The struggle against COVID-19 in Indonesian Education: **Responses, requirements, and policy needs for learning recovery**

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This report was prepared by: Neil Butcher, Noviandri Nurlaili Khairina, Citra Kumala, and Sonja Loots.

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Contact Information

The authors can be contacted at nkhairina@worldbank.org, ckumala@worldbank.org

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AKM	Minimum Competency Assessment
ASN PPK	Teacher independent learning for civil servant candidates
BAPPENAS	Ministry of National Development Planning
BOP PAUD	Pre-school grant (*Bantuan Operasional Penyelenggaraan*)
BOS	Basic education operational assistance (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*)
CAL	Computer-Adaptive Learning
DKI	Special Capital Region (*Daerah Khusus Ibukota*)
GOI	Government of Indonesia
HiFy	High Frequency Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts on Households Survey
INOVASI	Innovation for Indonesia's School Children: Australia Indonesia Partnership
J-PAL	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
LFH	Learning from Home
LMS	Learning Management System
LAYS	Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling
MoECRT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoRA	Ministry of Religious Affairs
PDDikti	Higher Education Database (*Pangkalan Data Pendidikan Tinggi*)
PPDB	Selection criteria for new students (*Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru*)
RISE	Research on Improving Systems of Education
TVRI	National television provider (*Televisi Republik Indonesia*)
UN	National examinations (*Ujian Nasional*)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

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Overview

This report reflects on the Indonesian school system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, assesses the influences of these policies on children in Indonesia, and discusses lessons learned. It further synthesizes these lessons into policy recommendations that might guide the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoECRT) to recover and to strengthen the system.

For over a year, the Government of Indonesia (GoI) has responded to the evolving situation promptly, with policy guidance and other support efforts, to keep 60 million children engaged in learning. While these efforts are lauded, the experiences of students, teachers, and parents shared here reflect the challenges that the pandemic, and consequent Learning from Home (LFH) have presented.

By reviewing the experiences of students, teachers, and parents identified through research studies conducted during 2020, the report proposes four broad policy areas that need attention, as below.

1. **Refocusing efforts on learning.** Reopening schools will require extensive planning to ensure that health and safety protocols are in place, and that younger, less independent students return to schools first. Significantly fewer primary and junior secondary school children are engaged in online learning outside of the capital, Daerah Khusus Ibukota (DKI) Jakarta. In addition, younger students' heavier reliance on teacher guidance make them more vulnerable to learning losses when they are not able to connect with their teachers. Another related policy focus is to include marginalized students in learning recovery efforts. While a wide range of efforts were put in place to reach students during the LFH period, many did not have access to the internet and had to rely on home visits or radio and television broadcasts of school subjects. Thus, a focus on learning includes returning to face-to-face instruction, continued development of LFH and blended learning options, and ensuring the inclusion of marginalized students.

2. **Supporting learning recovery.** Concrete catch-up plans need to be in place and technology can be leveraged to enhance learning. A primary concern is the potential learning losses that students have suffered, particularly those who were excluded from accessing learning through online or other means. The impact of learning losses will only be countered by a strategic and methodic approach to learning recovery.

3. **Providing training, support, and guidance to teachers, parents, and school principals.** Many parents felt unsupported and overwhelmed in the new roles they were required to play in their children's education. Similarly, many teachers felt unprepared for the new teaching roles they were required to fulfill. With both parents and teachers expected to play a continuously important role in students' learning recovery, both groups will need support and guidance.

4. **Strengthening relations between schools and their communities.** While the current research studies did not focus strongly on school-community relationships, these relationships are vital to strengthen the education system and its resilience in case of future disruptions. Ultimately, this paper looks beyond the end of the pandemic and towards rebuilding a stronger, more adaptable, and resilient education system.

I.

Background

Indonesia is reeling from the impact of COVID-19 on the welfare of its citizens, like many other countries. A year after the first Indonesian case was reported on March 2, 2020, the number of positive cases reached 1.55 million, with 42,064 deaths officially recorded (Dong, Du & Gardner, 2020). The World Bank (2020) reports that the unemployment rate rose by 1.8 percentage points to 7.1 percent and the underemployment rate increased by 3.8 percentage points to 10.2 percent in the third quarter of 2020 compared to the year before. While the economy shows some signs of improvement, there is still a long recovery ahead.

The education sector has been severely impacted, with COVID-19 responses affecting the learning of 60 million children. In September 2020, MoECRT highlighted that 'not enough people are talking about the educational crisis, the learning crisis that is happening all around the world, not just in Indonesia'. While 98 percent of schools have been engaged in LFH since March 2020 (MoECRT, 2020), a lack of access to appropriate resources to enable LFH has resulted in the reopening of some schools in regions where the risk of COVID-19 infections is lower (for example, some districts in North Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, Lampung, and East Nusa Tenggara).

To reflect on MoECRT's policy responses to COVID-19, assess the influences of these policies and propose policy implications for the way forward, the report is structured into four overarching and chronological policy response areas: (1) ceasing regular activities for emergency disease prevention; (2) introducing new learning approaches; (3) reformed education financing for continued education; and (4) introducing guidelines to reopen schools. While these stages provide a framework to map policy responses, they are not independent from each other and there might be some overlap either in timing or regarding the focus of policies.

"In September 2020, MoECRT highlighted that 'not enough people are talking about the educational crisis, the learning crisis that is happening all around the world, not just in Indonesia'."

II.

Reviewing the Government's education policy responses during the COVID-19 pandemic

After GOI announced the first confirmed COVID-19 case in Indonesia, the education sector was among the first to respond to the crisis and has implemented an adaptive and nimble series of responses since March 2020 (see Figure 1).

