



# STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY: EDUCATION FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

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

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Strength through Diversity Webinar, 05 October 2020



## Phase II (2019-): the value added of the project

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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**



# Education for Inclusive Societies: *Overarching Policy Questions and Objectives*



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?



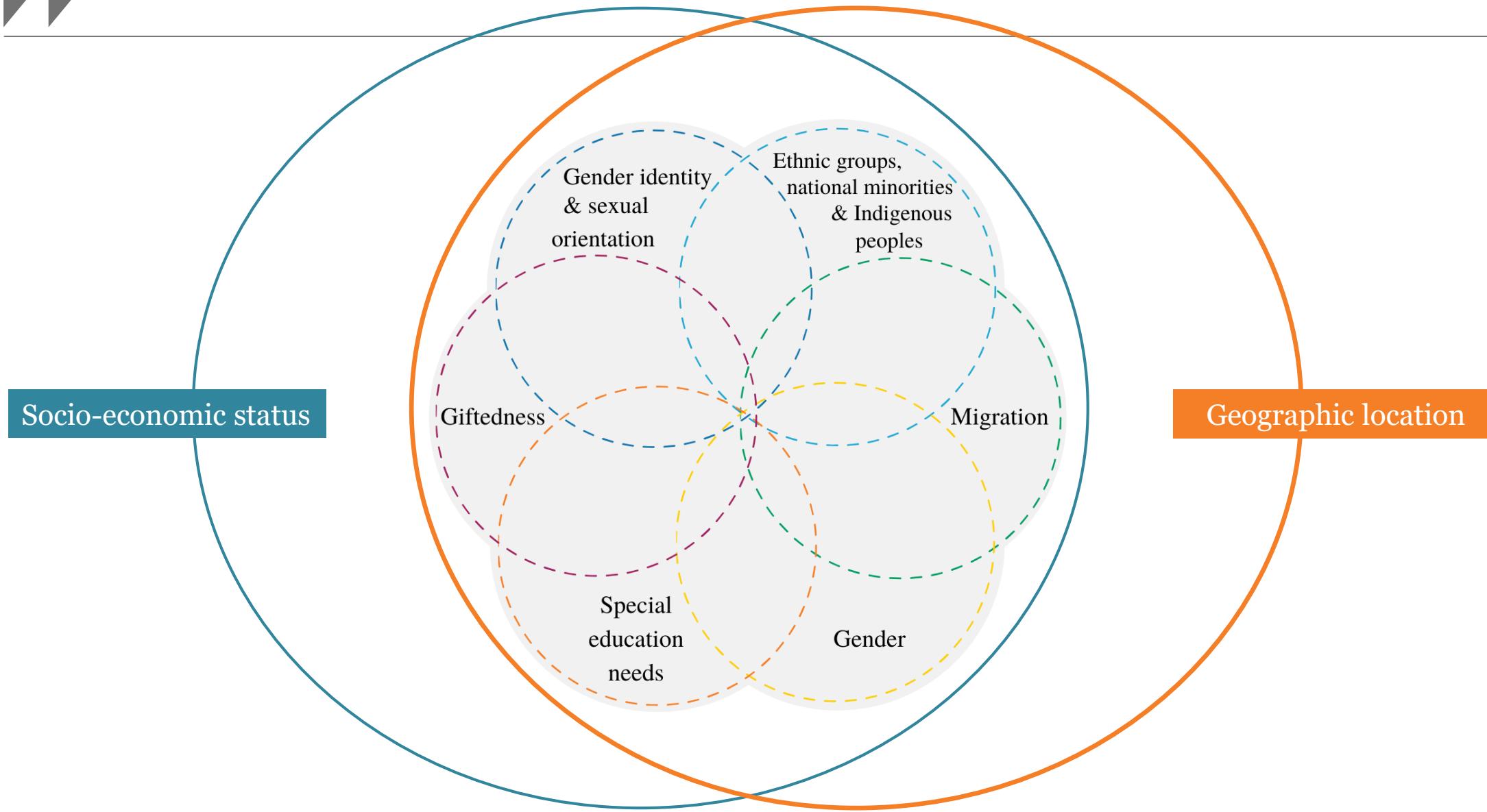
## Aim of the Project

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





# THE OECD STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY POLICY BRIEF

*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

## Immigrants, ethnic groups, Indigenous communities

- Lack of access to an electronic device or internet connection
- Precarious housing prevents good learning conditions
  - Language barrier
  - Living in remote areas
  - Discrimination intensified in some context which generates exclusion

