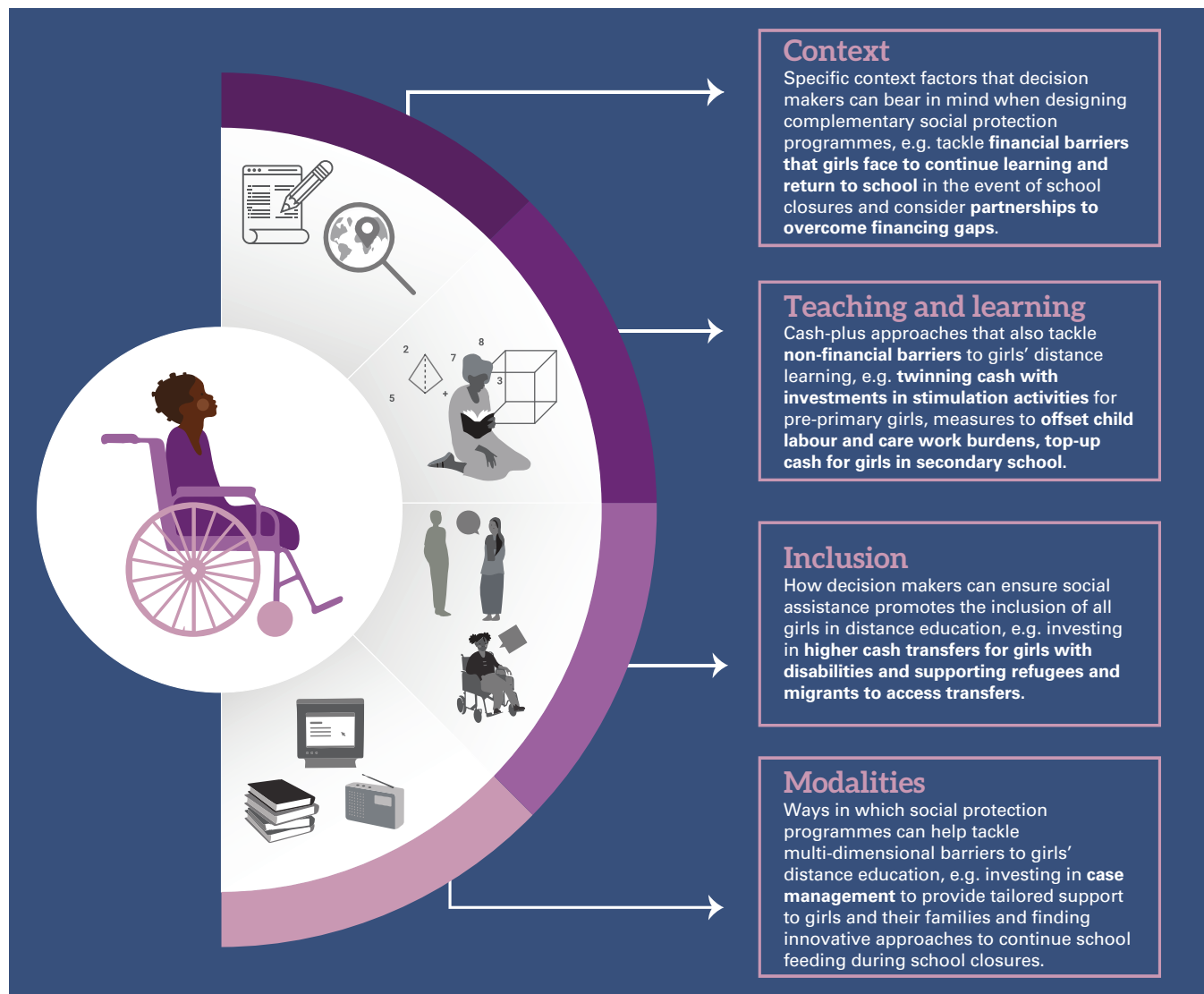
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b. Key considerations

Experience and evidence point to four key dimensions in harnessing the potential of social protection programming to support effective distance education for girls in crisis contexts:



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| | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Context | Social protection interventions can reduce financial barriers for girls in accessing distance education and allow them to continue to learn during school closures in both LICs and MICs. | Social protection can also support girls' eventual return to schools. | Social assistance is affordable in both LICs and MICs, but the financing gaps are greater in LICs, requiring support from development partners. | UNICEF Jordan's Hajati ('My Needs') ¹ labelled cash transfer for education provides monthly cash transfers to all school-aged children in vulnerable households, both refugees and vulnerable Jordanians in host communities. The programme includes linkages to complementary protection and referral services delivered through the Makani one-stop centres for children and adolescents. |
| Teaching and learning | To promote pre-primary educational access for girls, consider linking cash transfers with services to encourage parents to invest in stimulation activities with children. | Support families with cash transfers or stipends to offset risks of child labour and care work burdens for primary and secondary school-going girls. | Consider top-up cash for secondary school-going girls where risks due to age are greater. | The Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) ² provides cash transfers to marginalized girls who struggle to attend school, including refugees and female household heads. The programme aims to keep girls in school for as long as possible to attain at least functional literacy and numeracy and to be safe and supported at school and at home. |
| Inclusion | Given additional costs incurred by learners with disabilities (esp. assistive devices and materials), consider providing higher value transfers to support the learning of girls with disabilities. | Support migrant and refugee girls and their families to access social assistance. | | The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer programme ³ includes a focus on children in post-conflict Northern Ghana where they are more likely to be out of school than in other regions, and where gender gaps and ethnic disparities persist. LEAP provides cash payments to extremely poor households, including those with OVCs, and to family members with disabilities. The cash is labelled to incentivize enrolment of school-going age youth. |
| Modalities | Where possible, link cash transfer programming with a case management approach to provide girls and their families with tailored support to overcome multi-dimensional vulnerabilities. | Given that food insecurity can be an important barrier to learning during emergencies, combine cash transfers or school stipends during school closures with school feeding replacements, e.g. food baskets or food banks or community-provisioning of meals. | | During the COVID-19 pandemic, to compensate for the disruption of school feeding programmes, government and UN actors (i.e. WFP, FAO and UNICEF) have set up collection points for distributing food baskets ⁴ to families to support students' food security and nutrition during school closures. |