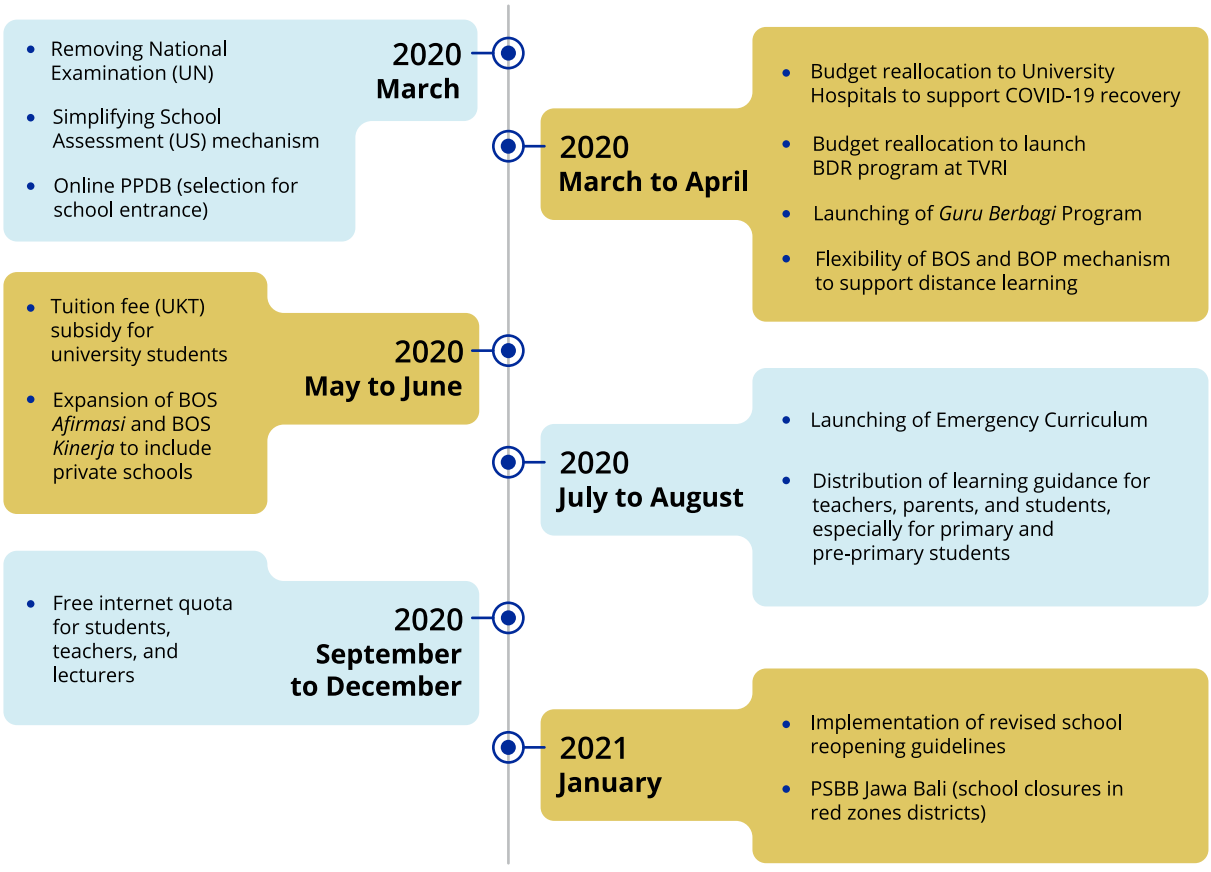

Figure 1 Timeline of MoECRT's initiatives in response to COVID-19 (refer to Annex 1 for a full list of policy responses)

1. Immediate cessation of regular activities to prioritize public health (March to April, 2020)

On March 9, 2020, the Ministry immediately released a circular letter to instruct all agencies under MoECRT, including schools and universities, to apply relevant health protocols to prevent infection. This included requirements to ensure the availability of handwashing facilities in school and implementation of routine cleaning and disinfection.[1] Within days, MoECRT instructed all educational institutions in the country to close and move to a 'learning from home' *(Belajar Dari Rumah)*[2] policy for all, including students in Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) schools and higher education institutions. This implied a shift to LFH 'until further notice.' With schools closed and students moving to distance learning, MoECRT relaxed the requirement for teachers to deliver the full curriculum.[3] Meanwhile, the national examinations (*Ujian Nasional*, UN) for secondary and vocational schools were scheduled to take place in March 2020. MoECRT announced a decision to cancel them, given that many students would need to gather in schools to take the computer-based examinations. UN 2020 was, however, already planned to be the last round of this type of national examinations, as MoECRT intended to replace it.[4]

With the cancellation of UN 2020, participation in the examination was no longer a requirement for student graduation, nor part of the selection criteria for accepting new students (*Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru*, PPDB). Previously, the UN score was used to rank students during the school admission process in public schools, both during general admission based on the zoning system and special admission based on student achievement. In the absence of a UN score, each local government set their own technical guidelines derived from general instructions in an MoECRT regulation.[5] For example, in DKI Jakarta, when applying to a school, students are ranked based on their age, with older students benefitting from their age,[6] while, in West Java, secondary students are ranked based on the distance from their home the school to which they are applying.[7] Local governments were also requested to prepare online PPDB mechanisms to prevent mass gatherings of parents and students during the process.

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of discontinuing face-to-face learning in favor of LFH. Early closure of schools has been found to be effective in curbing infection rates in the European context (Klimek-Tulwin & Tulwin, 2020), however other studies, including an international systematic review as well as country case studies from Japan and the United States of America, have found little evidence that cessation of face-to-face learning has had a mitigating impact on the transition of COVID-19 (Harris, Ziedan & Hassig, 2021; Iwata, Doi & Miyakoshi, 2020; Viner et al., 2020). While no large-scale Indonesian studies could be found to verify the effectiveness of the initial policy decisions, it might have contributed to a general awareness of health and safety protocols to minimize the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, this decision also came with a large cost for many students and to the system. Putra, Liriwati, Tahrim, Syafrudin, and Aslan (2020) found that Indonesia's initial policy response created various challenges, including difficulties faced by students and families unable to participate in learning because of a lack of access to technology and the strain placed on parents to act as facilitators in their children's learning. These findings have been confirmed by other studies, as noted in the following section.

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[1] See Annex 1 for a complete list of MoECRT communications

[2] *Belajar dari Rumah* is a partnership between MoECRT and the Indonesian public television network TVRI to facilitate televised education.

[3] Ministerial Circular Letter of MoECRT No 4/2020, see Annex 1.