## SEN

- Lack of accessibility to particular technology and extra services
- Parents might not be equipped to support their children with SEN
- Stressors may worsen symptoms for people that are affected by mental disorders

## Gender

- Gender roles may affect engagement in education
- Gender gaps may worsen
- Increase of domestic violence

## LGBTQI+

- Increase of domestic violence (no safe space)
- Stronger levels of depression and anxiety
- Higher rates of suicidal ideation, attempts, and completions
- Difficult or no access to hormones



# 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

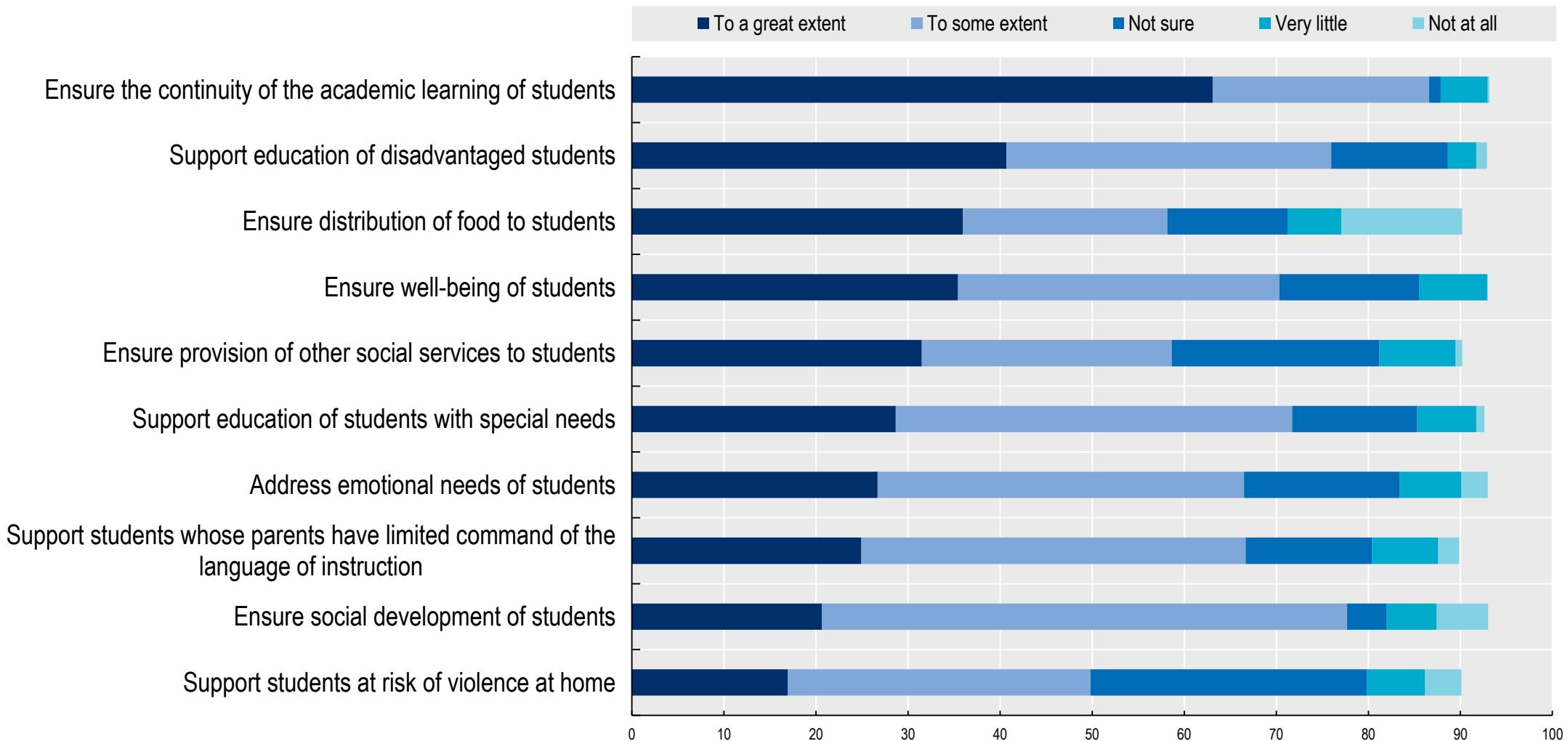
Can be **instrumental** in **identifying** disadvantaged groups and **targeting** them with specific policies...

