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## RECOVERY FROM LEARNING LOSS – RESOURCE GUIDE

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For policy makers in Africa, both recovery from learning loss and mitigating against the risk of dropping out (especially amongst girls) is a critical challenge. The purpose of this document is to provide details of useful resources that help in giving policy and practical guidance.

The first section is an introduction and includes the findings of an April 2021 study of the impact of Covid on learning loss in rural Kenya of 965 students who were reassessed during the 2020-21 academic year. This information is courtesy of our friends at Whizz Education. The second section provides several useful links as a single source on the best places to find details about recovery from learning loss

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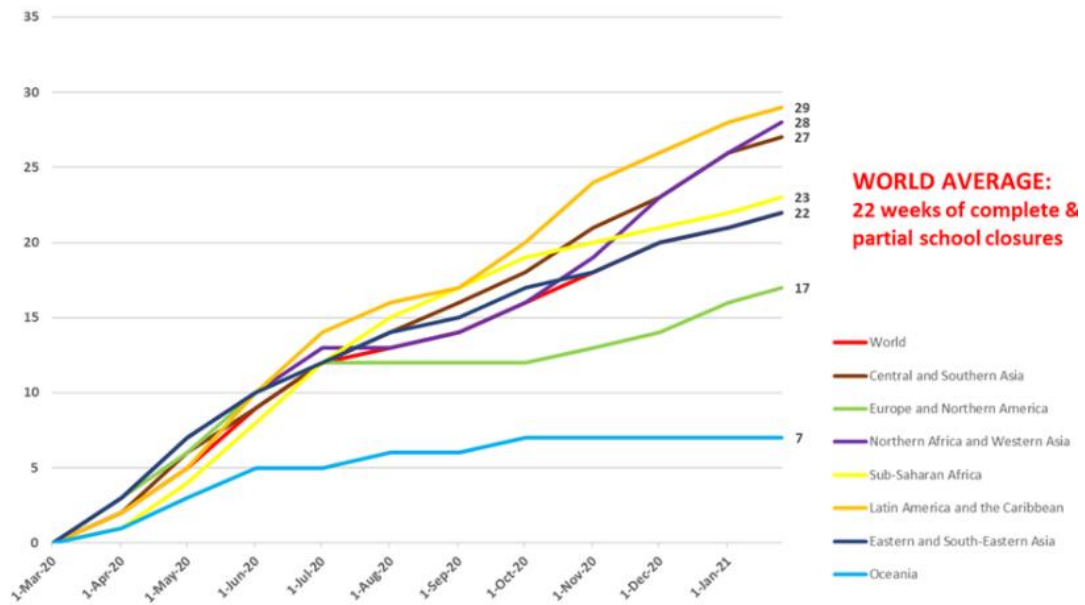
### SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

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Learning loss and the psychological impact on students and their families remains a major concern for policy makers and educators as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As stated by Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO’s Director General:

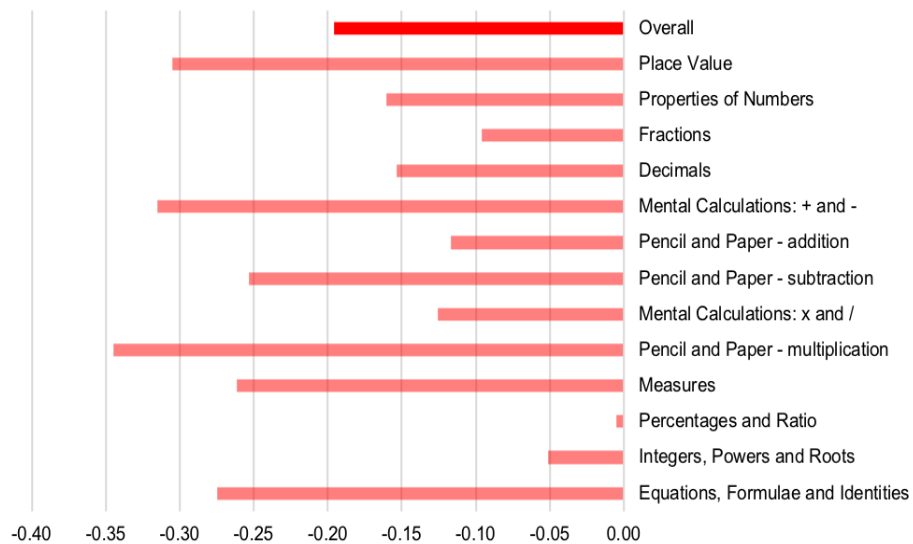
*“Prolonged and repeated closures of education institutions are taking a rising psycho-social toll on students, increasing learning losses and the risk of dropping out, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable.”*

