Contextual themes

COVID-19: Monitoring Impacts on Learning Outcomes (MILO)

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Acknowledgments

Introduction

The COVID-19: Monitoring Impacts on Learning Outcomes (MILO) project aims to measure learning outcomes in six countries in Africa, in order to analyse the long-term impact of COVID-19 on learning and to evaluate the effectiveness of distance learning mechanisms utilised during school closures. In addition, this project will develop the capacity of countries to monitor learning after the crisis.

The four overarching goals of the project are to:

> • Evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on learning outcomes and measure the learning loss by reporting against SDG indicator 4.1.1b
>
> • Identify the impact of different distance learning mechanisms put in place to remediate the learning disruption generated by COVID-19
>
> • Expand the UIS bank of items for primary education
>
> • Generate a toolkit so that assessment results can be scaled to international benchmarks, reporting against SDG 4.1.1.b.

In order to help address the first two overarching goals, the study will collect contextual data to help provide contexts on the impact of COVID-19 on students, schools and education systems. A student-level questionnaire will be completed by all students sampled in the study, a school-level questionnaire will be completed by school principals of sampled schools, and a system-level questionnaire will be completed by representatives of national governments on their country's COVID-19 education response. The data captured from these instruments will be analysed to describe the important contexts associated with learning outcomes during COVID-19.

The basis for the content to be included in these questionnaires will be based on published literature and what is known about the impact of COVID-19 on educational outcomes worldwide, with a specific focus on the African setting. ACER will develop a contextual framework provides this rationale for the contextual data collected as part of this study.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an outline of the major themes for the construction of the contextual instruments for the MILO study, and summarize the types of data proposed to be collected as part of the student, school and system level questionnaires.

Major themes

ACER has identified nine major themes (with some overlap) as the basis for developing content to be included in the contextual instruments of the study.

> a. *Background information about the system, the school and classroom, the students and their home environment.*

These data will capture the profile of participating students, schools and systems. Information at each of the different levels will be used to determine whether some segments of the population are more impacted by the disruption than others. Information intended to be captured relating to this theme include:

- o Student questionnaire
    - Student gender
    - Student age
    - Home background characteristics: parental education, parental occupation, home possessions, language spoken at home
    - Disadvantaged students
    - Household composition
- o School questionnaire
    - School principal characteristics: experience, education
    - Teacher characteristics: number, permanency, education
    - Student characteristics: language, disability, SES, migrant, refugee/IDP, single parent household.
    - School characteristics: school type, size, location, facilities, gender breakdown, years taught, class sizes, school meals, language of instruction

> b. *The nature of the COVID-19 disruption.*

These data will provide details of the nature of the disruption to educational systems and schools to provide context to other data collected relating to the response of the educational community to the period of disruption.

- o Student questionnaire
    - Nature of school closure and in-person attendance at school during the disruption
    - Home arrangements related to the disruption
- o School questionnaire
    - Accumulated time of school closure

- Nature of closure (e.g. closed to all, some, who)

- Arrangements for teaching and learning during closure (e.g. remote learning, reduced hours, restricted activities)

o System level questionnaire

- Nature of disruption and its effect on the educational system

c. *The impact of the COVID-19 disruption on teaching and learning processes*

Information collected under this theme will focus on the extent in which regular teaching and learning processes were disrupted and what steps were taken to ensure continuity of the delivery. Data collected for this theme include:

o Student questionnaire

- Student reports on teaching and learning arrangements delivered during period of remote learning (if applicable)

- Provision of resources for learning

- Student reports on frequency of use of learning resources

- Student reports on amount learnt during the disruption

- Student reports on available support from school and family

o School questionnaire

- Changes to delivery of classes during period of disruption

- Resources available (e.g. digital devises, physical learning materials, virtual lessons, recordings, phone calls, social media)

- Preparing for remote learning (e.g. training, adapting curriculum, remote assessment, transition plans)

- Teacher activities during remote learning

- Time spent providing remote learning

- Teacher experiences with remote learning (e.g. student engagement, curriculum followed, technology issues)