... 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..



# Countries' priorities in strategies of education continuity



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

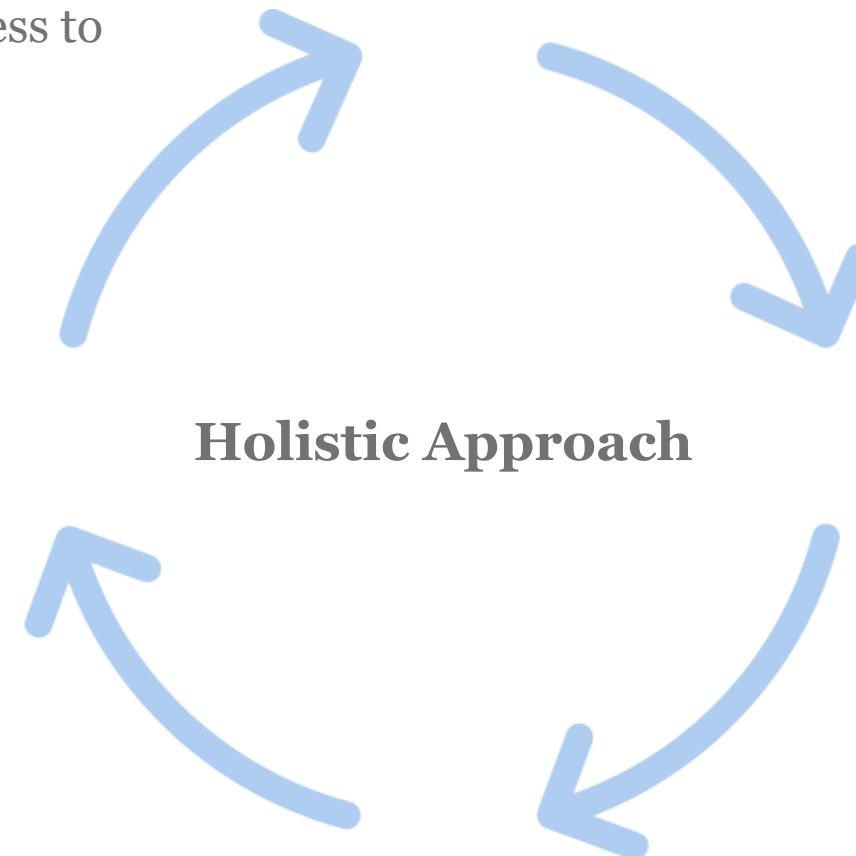
Equitable and inclusive access to digital learning resources

Support to and by teachers

Information to students and their families in different languages

Equitable and inclusive access to extra services for vulnerable students

Meeting socio-emotional needs





# 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**

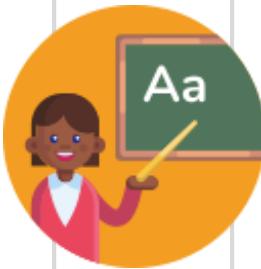
- **Online counselling services** (Canada, Australia, the United States etc.)
- Online initiative to set up **virtual meetings** between newcomers (Sweden)
- **Videos, creative tools** and **activities** for children, mainly developed by IOs (Spain, the United States, France etc.)