[4] In December 2019, MoEC announced sweeping changes to the education sector through four priority reforms, including abolishing the country's annual national examinations. They will be replaced by a minimum competency assessment and character survey, which aims to measure student's numeracy and literacy levels at grades five, eight, and eleven.

[5] Ministerial Circular Letter of MoEC No 4/2020, MoEC Regulation No 44/2019.

[6] Decree of Head of Education Office DKI Jakarta No. 501/2020.

[7] Technical Guideline of PPDB in West Java for Secondary Schools No. 422/5794-set.disdik, May 6, 2020

2. Initiatives to continue learning and introduction of new learning approaches (May to September 2020)

2.1 TV, radio, and use of technology

As an immediate solution to the loss of learning opportunity, MoECRT first launched a series of programs to provide students and teachers additional support during school closures. MoECRT engaged directly with the national television provider, *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (TVRI) to broadcast educational content to facilitate distance learning. Television is accessible by 85 percent of the population and was seen as the best option to rapidly expand learning outreach to students (Yarrow, Masood & Afkar, 2020). TVRI started to broadcast educational content from April 13, 2020. To reach students in rural areas, radio programs were also introduced to provide some learning content for students in pre-primary up to secondary level.[8] In an MoECRT survey conducted a few days after the first broadcast, 35 percent of K-12 students reportedly followed the *Belajar Dari Rumah* program broadcast by TVRI (MoECRT, 2020). Through April to December 2020, TVRI offered a variety of educational content for both students and parents. From Monday to Friday, TVRI allocated a daily three-hour session for learning content aimed at students, divided into six thirty- minute time slots for different groups: pre-primary, primary students (grades 1-3 and 4-6 respectively), junior secondary students, senior secondary students, and content aimed at parents. The learning content for students focuses on literacy and numeracy subjects. During weekends, TVRI broadcasts another three-hour session for art and cultural learning, including movie screening, talk show programs, and other cultural events. However, since early January 2021, there have been changes in the target audience and program structure of the TVRI educational program. During weekdays, TVRI only broadcasts learning content for pre-primary and primary students, providing 30-minute slots for each grade.

"TVRI allocated a daily three-hour session for learning content aimed at students, divided into six thirty- minute time slots for different groups: pre-primary, primary students (grades 1-3 and 4-6 respectively), junior secondary students, senior secondary students, and content aimed at parents."

[8] https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20200414/79/1226773/rri-luncurkan-program-belajar-di-rri-untuk-siswa-dari-rumah

Student engagement with the TVRI broadcasts declined over the course of five months in 2020. In June 2020, 56 percent of students reported watching educational television, but this proportion decreased to only ten percent in November 2020 (High Frequency Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts on Households [HiFy] Survey, 2020). The largest decrease was seen from students in DKI Jakarta (Figure 2), although there was no significant increase in the use of other learning modalities, such as using applications, online learning, or listening to lessons over the radio (Figure 3). Further analysis of the data shows that students from families in the bottom 40 category[9] are more likely to continue using the TVRI broadcasting while learning from home. This trend is likely related to constraints in owning the technology needed to access different modalities of learning and/or affordability of that access. Use of the TVRI broadcast for learning is also linked to a household's digital literacy level, with 82 percent of the TVRI broadcast audience coming from families who never use digital means for financial services and transactions. These findings could imply that learners just disengaged from the TVRI programming, or that, for some, the TVRI broadcasting might have acted as a transitional tool to keep learning going while schools/teachers decided to focus on one or a limited number of activities with which they were most comfortable, thus replacing the educational television programs with LFH alternatives. It also implies that the MoECRT action was appropriate, considering that more than half of the television broadcast audience comprises primary students, even with the significant decrease in the proportion of students watching the broadcasts in Round 2.