1. Natali, Luisa; de Hoop, Jacobus (2020). The Difference a Dollar a Day Can Make: Lessons from UNICEF Jordan's Hajati cash transfer programme, Innocenti Research Report. UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, Florence. <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Policy-Report-Lessons-from-Unicef-Jordans-Hajati-Cash-Transfer-Programme.pdf>

2. Stephanie McBride. (2019). The Kenya Equity in Education Project: Cash transfers for education in prolonged refugee contexts. UNHCR. <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/kenya-equity-education-project-cash-transfers-education-prolonged-refugee-contexts>

3. de Groot, R., et al., Heterogeneous Impacts of an Unconditional Cash Transfer Programme on Schooling: Evidence from the Ghana LEAP Programme, Innocenti Working Paper no. 2015-10. UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, Florence. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/iwp_2015_10.pdf

4. WFP, FAO, UNICEF (2020). Mitigating the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Food and Nutrition of Schoolchildren. WFP. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000114175/download/>

c. Promising practices

The following section provides illustrations of promising practices in social protection that are relevant and effective to support girls' learning continuity in emergency settings. The examples selected range from conditional to unconditional cash transfers and are implemented by diverse actors – national governments, multilateral or UN agencies, and NGOs – at varying scales. They include programmes that target only girls and both girls and boys.

Social protection programmes exist at all income levels. The programmes considered here span both middle and low-income country contexts, with middle-income countries spending more as a share of their GDP.ⁱ Often, their implementation depends on political will to identify the requisite fiscal space and to prioritize.

The first promising practice is the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) conditional cash transfer designed to support refugee girls' education, focusing on girls from female-headed households.

Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP)

Implementer: World University Service of Canada

(WUSC), UK aid-funded Girls Education Challenge, Windle International

School level: Upper primary and secondary

Type of context: Refugee, COVID-19

Geographic region: Dadaab and Kakuma, Northern Kenya

Population: Marginalized girls aged 14-20, including refugees and female-headed households

Type of intervention: Conditional cash transfer to tackle financial barriers to girls' education

The programme¹¹⁹ provides cash transfers to marginalized girls to promote school attendance among refugees and girls from female-headed households. It aims to support up to 20,000 marginalized girls to continue in education, gain functional literacy and numeracy skills, and feel safe and supported at school and home. Targeting is based on a

vulnerability index that includes girls at risk of dropping out of school, orphans, child-headed households, protection issues and performance. Girls are provided with a cash transfer to reduce the financial barriers of regular school attendance and support transition to the next grade level. The programme offers multiple disbursement platforms to support accessibility, including mobile money. Where girls are underage, parents or guardians are selected to receive the cash transfer on behalf of the girl. Given the disruption caused by COVID-19 outbreak, flexibility on cash disbursements was introduced to ensure continued support during lockdowns.

Impact: Of the 2,996 beneficiaries included in an impact evaluation, the programme improved attendance rates among targeted cohorts by 70% and achieved a 90% transition rate to the next grade.

Context suitability: middle and low-income country contexts hosting large numbers of refugees for protracted periods

Two more examples are large scale government-implemented initiatives aimed at tackling financial barriers to girls' education in post-conflict settings.¹²⁰ In South Sudan, the Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) programme combines a focus on providing cash to facilitate girls' enrolment and retention with investments in schools to improve education quality. In Ghana, the

Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) provides cash support to families to overcome education disadvantages as well as access to public health insurance.

i. Middle-income countries spend approximately 7–9% of their GDP on social protection, whereas on average, low-income countries spend less than 1%, with an estimated financing gap of 3.5–4% of GDP.

Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS)

Implementer: UK aid, South Sudan Ministry of Education and Instruction, Cambridge Education, Embassy of Canada

Target population: Girls in primary and secondary school

Type of intervention: Unconditional cash transfer

The GESS programme^{121,122} provided 295,000 girls with cash transfers aimed at improving girls' access to education as part of a post-conflict recovery initiative. The cash grants to schools were used to support school management bodies to identify and improve the quality of education services to enhance girls' learning outcomes. A key feature identified for success was the South Sudan Schools Attendance Monitoring System, a near real-time data management information system which gathers information on individual pupil enrolment and attendance. It is designed for fragile contexts, where physical access is difficult and where there are limited resources and low connectivity. A follow-up programme is working to tackle girls' low secondary school enrolment rates, girls' school drop-out and retention, and support learners with disabilities to access education.

Impact: The programme provided cash transfers of relatively low value (£18 per year) compared to those provided in other relatively similar programmes but contributed to an increase in girls' enrolment of approximately 6% over four years (2014-2018).

