STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY: EDUCATION FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

How can education systems and schools support vulnerable students during school closures and school re-openings?

Lucie Cerna

Strength through Diversity Webinar, 05 October 2020
Phase II (2019-): the value added of the project

1. Develops a holistic framework to analyse diversity in education valid across its different dimensions, with rigorous definitions of concepts.

2. Allows to examine the intersectionality across different dimensions of diversity.

3. Mobilises already existing knowledge, integrates it within a common framework and addresses knowledge gaps.
How can education systems support the learning and well-being outcomes of diverse populations and be more inclusive?

How can education systems support all individuals so that they are able to engage with others in increasingly diverse and complex societies?

Aim of the Project
Analysis and policy advice geared towards helping governments and schools address diversity to achieve more equitable and inclusive education systems.
6 Dimensions of **diversity** and 2 overarching factors

- Socio-economic status
- Geographic location
- Gender
- Ethnic groups, national minorities & Indigenous peoples
- Giftedness
- Special education needs
- Migration

Gender identity & sexual orientation
I. How can countries and schools ensure equity and inclusion in education during school closures?
Diverse student groups have faced great challenges during the lockdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigrants, ethnic groups, Indigenous communities</th>
<th>SEN</th>
<th>LGBTQI+</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of access to an electronic device or internet connection</td>
<td>• Lack of accessibility to particular technology and extra services</td>
<td>• Higher rates of suicidal ideation, attempts, and completions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Precarious housing prevents good learning conditions</td>
<td>• Parents might not be equipped to support their children with SEN</td>
<td>• Difficult or no access to hormones</td>
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<td>• Language barrier</td>
<td>• Stressors may worsen symptoms for people that are affected by mental disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Living in remote areas</td>
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<td>• Discrimination intensified in some context which generates exclusion</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Gender roles may affect engagement in education</td>
<td>• Gender gaps may worsen</td>
<td>• Increase of domestic violence (no safe space)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase of domestic violence</td>
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<td>• Stronger levels of depression and anxiety</td>
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Socio-economic status and geographic location

Responsible for **inequities** and wide **educational gaps** in academic performance already **before** the crisis.

The **intersection** with other characteristics can **amplify the disadvantage** of students.

Can be **instrumental** in **identifying** disadvantaged groups and **targeting** them with specific policies...

... but attention is needed to **avoid overlooking** diverse groups’ specific issues.

**Common issues** during closures are: access to ICT and internet connection, proximity to extra services, access to meals, etc..
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the continuity of the academic learning of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support education of disadvantaged students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure distribution of food to students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure well-being of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure provision of other social services to students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support education of students with special needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address emotional needs of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support students whose parents have limited command of the language of instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure social development of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support students at risk of violence at home</td>
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Source: Based on data collection produced for the "A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 (Reimers and Schleicher, 2020)"
Policy Areas Identified for a Holistic Approach

- Equitable and inclusive access to good learning conditions
- Support to and by teachers
- Equitable and inclusive access to extra services for vulnerable students
- Information to students and their families in different languages
- Meeting socio-emotional needs
- Equitable and inclusive access to digital learning resources
Providing equitable and inclusive access to digital learning resources during school closures

What are some policy options?

- **Partnerships** with national educational media
- **Free** online learning resources
- **Targeted distribution** of free electronic devices, internet connection and learning material

Examples of country initiatives

- Educational **television** and **radio** programmes (France, New Zealand, Portugal etc.)
- **Free access** to an online learning platform without consuming mobile data (Colombia)
- Distribution of **thousands of computers** across the vulnerable communities (Chile, Slovenia, Italy etc.)
- **Travel to remote Indigenous communities** for emergencies and continuation of essential services allowed (Australia, Chile)
### Distributing information to students and their families in different languages

**What are some policy options?**

- **Ongoing communication**
  - on health and education
  - in different languages to inform students, parents and communities

- **Multi-lingual learning resources** for non-native language speakers

### Examples of country initiatives

- **Letter for parents** in 12 languages about school closures during COVID-19 (Austria)

- **Communication** to Roma families with the help of associations (Slovak Republic)

- **Updated online information** in various languages on the government’s website (Sweden)

- **Communication** and learning tools in Indigenous languages (Mexico)
Ensuring that **socio-emotional needs** are being met during school closures

What are some **policy options**?

- **Counselling** options and **socialisation** opportunities
  - Lack of social contact, higher anxiety etc.
  - Vulnerable groups particularly at risk

- **Tools** to discuss COVID-19
  - Ongoing communication
  - Age-appropriate tools

Examples of **country initiatives**

- **Online counselling services** (Canada, Australia, the United States etc.)