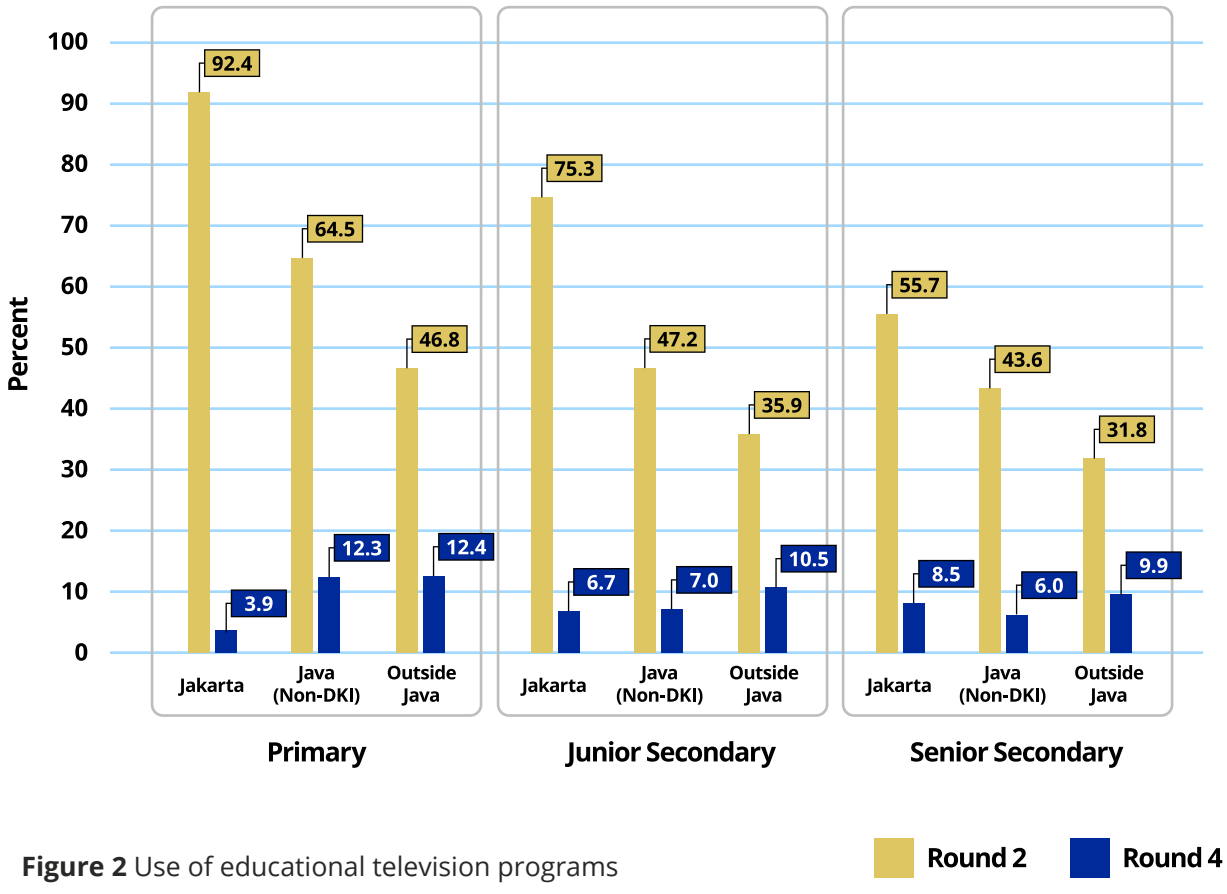


Figure 2 Use of educational television programs

[9] The World Bank uses the bottom 40 percent of income distribution among populations as an indicator to measure shared prosperity and the growth of real per capita income.

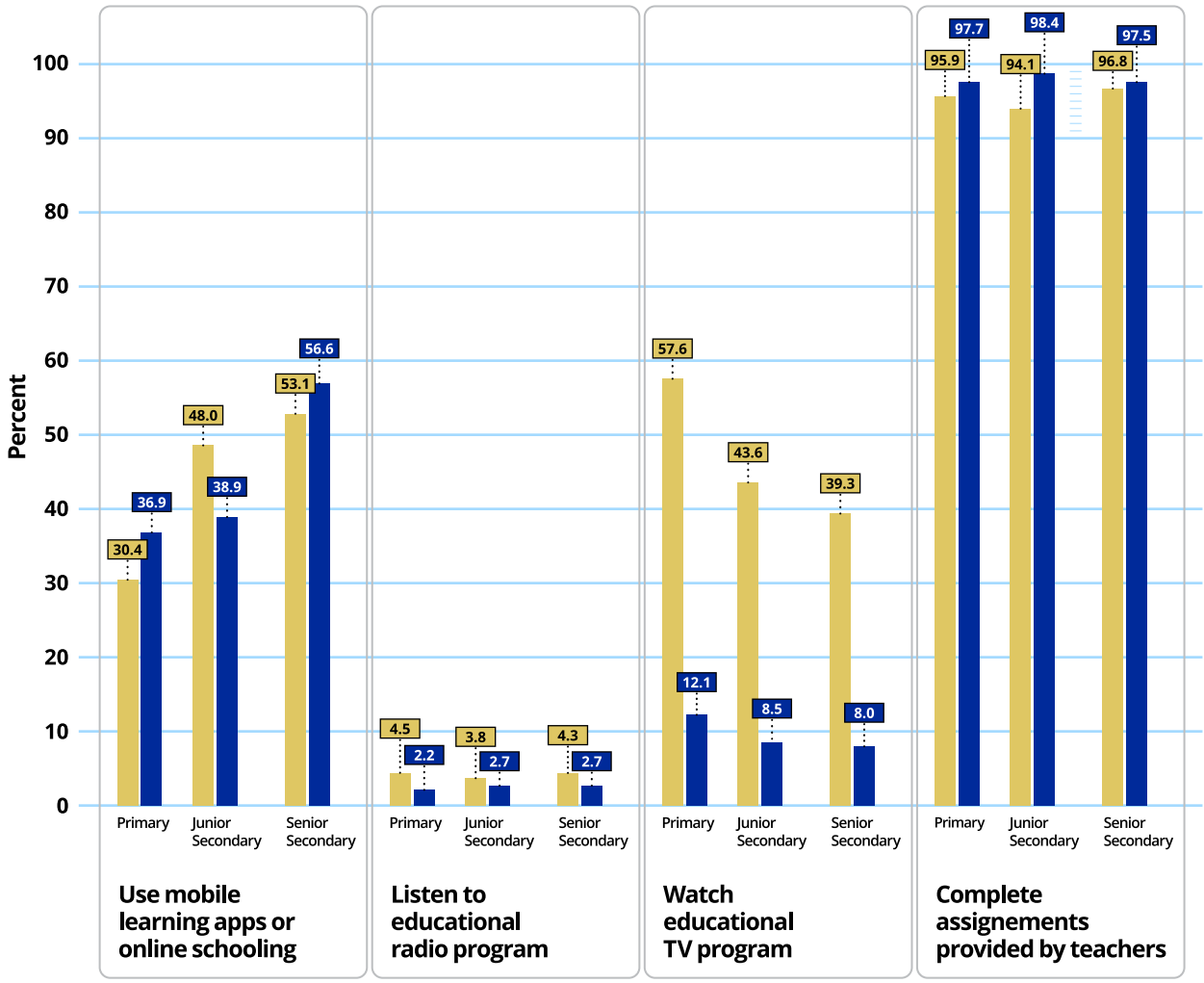


Figure 3 Different means of learning from home by school level

The 2020/21 academic year started with distance-based learning for most students, and teachers tried to adopt various modes of distance-based teaching and learning practices, though under constraints. As in other countries, the prolonged pandemic required most Indonesian education providers, including MoECRT and MoRA schools and universities, to use LFH. Various approaches were used: (i) online and/or app-based teaching (where internet is available); (ii) distribution of books and materials to students for their home learning; (iii) using social media channels, such as WhatsApp, for real time teaching and follow-up communications; (iv) using television or radio programs; and (v) especially for lower levels of education, teachers conducted home visits to deliver learning materials and provide tutorials for students. Home visits were also more common for students living in rural areas (13 percent) than in urban areas (2.5 percent). This might be related to the limited availability of other modalities such as online learning or poor connection in rural areas (HiFy Survey, 2020). During these sessions, teachers usually helped to deliver learning materials and provide tutorials for students, which were usually conducted in small groups of three to five students.