Context suitability: low-income contexts where there is guaranteed multi-year funding and political will on the part of the government, including investments in information management systems.

Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer, Ghana

Implementer: Republic of Ghana, with support from World Bank and UK FCDO

School level: Primary and secondary

Type of context: Humanitarian

Population: Extremely poor households with a focus on households with orphans or marginalized children, the elderly and people with extreme disabilities

Type of intervention: Quasi-conditional cash transfer

Ghana has made considerable progress in providing universal education. However, in post-conflict Northern Ghana, children are more likely to be out of school than elsewhere in the country. Gender gaps and ethnic disparities are also greater in Northern Ghana. The LEAP cash transfer programme provides cash payments to extremely poor households with a member in one of the following categories: orphan or vulnerable child (OVC), elderly poor, or person with an extreme disability unable to work. While transfers for the elderly and those with disabilities are unconditional, transfers to households with OVCs are labelled to incentivize enrolment of school-age children in formal education.

Currently, programme beneficiaries receive GHS 64 to GHS 106 cash payments bimonthly. Beneficiary households also receive free health insurance via the National Health Insurance Scheme. Funds to cover enrolment in the social health insurance scheme are transferred directly to the local health authority, which then issues cards to LEAP households who are identified through a community-based process and verified centrally with a proxy means test.

Impact: Based on a longitudinal propensity score matching study, evaluation evidence has found the following in terms of education outcomes:¹²³

- School enrolment: A statistically significant impact on enrolment of eight percentage points for children 13 years or older was found; when disaggregated by gender, we see a 20-percentage point positive impact on enrolment for boys, while impacts on girls are statistically insignificant. There is no impact on the 5-12-year cohort, likely because primary school enrolment is almost universal in Ghana.
- School absenteeism: Both boys and girls aged 5 to 12 years are missing less school due to the LEAP programme (13 percentage points for boys and 8 percentage points for girls). For older girls aged 13-17, LEAP reduces the likelihood of missing any school (10 percentage points) among those who are already enrolled in school.

Several evaluations¹²⁴ have found that these positive impacts notwithstanding, the insufficiency of the cash amount given and the difficulty accessing the complimentary services such as free healthcare and schools may have diluted programme impacts.

Context suitability: middle-income country context with good governance and donor support.

The final example is a “labelled” cash plus programme to support refugee and vulnerable host community students in Jordan, including girls at risk of drop out due to child marriage. Labelled cash transfers are small cash transfers made to caregivers of school-aged children, not conditional on school attendance but explicitly labelled as an education support programme. This type of cash transfer has been shown to have positive effects on parents’ belief that education is a worthwhile investment.¹²⁵

Hajati Labelled cash transfer, Jordan

Implementer: UNICEF Jordan, host communities in all governorates

Target population: Refugees (primarily Syrian) living in host communities and marginalized Jordanians

Type of intervention: Labelled cash transfer plus linkages to complementary protection and referral services¹²⁶ delivered through the Makani one-stop centres for children and adolescents

Jordan has made significant progress in delivering education services for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians since the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis. However, there are still significant gaps in access and learning outcomes for refugee communities. While boys of all nationalities are at greater risk of poor educational outcomes in Jordan than girls,¹²⁷ a significant number of girls¹²⁸ are missing out on educational opportunities due to child marriage, which is driven by entrenched gender norms and amplified by economic poverty and displacement.

Building on its Child Cash Grant (CCG), UNICEF designed the Hajati programme¹²⁹ (‘my needs’ in Arabic). Hajati provides households with a monthly transfer of 20 JOD (25 USD) per child. Inclusion is based on vulnerability and is irrespective of nationality per the UNICEF equity approach.

The design was built on recommendations from an evaluation¹³⁰ of child-responsive cash transfer programming. This includes (1) a soft conditionality element linking cash to education (labelling); (2) scaling up home visits and school counselling services; (3) providing information to facilitate health coverage uptake; (4) scaling up and raising awareness around the Makani programme; (5) installing a referral pathway with Syrian community leaders and service providers; (6) delivering programme services to vulnerable children irrespective of nationality or registration status; and (7) investing in an information response mechanism to answer refugees’ questions regarding eligibility, targeting and appeals.

Key innovations included targeting double shift schools (DSSs), which increased the number of catchment schools to 410 and the catchment pool of students to over 180,000. In year one of the programme (2018), Hajati provided benefits to 53,333 children from 19,609 households. Though it was scaled down dramatically due to unavailability of funding in the following year (to 10,000 children), new fund allocations as part of the COVID-19 emergency response¹³¹ enabled its rapid expansion to help address the crisis (to 18,000 additional children and adolescents).

UNICEF developed school attendance monitoring systems and a home visit protocol to follow up on any school absences over two weeks in order to identify and address barriers that the monthly cash transfers do not address, such as gender-based violence (GBV), health and nutrition. Monitoring and follow-up were conducted via RapidPro, an innovative two-way communication platform that proved invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic as a means of remotely reaching new recipients and facilitating enrolment in the programme.

Evidence from the GAGE programme suggests that Hajati’s complementary linkages to the Makani one-stop child and adolescent centres help tackle interlinked but non-economic barriers to girls’ education.¹³² The centres provide access to trusted non-family adults who can provide support and advice and referrals to further services (e.g. related to child protection, gender-based violence or mental health concerns). They provide transferable skills classes where adolescents learn communication and negotiation skills to support their agency in the classroom as well as at home, and a safe space to engage with peers and develop age-appropriate socio-emotional skills. The centres also provide outreach sessions to parents to raise awareness about the risks of child marriage.