Between March 2020 and January 2021, on average about 60% of the academic year was lost due to COVID-19 school closures. Figure 1, shows the duration of complete and partial school closures from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021:



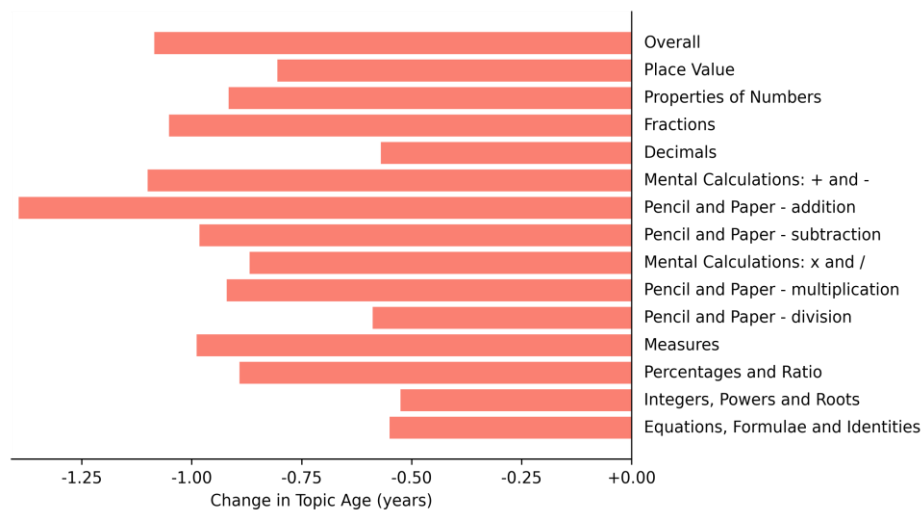
**Figure 1: Duration of complete and partial school closures in weeks. Source: UNESCO**

Learning loss is nothing new. Prior to COVID-19, students worldwide typically experience ‘learning loss’ over the school holidays; for example, in mathematics up to 2.5 months of lost learning is experienced during a 6-week summer break as shown in figure 2:



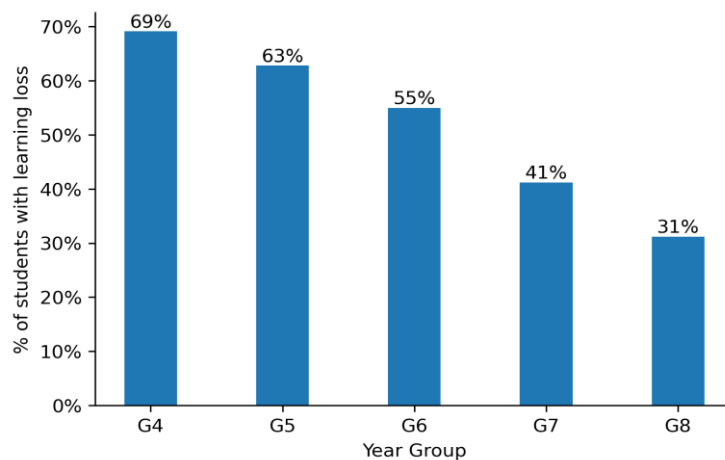
**Figure 2: Summer holiday learning loss by mathematics topic (UK and US). Source: Whizz Education**

From the April 2021 Kenya study, in a sample of 965 students, they found that 53% of children exhibited declines in their levels of mathematics knowledge in the period most impacted by school closures and disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The average loss among those students was 13 months. From figure 3 we can see that losses in mathematics learning were most pronounced in the topics rooted in core calculational procedures.



**Figure 3: Learning loss from a sample of 965 students in rural Kenya, who participated in Project iMlango in March 2020 (when schools closed due to COVID-19) and were reassessed in the 2020-21. Source: Whizz Education**

Another key finding of the Kenya study is how “grade level is a predictor of learning loss, with a greater proportion of students in lower grade levels affected. This is most likely because students have a smaller pool of core knowledge to draw on and are therefore more vulnerable to erosion of previously acquired knowledge.”<sup>1</sup> We can see from figure 4 how a higher proportion of students exhibited learning loss in the lower grades



**Figure 4: Percentage of students who experienced learning loss, by grade level from the sample of 965 students in rural Kenya, Project iMlango. Source: Whizz Education**

The study has more findings, including breaking down learning loss by gender and school type. In summary, COVID-19 has led to learning loss in core numeracy & literacy, and typically in sub-Saharan Africa we see this accentuated in rural areas. This relates strongly to households who do not have a robust internet connection (nor ownership of devices) and have been unable to utilise online learning resources, such as access to the Kenya education cloud.