In June 2020, 42 percent of households with K-12 students were engaged in online learning, most of whom (57 percent) were secondary-level students (HiFy survey, 2020). Although free internet support from MoECRT was launched in September, use of online learning remained at about 41 percent during November. A consistent pattern emerged in online learning use across both rounds of the HiFy survey, with students from the bottom 40 families least likely to use online learning. In Round 2 of the HiFy survey, 38 percent of students from the bottom 40 families used online learning and, in Round 4, 41 percent. These figures are consistently lower than other welfare classes in the respective periods (middle 40 and top 20 groups' use of online learning are both above 50 percent). Use of online learning was also significantly higher for DKI Jakarta, with 72 percent of the students using online means[10] for learning in the last seven days, which is twice as many as other regions in Java and regions outside Java (Figure 4).

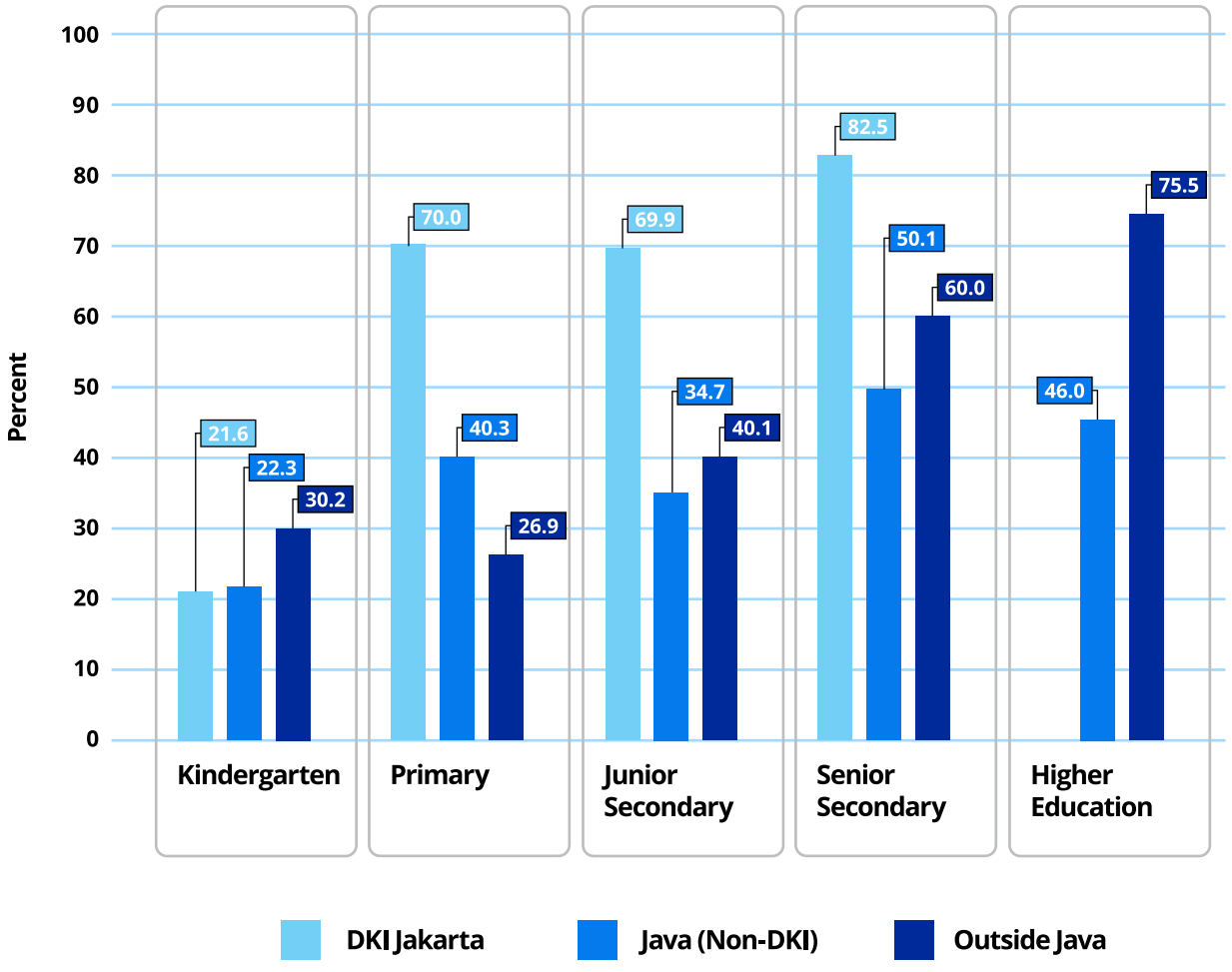


Figure 4 Use of mobile learning apps/online schooling, by level of education and region (HiFy, 2020, Round 4)

[10] Online learning here refers to the use of mobile apps for learning and online schooling, including online lecture via online interactive video platform.

The COVID-19 pandemic has propelled many schools to adopt new tools and learning platforms to maintain learning. For communication purposes, social media, including WhatsApp and Facebook, are the most common tools used by teachers to stay connected with students and/or their parents. These platforms were reported to be the main communication method for 50 and 84 percent of teachers in remote and non-remote areas respectively (MoECRT, 2020c).[11] To help with learning, many teachers, especially those in urban areas with better internet connections, also suggested that their students access learning content available online. In April 2020, 32 percent of teachers reported recommending that students use *Ruangguru*[12] services for online learning, while 41 percent recommended that students use the *Rumah Belajar*[13] platform provided by MoECRT (MoECRT, 2020c). Video conferencing is also an option for teachers to deliver learning instruction, with 46 and 20.5 percent of teachers in non-3T and 3T[14] areas respectively reporting using this feature for online teaching (MoECRT, 2020c). However, many teachers are still not familiar with using an online learning management system (LMS), although this technology can help teachers manage online classes, collect student assignments, and provide feedback, as well as to facilitate collaboration among students while learning from home. Just over 40 percent of teachers in non-3T areas reported using LMSs for distance learning, with most using Google Classroom. Only three percent of teachers reported using the Online Class feature in *Rumah Belajar*. Overall, only nine percent of teachers in 3T regions, those areas most underdeveloped and remote, reported using an LMS for distance learning (MoECRT, 2020).

