Pakistani Teachers’ Response to COVID-19

Teachers’ recommendations
- Ensure adequate funding to government schools to ensure they are able to provide the requisite facilities as per the School Reopening SOPs
- Specific financial provision for temporary hiring of teachers to address potential learning losses, drop-outs, and ensure compliance with issued SOPs

Number of government primary schools 118,587
1 teacher for 6 grades 27,203 schools (22.9%)”

Enrolment in government primary schools 11,881,022
Unavailability of (drinking) water 37,302 schools (31.5%)”

2 classrooms or less (for 6 grades) 76,178 schools (64.2%)
Unavailability of washrooms 30,095 schools (25.4%)”

Girls; drop-out & re-enrolment

Teachers’ recommendations
- Long summer and winter vacations result in drop-out of girls, particularly in middle and high schools
- Specific interventions needed to ensure girls return when schools reopen; this will provide a snapshot of the impact of ‘learning losses’
- Revision of content (foundational skills and concepts) covered in the previous academic year for the first few weeks
- Schools to cover ‘smart’ or reduced syllabi (covering only a selected portion of the goals set out in the curriculum) in the coming year
- A school-specific customizable ‘Ready-to-progress’ framework needs to be put in place, with quarterly targets

Framework for Pakistan’s COVID-19 response to education challenges

- Learning losses should not be viewed from a one-academic year lens only; short (3-6 months) and medium term (1-3 years) plans needed
- Students should be assessed on a sample basis when schools reopen; this will provide a snapshot of the impact of ‘learning losses’
- Revision of content (foundational skills and concepts) covered in the previous academic year for the first few weeks
- Schools to cover ‘smart’ or reduced syllabi (covering only a selected portion of the goals set out in the curriculum) in the coming year
- A school-specific customizable ‘Ready-to-progress’ framework needs to be put in place, with quarterly targets

Content & examinations

Primary schools

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Girls; drop-out & re-enrolment

Teachers’ recommendations
- Long summer and winter vacations result in drop-out of girls, particularly in middle and high schools
- Specific interventions needed to ensure girls return when schools reopen, and need-based financial support through the Parent Teacher / School Management Councils
- Disbursement of the first tranche of the middle and high school girls’ stipend prior to schools’ reopening
- Extension of Waseela-a-Taleem to children, particularly girls, of beneficiaries of the Ehsaas program enrolled in government middle and high schools

To ensure that children are protected from the increased pressure of accelerated learning as schools rush to cover syllabus, any system designed to address learning losses should be planned over an extended duration (rather than a 1-year approach)
- Content and grade-specific learning packs should be developed to support learning continuity at home
- Systems need to be put in place for students not able to cope in the promoted grades
- Medium term plan to bring matriculation and intermediate exams back to the current schedule (Plan 2023)

Change schedule for college and university admissions to cater for delayed matriculation and intermediate examinations

Pak Alliance for Maths & Science
and
Zindagi Trust
Concerted effort needed to engage local communities through the (former) local governments

Legal cover to enable school leaders to decide on school opening, closing, and/or reopening

Financial resources at the school-level to enable school leaders to invest in resources required prior to, and once schools reopen (implementation of SOPs, covering learning losses, purchasing consumables, temporary hiring of teachers)

Education managers at the district, tehsil/town/taluka and at the school level should have access to additional funds to respond to immediate needs

The process of Parent Teacher Council / School Management Councils’ fund utilization and school-specific financing should be revamped to allow school leaders and parents to procure services and goods locally and removal of red-tape at all levels

Teachers’ recommendations

- Concerted effort needed to engage local communities through the (former) local governments
- Legal cover to enable school leaders to decide on school opening, closing, and/or reopening
- Financial resources at the school-level to enable school leaders to invest in resources required prior to, and once schools reopen (implementation of SOPs, covering learning losses, purchasing consumables, temporary hiring of teachers)
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Equal opportunities: winter & summer zones

Teachers’ recommendations

- If schools in the 40+ districts falling in the Winter Zone reopen in mid-September 2020, students would have a maximum of 12 weeks before the three-month winter break and the matriculation / intermediate examinations.

Summer Zone Districts

Academic year starts: Apr-20
Academic year ends: Mar-21

22 weeks’ instruction, 2 weeks’ break

Winter Zone Districts

Academic year starts: Apr-20
Academic year ends: Mar-21

12 weeks’ instruction, 12 weeks’ break

Teachers’ recommendations

- Technology helps, but unequal access means that students without a television, internet and computing devices at home are being left further behind
- Having an internet-enabled mobile phone at home does not necessarily translate to students’ access to the device
- An ed-tech policy with input from government school teachers should be developed, with clear guidelines on how to enable teachers to facilitate adoption
- For tech-based interventions, government school teachers should be consulted for content development

- Of the 36 weeks in a typical academic calendar, students in schools in the ‘Winter Zone’ will have lost over 22 weeks’ worth of in-classroom time in the 2020-21 academic year. The students enrolled in schools in the Summer Zone will have lost 12 weeks in comparison