Learning loss is not evenly distributed and those worse affected are in lower grades and from poorer households. Recovery from learning loss is now a critical challenge for ministries of education and schools across Africa. The following **section 2** is meant as a one-stop guide for those wishing to access the best and most pertinent resources on recovery from learning loss.

1. Source: <https://www.whizzeducation.com/wp-content/uploads/Kenya-Covid-Impact-SCREEN.pdf>

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## SECTION 2 – RESOURCES

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The following are a selection of good quality links to resources to help policy makers and educators with recovery from learning loss.

### [COVID-19 Global Education Recovery Tracker: John Hopkins University, World Bank & UNICEF](#)

The Global Education Recovery Tracker is the result of a partnership between John Hopkins University eSchool+ Initiative, the World Bank and UNICEF, with the aim of capturing ongoing information about the status of schools, teachers, and students. As governments are moving from emergency response to policies for recovery, the tracker focusses on data that can help build more resilient education systems.

Please Visit: [www.covideducationrecovery.global](http://www.covideducationrecovery.global)

The site has several useful resources:

- **Maps:** displaying educational modalities at the country level.
- **Graphs:** showing what additional educational support is being offered to mitigate learning loss, by region, and how remote education has been provided using online platforms, TV, radio, mobile, take-home printed materials, and remediation tutoring.
- **Data:** an excellent country-by-country guide showing education modalities, teacher vaccination programs, the type of remote education support, internet access and education statistics including enrolment ratios.

The Global Education Recovery Tracker also includes relevant stories, with recent insights such as:

- 26% of countries in sub-Saharan Africa are not relying on the internet as a means of providing remote learning support.
- 1 in 3 countries have introduced tutoring as remote learning support, though unlike Europe and Central Asia, such tutoring support is not prevalent in the Middle East and North Africa.
- Low-income countries are 2.6 times more likely to prioritise in-person learning for students sitting final exams.

*All data sourced: Johns Hopkins University, World Bank & UNICEF (2021). COVID-19 Global Education Recovery Tracker.*

### [Recovering Education 2021: UNESCO, UNICEF & World Bank](#)

The joint mission of UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank focusses on three priorities: bringing children back to school, recovering from learning losses and supporting teachers. Progress on these priorities is tracked through existing indicators following the SDG4 monitoring framework in over 200 countries.

Visit: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/48a431d24d2d23eb1a2fc25a37a00a2b-0140052021/original/Recovery-mission-statement-5-pager-FINAL-4-45pm.pdf>

The document provides a summary of the targets, indicators, and data sources of the three priority areas with the scope of ensuring learners are back in school; schools re-open safely; students receive remedial learning and services to recover from learning loss; and teachers are prepared and empowered to meet the learning needs of students.

## [Policy Paper for Reducing the Impact of COVID-19 on the Cost of Achieving SDG4: UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report](#)

This policy paper focusses on remedial re-enrolment programs to reduce the additional costs incurred by COVID-19 and the financing gap in low and low to middle income countries to achieve SDG4.

Please visit: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374163>

The policy paper outlines the costs of achieving SDG4 as assumed in 2015 and the revised costs projected before the outbreak of the pandemic. It further explains the main cost drivers due to COVID-19 and steps to be taken to mitigate the impact on learners. The paper shows how spending on education now will lessen costs later on.

Further increases in cost due to COVID-19 are detailed as:

- **Remediation:** addressing the loss of learning especially for disadvantaged students who lack the means to utilise distance learning solutions or have inappropriate learning environments at home.
- **Re-enrolment:** ministries of education need to design and implement re-enrolment strategies consisting of national campaigns and incentives.
- **Second Chance Education:** governments should have a policy to give students a second chance where re-enrolment has failed to ensure all students return to school.
- **Infrastructure:** new equipment and materials to ensure public health protocols are met

The policy paper also provides useful information and potential scenarios of the damage school closures can have on long-term GDP of a country.

## [UNESCO High-Level Global Education Meeting on Recovery: Presentations \(March 2021\)](#)

On 29 March 2021, UNESCO convened a high-level meeting to address education recovery.