Context suitability: middle-income country context hosting large numbers of refugee children and adolescents; secured multi-year funding or availability of national resources to ensure cash transfer continuity.

d. Checklist

The checklist below builds on the key considerations outlined above regarding the contribution of social protection programmes in supporting girls' continuity of learning in crisis contexts as well as lessons distilled from the promising practices. It provides

guiding questions to use in designing, monitoring, and evaluating social protection interventions designed to support broader interventions aimed at enhancing girls' learning outcomes in emergency and crisis settings.

Key actions

Guiding principles

| | |
|---|---|
| Design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A needs assessment is conducted to inform the design of interventions that are part of the education response, and girls themselves are consulted in the process <input type="checkbox"/> Existing social protection programming infrastructure is leveraged where possible (such as cash transfers or cash plus or school stipends) to provide emergency payments to support girls' access to distance education during educational disruptions as well as support the eventual return to schooling <input type="checkbox"/> Interventions are designed so that they can be rapidly scaled up in times of crisis <input type="checkbox"/> Interventions are aligned to a rights-based approach to education <input type="checkbox"/> Labelled-cash transfers are used as tools to promote rights-based access to education through carefully designed in-person, social media and media-based behavioural change communications messaging |
| Targeting and transfer mechanisms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Targeting approaches such as the age of household head, male vs female caregivers, and social exclusion are considered when designing cash transfer programmes <input type="checkbox"/> The option of transferring the cash directly to a bank account in the girls' name is considered, where possible, to incentivize the use of the money for girls' continued learning <input type="checkbox"/> In the case of emergency payments, flexible systems that can provide creative solutions to ensuring money is delivered in a timely way are preferred, but only methods not subject to higher-than-usual fraud and corruption risks: consider mobile money as an option |
| Transfer amount | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ideally, the transfer amount is sufficient to support both sustenance and educational investments, including costs related to school materials, uniforms and fees, as well as accessing distance education (e.g. devices, internet charges, mobile phone data charges). Cash transfer plus programmes that include in-kind technology transfers are considered so that girls can access the hardware necessary to engage in some types of distance learning. <input type="checkbox"/> All relevant evidence is documented to justify potentially increasing the amount of the cash transfer for girls as they progress to higher grades (if evidence shows girls are disadvantaged vis-à-vis boys, especially at secondary school levels) |
| Timing, frequency of transfer and length of exposure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The timing of the transfer is linked to key junctures in the school year when school-related costs are most likely to be incurred <input type="checkbox"/> When planning for a cash transfer intervention, given that the evidence suggests greater returns for multi-year support, consider funding stability and the duration of support <input type="checkbox"/> Plans communicate programme duration to beneficiaries to ensure adherence to 'do no harm' principles |
| Conditionality and behavioural nudges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider relaxing conditions related to school attendance in emergency settings where schools are closed, and distance education options are limited <input type="checkbox"/> Cash transfer payments can be conditional or labelled with regard to enrolment or delay of child marriage or entrance into secondary education in the case of protracted crises <input type="checkbox"/> Messaging and access to complementary programming is provided, such as non-formal tuition or education support to further incentivize girls' continuity of learning and learning outcomes |

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d. Checklist (cont.)

| Key actions | Guiding principles |
|--|---|
| Pre-primary education outcomes | <input type="checkbox"/> Complementary services are linked to cash transfers to encourage parents to invest in stimulation activities with their children to develop age-appropriate cognitive skills |
| Primary education outcomes | <input type="checkbox"/> Interventions in distance education programmes are combined with cash support to encourage families to continue to invest in their children’s studies even during formal school disruptions and to disincentivise reliance on girls’ paid and unpaid child labour |
| Secondary education outcomes | <input type="checkbox"/> When financially and politically feasible, girls are provided with higher top-up cash for education in contexts where girls face educational disadvantages |
| Inclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Given the additional costs incurred by learners with disabilities (e.g. purchasing and maintaining assistive devices), the transfer value for girls with disabilities is increased if financially feasible <input type="checkbox"/> Higher value payments are provided to girls living in poverty to overcome transportation barriers Migrant and refugee girls’ and their families are supported to overcome administrative barriers to access payments |
| Complementary interventions | <input type="checkbox"/> Given multi-dimensional barriers to education, cash transfer programming is linked with a case management approach whereby families can be supported in tailored ways to address the vulnerabilities they face <input type="checkbox"/> Existing case management infrastructure is used, and piloting is considered if it is unavailable <input type="checkbox"/> Given that food insecurity can be an important barrier to education and learning during emergencies, investments are combined in cash transfers or school stipends during school closures with school feeding replacements, e.g. through food baskets or food banks or community-provisioning of meals |
| Plugging evaluation evidence gaps | <input type="checkbox"/> Experimental impact evaluations are used to explore better how cash transfers, cash plus approaches and/or school stipends contribute to addressing educational disadvantage in emergency contexts and to contribute to the wider evidence base <input type="checkbox"/> When investing in a cash plus intervention, evaluation evidence is sex-disaggregated to better understand the gendered effects of such investments |