> "A synthesis of the research findings show that younger students, those from lower socioeconomic circumstances, and students with limited access to infrastructure will arguably suffer greater learning losses because of school closures."

[11] This is in comparison with other communication method listed in the survey: in-person education at school, home visits, phone/text message, video conference messaging, email, and others.

[12] *Ruangguru* is one of many EdTech firms in Indonesia, offering learning content for K-12 students and teachers.

[13] *Rumah Belajar* is a Learning Management System (LMS) platform developed by MoEC.

[14] 3T is abbreviated from *Tertinggal, Terdepan, dan Terluar,* which literally translates to the Frontier, Outermost and Disadvantaged Areas as classified by the Presidential Regulation No. 131/2015.

2.2 Curriculum revision and teaching practices

Both MoECRT and MoRA introduced an adapted K-12 curricula to reduce the burden of distance learning on both students and teachers. Schools were given the option to continue using the national curriculum, use the special circumstances curriculum, or adapt the curriculum themselves. The special circumstances curriculum is an adapted version of the national curriculum, where basic competencies are refocused for each subject so that teachers and students can focus on essential and prerequisite competencies for continuing learning at the next level. MoECRT also relaxed some regulations for teachers, for example, doing away with the 24-hour face-to-face workload per week so that teachers could focus on providing interactive lessons to students without the need to fulfilment requirements for formal classes (MoECRT, 2020b). Of the almost two-thirds (62 percent) of teachers who indicated, in the Tanoto Foundation (2020) study, that they responded to the MoECRT instruction to adjust curricula, 71 percent simplified learning activities, 57 percent provided or integrated learning materials that relate to COVID-19, 41 percent adjusted basic competences according to student needs (more practical life skills rather than subject matter), and 26 percent reduced coverage of materials.

MoECRT provided practical learning guidance for teachers and parents of younger students. As part of the emergency curriculum, modules for primary students focus on literacy and numeracy subjects for each grade.[15] Modules for students contained an activity book for learning, which is based on the core curriculum for each grade. Modules for parents contain practical tips and examples of schedules and activity organizers, which aim to help parents to assist with and monitor their children's learning. Modules for teachers contain more information on how to assess student competency during distance learning and descriptions of activities included in student modules. These modules are not compulsory but are intended to provide guidelines when needed during distance learning. Similar modules are available for pre-primary students and parents, which are complemented by printable learning materials and activity books.[16]

[12] Ruangguru is one of many EdTech firms in Indonesia, offering learning content for K-12 students and teachers.

[13] Rumah Belajar is a Learning Management System (LMS) platform developed by MoEC.

[14] 3T is abbreviated from Tertinggal, Terdepan, dan Terluar, which literally translates to the Frontier, Outermost and Disadvantaged Areas as classified by the Presidential Regulation No. 131/2015.

[15] Available here: https://bersamahadapikorona.kemdikbud.go.id/tingkat-sd-modul-belajar-literasi-numerisasi/

[16] Available here: https://bersamahadapikorona.kemdikbud.go.id/buku-saku-paud/

2.3 Teacher support

MoECRT launched two online platforms to support teachers with their teaching practice – a platform for peer-to-peer communication and a platform for online training. The first platform is called the *Guru Berbagi (teacher sharing)* website, which enables teachers to discuss teaching approaches with peers. Through this platform, teachers can share and download lesson plans developed by other teachers and share learning content and media learning techniques. The second platform is called *Guru Belajar (teacher learning)*, initially designed to host a webinar series to help teachers adapt to distance learning, including training in using technology for teaching and learning. Teachers were able to access this online training platform through their smart phones and computers. MoECRT is currently using the platform to offer online learning content for teachers. As of March 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic series has ended and there are four sets of webinars available on the *Guru Belajar* platform, including on Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM), inclusive education, life-skill education, and teacher independent learning for civil servant candidates (ASN PPK). To date, the AKM has had 502,148 participants and ASN PPK has had 484,639.[17]

Key challenges reported by teachers include struggling with internet connectivity, finding it difficult to monitor student progress and development, and not being sufficiently trained in applying educational technology to pedagogical approaches (RISE SMERU, 2020; Tanoto, 2020). The INOVASI (2020) study, which focused on 15 districts, found that while the local government provided support to schools and teachers in terms of LFH guidance, communication allowance, logistic benefits, and teaching support, fewer than 50 percent of teacher respondents indicated that the support they received was adequate. One example related to a lack of guidance and support on engaging students with disabilities during LFH. All teachers in this study were four times more likely to receive information on online learning from the television and the internet than from the school principal. While this indicates the resourcefulness of teachers, it raises a concern that they might not have received appropriate guidance from their respective schools to lead LFH initiatives.

> "The platform is called the Guru Berbagi (teacher sharing) website, which enables teachers to discuss teaching approaches with peers."

[17] Available here: https://gurubelajardanberbagi.kemdikbud.go.id/

2.4 Students' Experience and Feedback from LFH

Some students enjoyed the LFH experience, while others did not. For the 51 percent of students who did not experience LFH as enjoyable in the Tanoto (2020) study, the primary reason was being given too many tasks (43 percent), followed by 17 percent indicating that they were bored with the activities given to them, and 16 percent missing regular interactions with their peers and teachers. Not all students' experiences with LFH have been negative. The Tanoto (2020) study, conducted in five provinces, including North Sumatra, Riau, Jambi, Central Java, and East Kalimantan, showed that, for the 48 percent of students who said that LFH was enjoyable, most (51 percent) appreciated the ability to discuss their work with parents, followed by 41 percent who liked the differentiated learning activities. By comparison, around 55 percent of students acknowledged support from their respective schools to access online learning, including providing them with internet packages (UNICEF LFH, 2020b). Similarly, respondents to the INOVASI (2020) study note that students have developed improved life skills and healthy life knowledge.