The report of this virtual conference and details of the speakers is available at:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000376984>

Three roundtable sessions focussed on the most immediate concerns of ministers of education:

1. Keep schools open, prioritising and supporting teachers
2. School dropout and learning loss
3. Digital transformation and the future of education

Copies of the presentations can be downloaded by clicking on the names of the speakers below:

1. Evidence on keeping schools open and teacher leadership by [Prof Didier Jordan, UNESCO Chair and Mugwena Maluleke, General Secretary South African Democratic Teachers' Union](#)
2. School dropout & learning loss and findings from the global education coalition surveys by [Sylvia Montoya, Director UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Gwang-Chol Chang, UNESCO Chief of Education Policy Section](#)

### [Best Practices for Learning Loss Recovery: Hanover Research](#)

Although taken from a US point of view, this document provides a very useful summary of two important areas:

- Additional Learning Time
- Additional Instructional Programs

Please visit: <https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Learning-Loss-Recovery-Best-Practices.pdf>

Key findings of the report include one-on-one tutoring as showing the largest educational performance improvement; in-school strategies such as individual learning plans and cross-grade collaboration; integrating school-day instruction into after-school curricula; and creating community partnerships to share the tutoring load.

The concept of **looping** is introduced in this report. This is a structural innovation that improves student achievement and helps the recovery from learning loss. It is based on the practice of a teacher instructing the same group of students for at least two school years – following them from one grade to the next.

The paper also addresses long-term recovery strategies as well as short-term interventions.

### [Planning for School Re-Opening and Recovery from COVID-19: Centre for Global Development](#)

Although policy makers have dealt with many of the issues around re-opening and making the school environment safe, section 5 in the document provides a useful summary of the evidence for recovering from learning loss.

Please visit: <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/planning-school-reopening-and-recovery-after-covid-19.pdf>

Sample policy recommendations include:

- Engaging students in accelerated learning interventions
- Engaging teachers in training and caching
- Engaging parents regarding their involvement in remote learning

### [Recovering Learning Losses as Schools Re-Open, Guidance for Policymakers: RISE Indonesia Program](#)

The RISE Indonesia Country Research Team have produced a comprehensive policy brief that applies to any country and has excellent recommendations.

Please visit:

[http://rise.smeru.or.id/sites/default/files/publication/Recovering%20Learning%20Loss%20Note%20%28ID-EN%29\\_.pdf](http://rise.smeru.or.id/sites/default/files/publication/Recovering%20Learning%20Loss%20Note%20%28ID-EN%29_.pdf)

The report provides nine guidelines for recovering from learning losses and six key indicators that governments should monitor. It also gives a detailed toolkit of various differentiated teaching practices and system requirements.

### [Learning Loss Strategy Guide: Colorado Department of Education](#)

The Colorado Department of Education has produced an excellent learning loss evidence-based strategy guide for schools.

Please visit: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/learning-loss-recovery-strategy-guide>

The implementation guide summarises 4 core components of recovery:

- Determination of immediate needs
- Decision making based on school-wide logistics
- Accelerated learning for recovery
- Support for Students and staff

### [UNESCO: Recovering Lost Learning – What Can be Done Quickly at Scale? June 2021](#)

This is UNESCO's latest issue paper on catch-up learning programs that provides a preliminary analysis of measures for planning and implementing learning loss recovery programs.

Please visit: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377841>

Governments, schools and teachers need to consider three interrelated dimensions in their local context: The curricular approach (e.g., whether the curriculum will be condensed to focus on core knowledge and skills); the additional support required (e.g., tutoring for struggling students); and the practical measures needed to implement the adopted approach (e.g. adjusting the school calendar and timetable in order to increase the in-person contact time, organizing smaller groups of students in the class).

Key actions suggested by the UNESCO findings are:

- “Assess learning needs by determining skills and knowledge gaps based on the implemented or adjusted curriculum. Both continuous formative and summative assessments are essential.
- Adjust pedagogy to make teaching more adaptive to the individual needs and abilities of students. The curriculum may need to be condensed to reflect core principles and to teach essential skills in the limited time available.
- Prioritize, train and support teachers who are the backbone of any educational system. Any attempt to introduce new technologies or techniques into the classroom must be accompanied by teacher training in adaptive learning strategies, learning assessment and digital skills.
- Emphasize social-emotional learning by recognizing the mental health needs of students and teachers. Classroom programmes should integrate a mental health component such as mindfulness and foster healthy interpersonal relationships among students and teachers.
- Ensure inclusion and gender equality, especially for some 11 million girls, who might not return to school after the pandemic, and other disadvantaged or vulnerable groups who were hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis. Policy makers should reduce gender discrimination in schools, push for girls to return to school post pandemic, promote women’s leadership in recovery planning, and consider the specific needs of vulnerable learners in and outside of the classroom.”<sup>2</sup>

2. The bullet points are quoted from: <https://en.unesco.org/news/recovering-lost-learning-what-can-be-done-quickly-and-scale>