e. Conclusions

- Given the important role that social protection can play in promoting continuity of learning, it is essential to advocate that social protection systems be designed with the capability to rapidly adapt and scale up to support existing and newly vulnerable children and adolescents in crisis contexts.
- To promote inclusion, social protection interventions must be informed by context-relevant vulnerability assessments. For example, measures to support the inclusion of learners with disabilities and learners from migrant or refugee households must be robustly monitored and evaluated to inform programme adaptations.
- Social protection interventions, including cash transfers and school stipends, can play an essential role in supporting households to overcome financial barriers to girls' continuity of learning during school closures and re-enrolment upon the return to school.
- Cash plus approaches that provide linkages to complementary services and referrals can help tackle additional non-financial but closely interlinked vulnerabilities that might jeopardize girls' learning in emergency settings.
- Replacement school feeding interventions such as the provision of food baskets, food banks or community-provided meals may also help overcome household food insecurity that could otherwise divert attention away from girls' learning (e.g. into child labour activities).
- Given that there is very limited evidence about the role of social protection in supporting improved learning outcomes in general, and especially in emergency contexts, it is crucial to invest in more robust impact evaluations to better identify and test possible impact pathways.

Ahed has a message: "I want to tell the world that we girls are capable of doing many things that you thought we couldn't. We have the right to work and to education, the right to be protected from violence. Do not underestimate girls."



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4. Understanding programme costs and how to get value-for-money

Scarce resources and enhanced needs mean that it is paramount in emergencies that the available financial resources are put to the best possible use. Limited funds mean that the relative affordability of various programmes affects decisions about what can be done and how many people can be supported. Having information on costs from successful programmes can help ensure that more people get the effective support they need.

Although relatively uncontroversial, specific cost data for programmes are hard to find, and where they do exist, hard to compare. This is often an issue of documentation rather than the information not existing. Even well-measured impact evaluations often lack data on costs. Efforts are underway to improve this, such as the IRC's work on the Diopra tool,ⁱ which has an easy to use plug-in to help implementers link their finance systems to project outputs.

Given the lack of readily available information, a pragmatic first step in cost-analysis is to identify the likely cost-drivers of the programmes and judge how they will change if programmes are to be repeated or scaled up/down.

This is as simple – or complex – as understanding what is needed to deliver the programme. The most straightforward approach is to use the ingredients method,ⁱⁱ where teams work to identify and then cost the inputs/resources required to deliver the results and understand which of these inputs are fixed and which are variable.ⁱⁱⁱ

This logic can be applied to many scenarios to understand what is required to deliver the programme, whether it is to be replicated or scaled.

This process can help decide what level of technology is suitable for each context.^{iv}

For example, suppose an internet-enabled device is required for delivery. In that case, we need to assess the extent to which the target population has to be provided with Internet versus what is already available. By thinking through what ingredients exist versus need to be provided, options for delivery can be assessed quickly within the funds available.

i. www.diopratool.org/how-does-diootra-work

ii. Clive Belfield, A. Brooks Bowden and Henry M. Levin. (2018). "Cost Estimation In Education: The Ingredients Method," in Scott Farrow (ed.) Teaching Benefit-Cost Analysis, chapter 16, pp. 200-207, Edward Elgar Publishing.

iii. Fixed costs are those that do not change regardless of the number of beneficiaries, while variable costs will increase with the number of targeted beneficiaries. For example, developing content for a textbook is a fixed cost: it does not change if the book is used by one or one hundred million children, but the cost of printing that textbook is a variable cost: it will change dramatically depending on number.

iv. It is important to think about contexts as covering time periods as well as locations.



Example of Costing Using Ingredients Method to Simplify Cost Discussion

In Sierra Leone, when schools were closed during the Ebola crisis, radio teaching was initiated. This was resumed during the Covid-19 school closures. As part of the Education Workforce Initiative in Sierra Leone, they supported the Teaching Service Commission to think through utilizing these remote learning lessons to reach the most remote schools, even during more stable times. To do so, they costed this (potential) intervention using an ingredient basis: thinking through the key activities, their unit costs, and the number of units required for that activity.

The activities included: (1) recording the high quality lessons;(2) purchasing and distributing the SD cards with these lessons and radios to listen to them on; (3) training coaches to instruct the teachers in the remote schools to facilitate these audio lessons; (4) ongoing coaching to the teachers in the remote schools to improve use and learning. The ingredients are differentiated as fixed or variable, then their unit costs and the quantity needed are used to estimate the total cost. The timespan of whether these are one-off or ongoing activities are also considered to differentiate between the costs in the first year and the ongoing recurrent costs going forwards.

Value for money considerations can also be brought in during this process, although this does not only mean minimizing and cutting costs. This could involve assessing whether existing resources can be used (such as some schools already having radios they could use), and, in this case, drawing on evidence that these interventions are best with additional coaching. The final 'model' can then be scaled up or down to illustrate likely coverage dependent on what funds are available.

| Step | Key activities description | Fixed or Variable | Unit Cost (Le) | No. Units | Cost (Le Mn) |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|----------------|------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Highly accomplished teachers recording lessons | Per teacher, annual | 5,000,000 | 4 | 20 |
| 2 | SD Card costs | Per school grade, annual | 1,000,000 | 600 | 600 |
| | Radio costs | Per 50% of school grades, one-off | 275,000 | 300 | 83 |
| 3 | Development of coaching course | Fixed, one-off | 15,505,545 | 1 | 16 |
| | Training of coaches | Per coach, annual | 422,142 | 15 | 6 |
| 4 | Coaching visit costs | Per visit (5 per school grade), annual | 124,373 | 15 | 373 |
| | Payment of phone credit for coach | Per coach, monthly | 83,300 | 180 | 15 |
| | Salary of coach | Per coach, annual | 20,000,000 | 15 | 300 |
| First Year Cost (Le Mn) | | Per class | 2.4 | 600 | 1,412 |
| First Year Cost (USD) | | Per class | 243 | 600 | 145,563 (USD) |
| Recurrent Annual Cost (Le Mn) | | Per class | 2.2 | 600 | 1,314 |
| Recurrent Annual Cost (USD) | | Per class | 226 | 600 | 135,462 (USD) |

Source: Education Commission, 2020. Education Workforce Costed Options Paper. Education Workforce Initiative Sierra Leone. Research and Policy Paper.