- Online initiative to set up **virtual meetings** between newcomers (Sweden)

- **Videos, creative tools** and **activities** for children, mainly developed by IOs (Spain, the United States, France etc.)
Ensuring support to and by teachers during school closures

What are some policy options?

- Making appropriate resources for teachers available
- Supporting teachers’ initiatives to support vulnerable student groups
- Supporting teachers’ socio-emotional well-being

Examples of country initiatives

- Guidelines and free online teaching resources (Portugal, Italy, Norway, Latvia etc.)
- Guidelines, counselling services etc. with a focus on teachers' well-being (New Zealand)
- Support to immigrant/refugee students through WhatsApp groups and help with the registration (Greece)
- Help to students with SEN through online extra-support (Uruguay, United States)
II. How can education systems support vulnerable students with the re-opening of schools?
Policy Areas Identified for a Holistic Approach

- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Partnerships between stakeholders
- Return to school
- Learning Gaps
- Well-being as a priority
- Equity and inclusion in reopening strategies with hybrid models and intermittent school closures
- Support to and by teachers
• **Learning loss** (reading and mathematics) might be substantial for most students but particularly severe for vulnerable student populations (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2020; Maldonado and De Witte, 2020; National Foundation for Educational Research, 2020)

• A study in the UK showed that teachers reported that **62% of “vulnerable students”** and **58% of students with SEN were less engaged** in remote learning than their classmates (National Foundation for Educational Research, June 2020)

• A study conducted in Hungary with teachers and Roma families showed that **dropouts** tend to be higher in schools with a higher share of Roma students (Kende and Messing, May 2020)
Supporting vulnerable students during school re-opening: **Cooperation**, including all stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Between Ministries</strong></th>
<th><strong>With teacher unions</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mainly Ministries of Health and Education</td>
<td>• Via formal and informal policy dialogues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• To design re-opening strategies</td>
<td>• Design re-opening strategies &amp; ensure implementation of equity and inclusion policies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Teacher unions have called for greater participation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>With associations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Whole-community approaches</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Through material/financial support</td>
<td>• Through ongoing communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To reach most people on the ground</td>
<td>• To foster socialisation and sense of belonging</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Addressing learning gaps

What are some policy options?

- Summer schools
- Accelerated education programmes
- Universal design to curricula
- After-school tutoring and study classes
- Informal learning

Examples of country initiatives

- In Germany, the Ministry of Education in the state Rhineland Palatine offered EUR 500,000 to fund a summer school to enable students to catch up before the new school year.
- Special programmes for the most disadvantaged students in England.
- France will finance 1.5 million additional hours for teachers to support students after school hours.
Ensuring that the **well-being** of students remains a priority

Special focus on **socio-emotional well-being**

- Provision of **psychological support**
- Responding to **socialisation** needs
- Building a **sense of community**
- **Instruct** teachers and parents on **how to communicate** with children about mental health issues

Example: England instructed teachers to use 'well-being guides' to help children understand what's going on and talk about their feelings

Providing **equitable and inclusive access to extra services**

- Continuing and adapting existing **financial support** to vulnerable children and families
- Cash **transfers** and **parenting programmes**
- **Free school meals** distribution

Example: Canada will provide CAD $75.2 million to Indigenous post-secondary students. Plus, added student loans waivers and increased student grants
Support by and to teachers and school leaders

**Teachers** expressed

- A high level of **stress**
- A need for **stronger support** from education authorities
- A need for more **accessible resources**
- A need for **capacity building**
  (School Education Gateway June 2020)

- Need to provide them with the **necessary resources to support all learners** and ensure their well-being at school

**What are some policy options?**

- Guidelines for safe school re-opening, **focus on vulnerable students** (United Kingdom)
- **Emergency fund for the well-being** of students and teachers (New Zealand)
Main gaps identified and suggestions

- Encouraging return to schools

- Equity and inclusion in reopening strategies with hybrid models and intermittent school closures

- Monitoring and Evaluation

- System of incentives to promote attendance, in particular for more vulnerable students

- Further improving the access to and quality of distance learning

- Placing vulnerable students as a priority in hybrid model strategies

- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of initiatives implemented during the crisis, identifying gaps and collecting disaggregated data
Next steps

• Comments are welcome. **Written comments** on the draft Policy Brief by **23 October 2020**. Brief will then be published on the OECD Covid-19 site.

• Invitation to **8th Strength through Diversity Policy Forum**: 18 March 2021.
  – Possible theme: Inclusion of vulnerable students in the post Covid-19 educational context
  – Other suggestions?
Thank you!

For more information:

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http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/strength-through-diversity.htm