# 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)

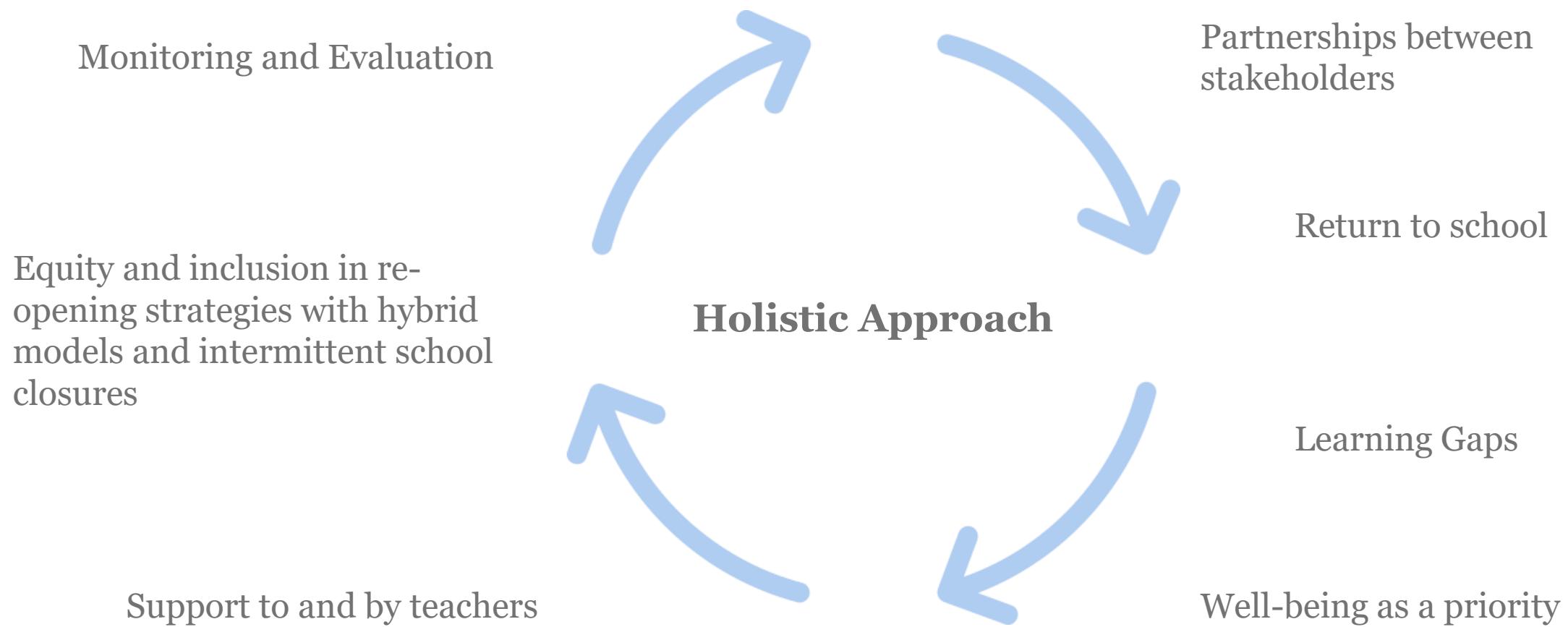


# THE OECD STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY POLICY BRIEF

*II. How can education systems support  
vulnerable students with the re-opening of  
schools?*



# Policy Areas Identified for a Holistic Approach





## Impact on education

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- **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

## Between **Ministries**

- Mainly Ministries of Health and Education
- To design re-opening strategies

## With **associations**

- Through material/financial support
- To reach most people on the ground



## With **teacher unions**

- Via formal and informal policy dialogues
- Design re-opening strategies & ensure implementation of equity and inclusion policies
- Teacher unions have called for greater participation

## **Whole-community approaches**

- Through ongoing communication
- To foster socialisation and sense of belonging



# 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

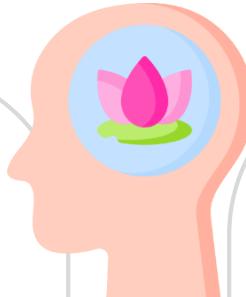


# Ensuring that the **well-being** of students remains a priority

## 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

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- Encouraging **return** to schools
- Equity and inclusion in re-opening strategies with **hybrid models** and **intermittent school closures**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**