Costs are always lower in the places where key infrastructure/ingredients are already provided. If these have to be provided in the programme, then accountants treat these as capital investments and spread their cost over time to compare time periods accurately. High-tech distance education provision may comprise a greater share of these upfront fixed costs in terms of the one-off policy and software development costs, but the marginal costs of adding another user (if they have their own way of accessing) is very low. This can be compared to low or no-tech distance education provision through printed basic materials, where there is a greater share of variable costs driven by the number of beneficiaries targeted. A simple way of thinking about this is the cost of *developing* the support and the costs of *delivering* the support.

An example of this is the Learning Passport site. While there were costs to develop the platform, these are already paid and should not influence a user's decision to use the site. Here, the mapping

of costs will depend on how the platform is used in country, notably if investments will be made in local content, if it is taken offline, or if devices are purchased for users to access the platform.

Programmes should consider which of their **key cost drivers** have the greatest impact on the programme's total cost and focus their attention on this point to ensure they can get value for money^v from that programming. If the bulk of costs are procuring devices, taking extra time to ensure that specifications are correct can have a greater impact on value-for-money than a slight cost saving on venue hire for one-off training.

Often, implementers and funders may want to dig deeper into the cost drivers of particular components of projects, especially when they are a large share of overall spending.

Taking the previously discussed KEEP programme as an example, we can look at the cost drivers of conditional cash transfers. For conditional cash transfers,

the key cost drivers are (1) the money being transferred, (2) the fees incurred during the transfer, and (3) the targeting and conditions, namely the labour costs of identifying, processing and monitoring the transfers and recipients. Costing and assessing value in these three areas differ, but once the cost drivers and implementation steps are identified, it can become clearer.

The first element, the cost of money transfers, varies depending on the modality of the transfer (bank transfers vs mobile money vs physical cash); the volume (better rates can be negotiated with more funds) and the frequency (sending one \$100 payment is cheaper than ten \$10 payments). However, while it may be cheaper to send payments in bulk, this may not be aligned with funding cycles or how the project wants to structure conditionality. There are important value-for-money considerations regarding how often it is most useful for the recipient to receive funds traded off against the greater relative transfer fees for smaller, more frequent transfers.

The costs of identifying, processing and monitoring transfers depend on project choices, including how targeted the transfer is and the extent of the conditionality. Here we need to be careful of the false economy. While minimizing the time and costs spent identifying recipients and limiting conditions can enable a greater share of funds to be transferred, the effectiveness may be limited if the recipients are not well selected or if the funds are not used in the way intended by the programme.

These variables must be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis, especially when programmes are aimed at reaching particularly marginalized groups. These groups – such as girls with disabilities who may not be particularly visible in the community – can easily fall out of focus when programmers are also trying to meet strict quantity or cost targets. Careful planning and ensuring that there is sufficient space within budgets to allow the time to “count the uncounted” is vital for equitable targeting.

^v **Value for money (VFM)** does not mean just cutting costs without consideration on the impact, but looks at the economy (getting the right quality of inputs at as low a cost); efficiency (how these inputs are used), effectiveness (how much this affects the targeted beneficiaries outcomes) and equity (how well these outcomes affect all children, particularly marginalized groups).