- Student involvement with remote learning (e.g. attendance, learning, work produced, discipline, quality of work)

- Barriers to remote learning (e.g. technology, learning materials, teacher resources, policies, equity)

o System level questionnaire

- Policies related to the delivery

- Curriculum changes in response to the disruption

d. *The impact of the COVID-19 disruption on school policies and procedures*

Information collected under this theme will cover non-classroom related changes as a result of the disruption, including ongoing policies set at the school level. Data collected for this theme will include:

- o Student questionnaire
- o School questionnaire
    - • Child academic support (e.g. targeted teaching to specific students and learning areas, grade repetition)
    - • Child wellbeing support (e.g. meals, families, counselling, SEL, health & safety,
- o System level questionnaire
    - ▪ System level policies on changes to school policies and procedures

e. *The impact of the COVID-19 disruption on school community interactions*

Information collected under this theme will explore how members of the school community (including students, parents, school staff and the respective local authorities) interact. Suggested topics to include in the questionnaires include:

- o Student questionnaire
    - ▪ Communication type and frequency with school community during the disruption
- o School questionnaire
    - ▪ Communication guidelines with school community during the disruption
    - ▪ Frequency of contact with parents/guardians
    - ▪ Information and advice provided to parents/guardians (e.g. support child's learning and wellbeing, further social services)
- o System level questionnaire
    - ▪ Policies related to keeping in contact with vulnerable students (system questionnaire)

f. *Impact on school community wellbeing*

Information collected under this theme will explore policies and procedures put in place to protect wellbeing of the school community as well as capturing information about perceived wellbeing during the period of disruption. Proposed topics included in the questionnaire would include:

- o Student questionnaire
    - ▪ Communication type and frequency with school community during the disruption

- o School questionnaire
    - Support for staff (e.g. information, services)
    - Support for student wellbeing (e.g. checking in, home visits)
    - Concern for wellbeing and/or learning: principal, staff, students
- o System level questionnaire
    - Policies related to the safety and wellbeing of students
    - Policies related to the safety and wellbeing of staff

g. Ongoing arrangements as a result of the COVID-19 disruption.

Data collected as part of this theme would be designed to provide information about post-disruption arrangements at schools, including preparedness for future periods of disruption. Information proposed to be collected as part of this theme includes:

- o Student questionnaire
    - Student report of how prepared they are for remote learning if their school closed for an extended period in the future
- o School questionnaire
    - How prepared are schools
    - Changes to policies and procedures (e.g. contact hours, health and safety, remote learning)
- o System level questionnaire
    - Policies in place for school return from disruption
    - Policies to prepare in case of future disruption

h. Assessment and monitoring during and after the COVID-19 disruption.

This theme is intended to capture information related to how schools monitored student achievement as well as the school community wellbeing during and after the disruption. Information related to this theme to be collected will include:

- o Student questionnaire
    - Students report on type and amount of feedback they received during the disruption
- o School questionnaire
    - Expected assessments (e.g. formative, summative, online, recording keeping)
    - Feedback to students
    - Impact on learning: (e.g. all students, some, who)

- o System level questionnaire
    - ▪ Whether students were assessed during/after disruption
    - ▪ Collection of data on emotional wellbeing (teachers and students)

i. Resourcing for coping with the COVID-19 disruption.

This theme will capture the resources available to the school community prior to the disruption, and whether new resources were made available as a consequence of it. Information related to this theme to be collected will include:

- o Student questionnaire
    - ▪ Access to digital devices
    - ▪ Access to broadcast technology
- o School questionnaire
    - ▪ Resources for teachers and students (e.g. technology, targeting students in need)
    - ▪ Professional development (e.g. remote learning, student wellbeing, engaging families)
    - ▪ School received support (e.g. national/provincial authority, community, aid organisations)
- o System level questionnaire
    - ▪ System level policies on school and student ICT provision
    - ▪ System level policies on school infectious disease prevention
    - ▪ Resources for professional development