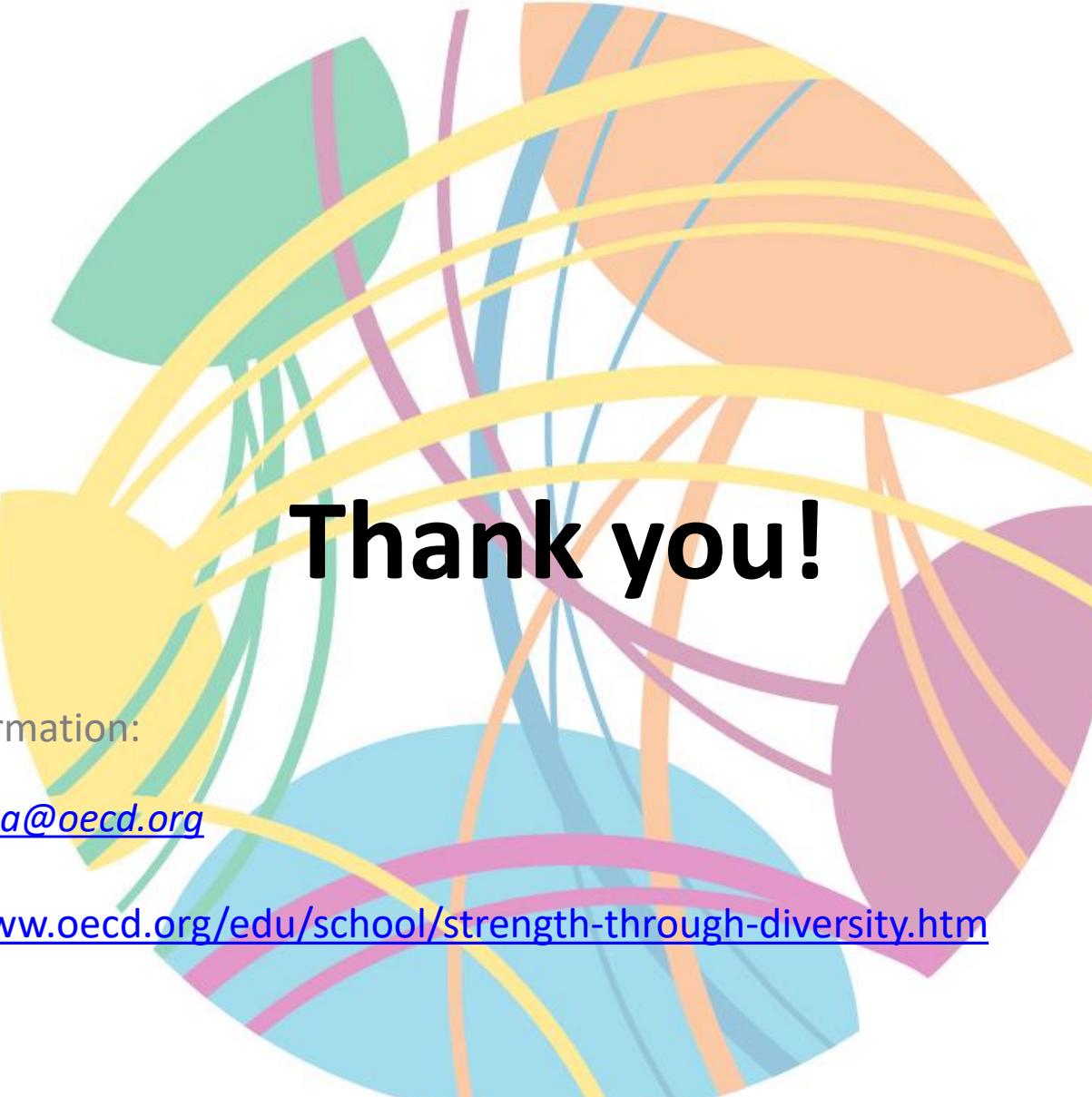
- System of **incentives** to promote attendance, in particular for more vulnerable students
- Further improving the **access** to and **quality** of **distance learning**
- Placing vulnerable students as a priority in **hybrid model strategies**
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of initiatives implemented during the crisis, identifying gaps and collecting **disaggregated data**



## Next steps

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- 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 **8<sup>th</sup> 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>