**Example of how Cost Drivers Vary by Contexts:
Learning Passport**

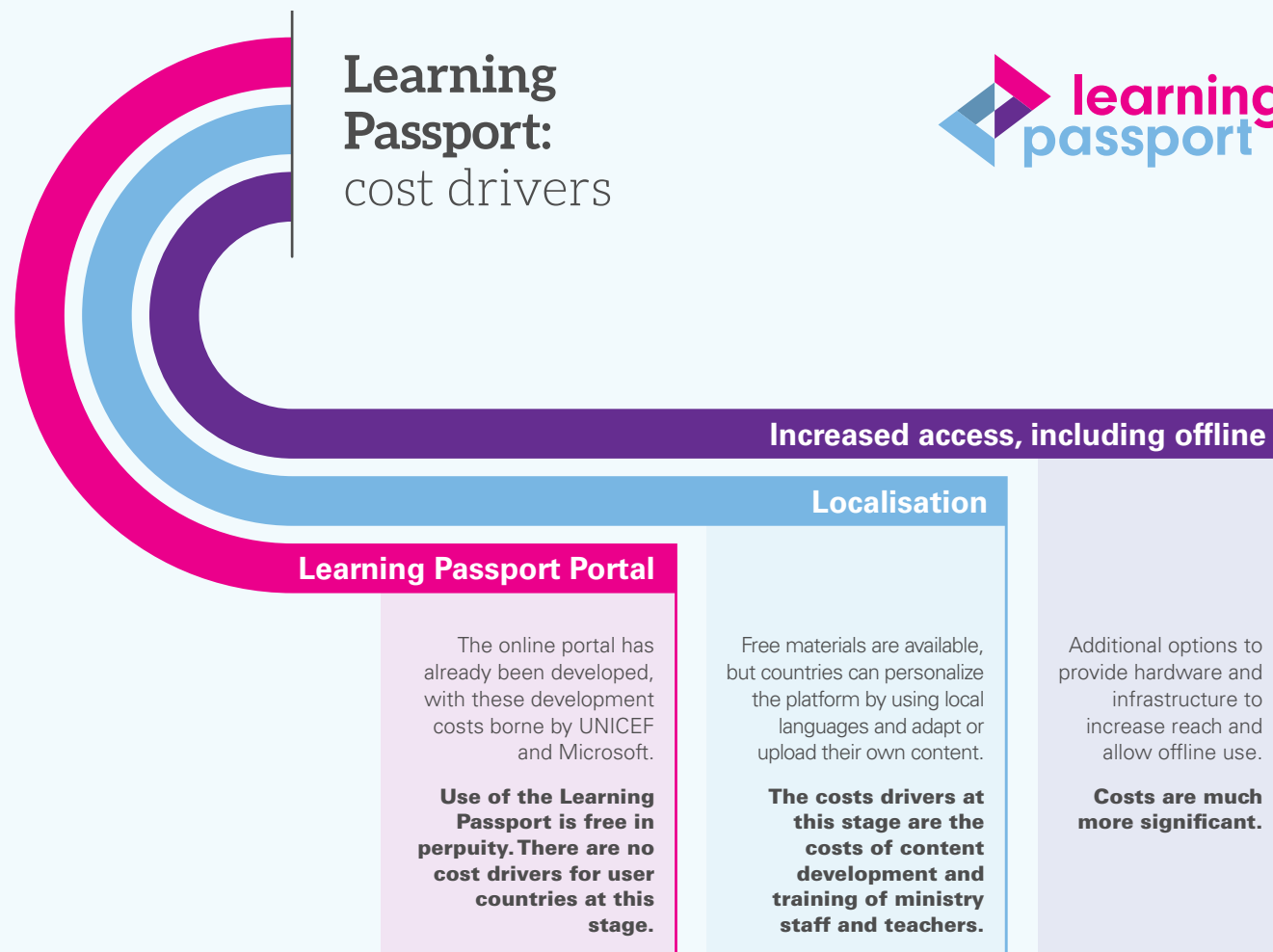
UNICEF developed the online *Learning Passport* portal with Microsoft as a platform for countries to use and adapt (and potentially take offline) content to support learning. The costs here are examined for the user, as the hosting and platform support costs are covered centrally. The extent of costs to the user countries vary depending on the extent to which the country wishes to personalize their content and to invest in maximizing the reach to those children who don't have devices or connectivity.

For the initial stages of using the learning portal and localizing the portal to meet the language and content needs of the user country, costs can be relatively minor. These costs can be minimized further if the country's curricula and content has already been developed, if the Ministry own the copywrite, if it can be easily adapted for the portal, or if the country wishes to adapt existing available content to their context. Another cost driver is capacity development and training of Ministry staff and teachers and possibly other stakeholders in how to engage with and use the Learning Passport, which requires paying for trainers, venue hire, transport costs and, of course, lunch.

For many countries, the costs of the *Learning Passport* can stop at this stage – giving them a learning portal with localized access and content that can be freely used by children with the hardware and connectivity to access the portal.

However, there is a significant risk that this level of provision would not reach the most marginalized girls and particularly girls in emergency contexts. Therefore, countries may also want to take it further and try to increase the number of children who can access the portal through increasing the number of children with the hardware and/or connectivity or enable offline access to the portal through providing downloadable content onto hardware, or local area network connectivity to the portal.

Here, the costs increase significantly with the cost drivers of hardware, connectivity and infrastructure provision being at a significantly higher unit cost than the cost drivers of localization. Nevertheless, investments in this area are important for increasing the equity of access to the *Learning Passport*, particularly for girls in emergency contexts.



III. Conclusions

We conclude with five key considerations across all stages at the programme cycle to promote girls' learning in emergency contexts.

1. Context

- Involve girls in the planning, design and M&E stages of programming to promote girls' learning outcomes in all settings, including emergency settings.
- Prioritize the availability of content in local languages in all settings.
- Plan and design social protection programmes that ascertain the required resources and capacities from the outset to bring interventions to scale as well as their ability to reach the most disadvantaged in line with SDG4: Leave No One Behind. Keep in mind that evidence shows that country income status is less of a factor in social protection programming than political economy dynamics and government/donor willingness to prioritize social assistance programming within the available fiscal space.

2. Teaching and learning

- Design programmes to mitigate gender-specific risks that girls face in accessing distance learning which include consultations with local community organizations with experience tackling gender-based barriers.
- Ensure that a safeguarding policy is in place to address various child protection risks and potential backlash to targeting girls in distance learning in all LMICs.
- Invest in teacher and learner digital safety across LMIC contexts, especially when implementing low and high-tech distance education approaches in contexts that may be new to digital teaching and learning and in the piloting stage.
- Maintain a degree of teaching presence in distance learning interventions to enhance girls' learning outcomes and build social and emotional skills, paying particular attention to training and retaining female teachers in conflict contexts.