During LFH, parents had to take on more prominent roles in their children's learning. Some of the challenges that parents experienced included increased responsibility to tend to their children's education while attempting to work from home; difficulties understanding subject matter; inadequate access to the internet or devices to aid LFH; and increased family expenses, such as data packages (Tanoto, 2020). On the other hand, parents engaged more with their children, monitored study habits, and felt safer having their children at home during the pandemic (Tanoto, 2020). Teachers supported parents by providing information on LFH (68 percent); providing information on learning resources (65 percent); and providing consultation time to students and parents (52 percent; Tanoto, 2020). Parents, however, listed a lack of teacher guidance and contact with teachers as a main challenge, in UNICEF's return-to-school and LFH surveys (2020a; 2020b), as well as in Save the Children's (2020a) survey. Most teachers (87 percent) in the RISE SMERU (2020) study claimed that parents were not responsive to teachers during LFH. In contrast, the J-PAL study focusing on urban schools reported that at least 75 percent of parents feel that their child's study load, learning material, and delivery during LFH met their expectations. More than 90 percent of parents felt that they had received adequate guidance from teachers, according to J-PAL.

The various surveys show that students from families of a higher socioeconomic status tended to receive the support they needed, both in terms of resources to learn and assistance from adult family members. Families from higher socioeconomic status usually have someone who is educated enough to help students to learn. Meanwhile, lower-income students tended to receive minimal support from other family members. Even if their parents or other family members accompanied these students during their learning, adults mostly indicated that they had limited ability to understand and deliver the content or that learning was still difficult given that they had limited access to learning materials (due, for example, to internet quota, smartphone, computer, and other resources needed to access content). The experiences of these students could potentially widen the inequity gap, given that low-performing students from low-income families will have an extra burden to catch up beyond the pandemic.

[8] https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20200414/79/1226773/rri-luncurkan-program-belajar-di-rri-untuk-siswa-dari-rumah

Teachers are also required to find alternative solutions for learning, given the different circumstances and capabilities of students. Online learning might not be an appropriate medium for teaching and learning for many students due to limited access to devices and internet connection. As a result, teachers often need to improvise by implementing blended approaches in teaching and learning. For example, schools in Sungai Apik, which is located 45km from the nearest city, need to group their students into two categories: those with online connectivity and those who come to school for face-to-face learning.[18] This school is located in a 'yellow zone,' indicating that the government permits limited face-to-face learning. Teachers create different schedules and assignments for those who come to school and for those learning online. Not only are teachers required to be empathetic to the circumstances of their students, they are also required to be creative and adjust lesson plans for different student needs.

2.5 Concerns about the effectiveness of LFH

Several studies note the negative impact of LFH on student learning. Half of students taking part in the INOVASI and MoECRT studies spent fewer than two hours per day studying. Many teachers faced severe difficulties in adapting to new technologies, particularly at the beginning of LFH (INOVASI, 2020; MoECRT, 2020). The INOVASI (2020) study further found that students had reduced access to the learning process, and the quality of learning seemed low, with inequalities between students from different backgrounds more pronounced. This implies that the education levels of parents and the socioeconomic status of the family influence the value placed on engaging with education or the availability of technology to support learning. Students who experienced more difficulties noted challenges with internet access and a lack of support from schools as key contributing factors. Both the Tanoto (2020) and UNICEF LFH (2020b) studies list internet access as one of the main challenges that students faced during LFH. Taken together, the negative impact of LFH could be associated with reduced learning hours, lower learning quality taking place, widening inequalities in engagement with learning, and a general sense of a lack of support and guidance on how to proceed with LFH.

Another key concern relates to determining and mitigating the potential impact of school closures on student learning achievement. Simulations by Yarrow et al. (2020) estimated that school closures, regardless of whether LFH took place,[19] would negatively impact students' literacy and numeracy development. Considering that most Indonesian students scored below the minimum proficiency level for reading before COVID-19, the pandemic may have magnified the problem. In terms of learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS), or the difference between the number of years a child attends school and the actual years of learning the child has completed according to harmonized test scores, Indonesian students can expect to complete 12.3 years of schooling but only learn the equivalent of 7.9 years of schooling. Implementing a simulation methodology, Yarrow and his colleagues estimated that this might further reduce to 7.2 years of schooling in the most pessimistic scenario. Another primary concern is student dropouts. With Indonesian household incomes expected to decline, the student dropout rate is expected to increase accordingly, as parents take older children out of school to ease the strain on family income. This is

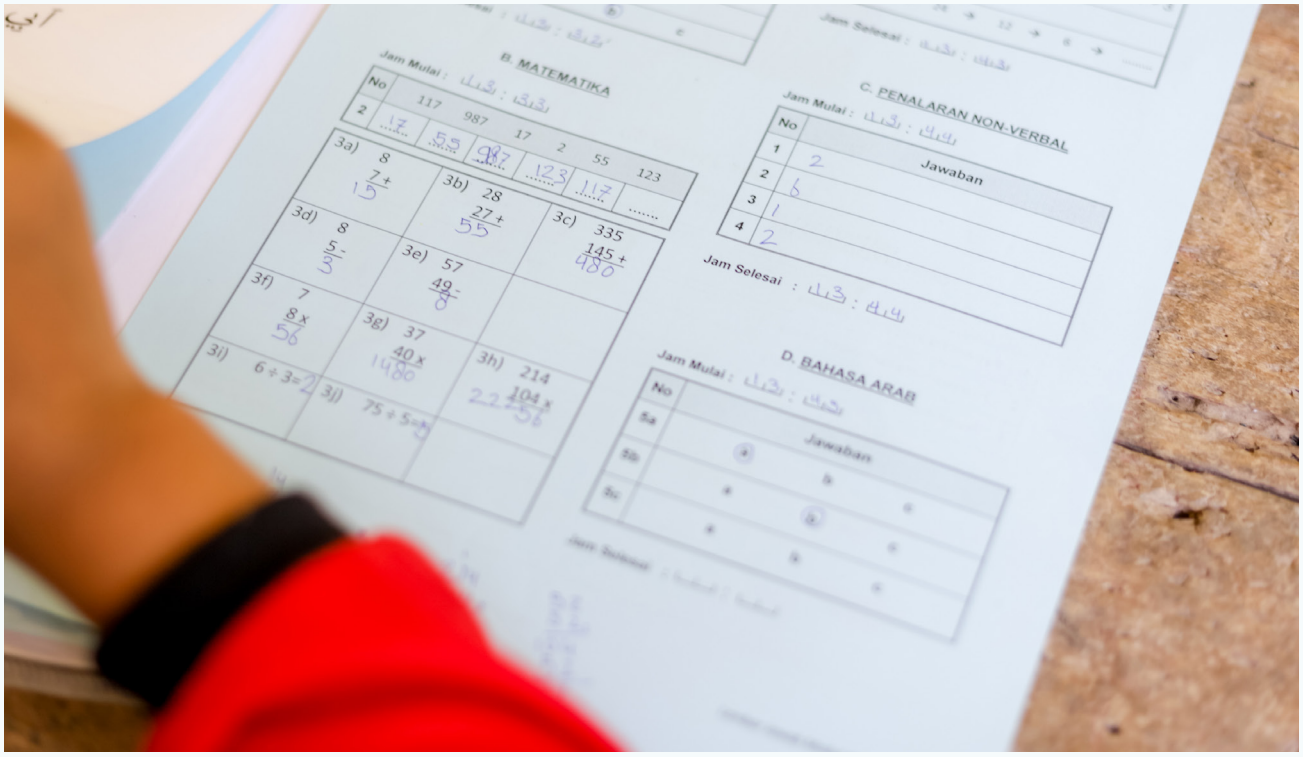
[18] https://www.pintar.tanotofoundation.org/upaya-guru-perdesaan-sungai-apit-membuat-siswa-belajar-blended/