- Invest in continued teacher professional development in gender-responsive digital pedagogies to leverage learning outcomes for girls in all LMICs, given that this is a new field.

3. Inclusion

- Invest in vulnerability assessments of different cohorts of girls from the outset across all contexts, so that when emergencies unfold, these can inform rapid responses. In addition, invest in crisis-specific assessments to gauge newly emerging vulnerabilities affecting girls' learning.
- Embed content into no-tech, low-tech, and high-tech programming to tackle discriminatory gender norms; in low-income contexts, partnerships may be significant in sourcing and adapting existing gender-transformative content.
- Pay particular attention to intersecting vulnerabilities that girls may face based on gender and other social characteristics such as disability, migrant or refugee status etc. in all contexts.

4. Modalities

- Allow for student-level differentiation and personalized learning in distance learning modalities in emergencies in all contexts.
- Prioritize multi-modal and blended learning approaches to cater to diverse levels of connectivity and accessibility challenges. While the high-tech end of these multi-modal approaches is perhaps more conducive to MICs, investment is also needed in LICs, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic highlights that new forms of emergencies are likely to affect the globe at unpredictable intervals. In MICs with high internet connectivity and EdTech systems, continue to raise the bar in digital distance education and advance girls' digital skills.
- Invest in cash plus programmes, as evidence indicates that such approaches can play an essential complementary role in supporting girls to continue learning during school closures by tackling financial and other social barriers in both low- and middle-income contexts.

- Innovate so as to invest in alternative approaches to school feeding, such as food baskets and food banks, which can help address food insecurity issues that might serve as barriers to continuity of learning, especially in low-income settings.

5. Data and evaluation

- Invest in gender-disaggregated data on access and use of technology in LMICs where investments are being made to distribute technology and/or data bundles to keep pace of the evolving situation in each context.
- Strengthen gender-disaggregated data on literacy and numeracy and attendance and retention rates at school to design gender-equitable interventions during emergencies in line with the SDGs.
- Invest in design and rollout of impact evaluations that explicitly assess the contribution of social protection interventions (cash plus, labelled cash transfers for education and school feeding) to girls' educational performance to strengthen the evidence base and learning in this under-researched field.

One of the voice actors of the Itetero radio show during a recording session at Rwanda Broadcasting Agency. The characters on Itetero help effect positive behaviour change and teach children about hygiene, health, safety, and how to stimulate their creativity and imagination. Itetero is Rwanda's first radio show created for children, by children.



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IV. Complementary Standards and Resources

Reimagining Girls' Education: Solutions to Keep Girls Learning in Emergencies builds on and complements foundational standards in education in emergencies and principles described in other resources, including:

- INEE. (2010a). Ensuring a Gender Perspective in Education in Emergencies.
- IINEE. (2010b). Gender Equality in and through Education: INEE pocket guide to gender.
- INEE. (2010c). Minimum Standards Handbook: Preparedness, response, recovery.
- INEE. (2020). Technical Note: Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- INEE and UNGEI (2019). Guidance Note on Gender: Gender equality in and through education.
- IASC. (2018). The Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action.
- ODI and UNGEI. (2017). Evidence Review Mitigating Threats to Girls' Education in Conflict affected Contexts: Current practice.
- Plan International. (2019). Left Out, Left Behind: Adolescent girls' secondary education in crises.
- UNESCO, UNICEF, Plan International, UNGEI, and Malala Fund. (2020). Building Back Equal: Girls back to school guide.
- UNHCR. (2020). Considerations and Options for Connected Education: COVID-19 response how to ensure refugees benefit from national virtual learning responses
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- UNICEF. (2020). Guidance on Distance Learning Modalities to Reach all Children and Youth During School Closures: Focusing on low- and no-tech modalities to reach the most marginalized.
- UNICEF. (2020). Gender-Responsive Education Framework and Standards in the Context of COVID-19.

UNGEI – ECW – INEE: A Core Resource on Gender in Education in Emergencies – EiE-GenKit

The EiE-GenKit is a series of tools and practical guidance that helps practitioners ensure education in emergencies interventions and programmes are gender-responsive and inclusive. The materials encourage gender to be considered across EiE programme cycle phases and across EiE thematic interventions that bridge humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts in the education sector. Based on internationally recognized minimum standards, the resource builds on existing sector-wide tools and processes, enhancing current institutional approaches to design, implement, and evaluate gender-responsive and inclusive EiE interventions. The tools and guidance are intended for immediate use or further adaptation by national actors operating across different types of humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises such as armed conflict, natural disasters, and disease outbreaks.

The EiE-GenKit brings together resources that support gender-responsive action across prevention, preparedness, and response to crises, particularly for the most at-risk populations. Each EiE-GenKit section corresponds to a stage in the EiE programme cycle and contains tools relevant to that stage as outlined below:

✓ **Preparedness, Information Management, Coordination**

✓ **Needs Assessment and Analysis**

✓ **Programme Planning and Design**

✓ **Resource Mobilization**

✓ **Implementation: Access and Learning Environment, Teachers and Education Personnel, Teaching and Learning**

✓ **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The EiE-GenKit will be field-tested with country partners during 2021.

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With funding from the UK government, UNICEF provided 20,000 solar radios for use by an estimated 72,000 children in remote villages in Ethiopia.





Published by UNICEF
Education Section
Programme Division
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

www.unicef.org/education

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February 2021

ISBN: 978-92-806-5212-3