[19] The research team calculated the effectiveness of alternative means of teaching and learning during school closures to be roughly 33% of the learning effect of in-classroom instruction.

expected to occur more frequently among families from lower socioeconomic circumstances, who might show lower attachment to learning. Ultimately, the true extent of learning losses will only become clear once students are assessed.

While most schoolchildren were able to continue learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the quality of learning is questionable. MoECRT's initial response to use television and radio services to broadcast lessons may have helped teachers and students transition from traditional face-to-face classes to a platform or platforms that suited them best. It also helped to reach students in remote areas lacking infrastructure. However, it seems many students struggled to adapt to LFH, with the learning gap wider for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Responses from teachers on how they adapted the curriculum point to a lack of concrete guidance, with many teachers resorting to their own judgement to adjust the curriculum. This is also reflected in misunderstandings and feelings of a lack of support and understanding between teachers, parents, and students. While platforms were provided to support teachers, many still felt unguided, overwhelmed, and overworked.

> "MoECRT's initial response to use television and radio services to broadcast lessons may have helped teachers and students transition from traditional face-to-face classes to a platform or platforms that suited them best."



3. Building a more resilient education system through reformed education financing (April to September 2020)

MoECRT increased flexibility in the usage of the school grants for basic education (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah* [BOS] and pre-school (*Bantuan Operasional Penyelenggaraan PAUD* [BOP PAUD]) programs to alleviate the financial burden of distance learning and COVID-19 on schools, parents, and teachers. In normal times, these regulations set rigid budget allocation guides for BOS/BOP grants that are applied at school level. To better reflect the needs at school level, the standard budget restrictions were relaxed to give principals more flexibility in using the funds. According to MoECRT regulation No. 19/2020, principals can provide internet quota subsidies for students and teachers, pay subscriptions for online learning courses/platforms, pay transport allowances for teachers who pay home visits to students, procure laptops and tablets or print more learning materials and worksheets for students, and buy health and sanitation supplies for schools, such as disinfectants and masks.

MoECRT and MoRA increased the amount of financial support and flexibility of usage for each school. Many school principals reported that they were aware of the BOS funding relaxation policies introduced by MoECRT but remained hesitant to allocate more money to support teachers due to limited guidance. The RISE SMERU (2020) study reported that 43 percent of teacher respondents received additional funds from their schools for teaching activities from home, and 24 percent received training related to technology use in learning. It seems that schools in urban areas were more likely to make use of BOS funding to support teachers than schools in rural areas. As with MoECRT, MoRA provided support in the form of relaxed restrictions on financial obligations. MoRA, which oversees more than 80,000 madrasahs and other religious schools and provides education for around 15 percent of the student population in the country, enacted similar policies. It provided financial support for madrasahs and their students in the form of BOS/BOP relaxation and subsidized tuition fees.

To support more schools during the pandemic, MoECRT also expanded the BOS program to private schools. The incentive-based school grant (BOS Afirmasi) was originally designed to support public schools in 3T areas for quality improvement, while the performance-based school grant (BOS Kinerja) was designed as a reward for high-performing public schools. However, due to COVID-19, MoECRT decided that these grants could also be given to private schools. According to MoECRT regulation No. 23/2020 and MoECRT regulation No. 24/2020, BOS Afirmasi and BOS Kinerja can be given to schools that are most in need and affected by the pandemic. The allocation for 2020 is IDR 60 million per school per year. No information is yet available on disbursement details.

Between March 2020 and May 2021, students and teachers at all levels of education received an internet data quota. In late August 2020, the government announced that there would be an allocation of IDR 7.2 trillion to provide free internet access for teachers and students from September to December 2020. This amount was meant to cover all MoECRT students and teachers: 50.7 million pre-tertiary students, 5.2 million university students, 3.4 million teachers, and 250,000 lecturers across the country. To be enrolled in this program, schools needed to update student and teacher phone numbers in the basic education data system, DAPODIK, and, when the student/teacher passed the eligibility criteria, quotas were distributed monthly. In early March 2021, Minister Nadiem announced that the program would continue in 2021, with an adapted approach to enable more general use of quotas: pre-primary students would receive 7GB per month (previously 20GB), primary and secondary students 10 GB per month (previously 35GB), teachers 12 GB per month (previously 42GB), and university students and lecturers 15GB per

month (previously 50GB). Students and lecturers who previously received the quota subsidy in 2020 would continue receiving the benefit, as long as they maintained an average monthly use of 1GB of the quota. The data packages were not allowed to be used on websites blocked by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok (MoECRT, Regulation No. 4/2021). Based on the HiFy survey in November, around 51 percent of students reported receiving the quota, but only 82 percent of students receiving the quota are using it for daily learning.

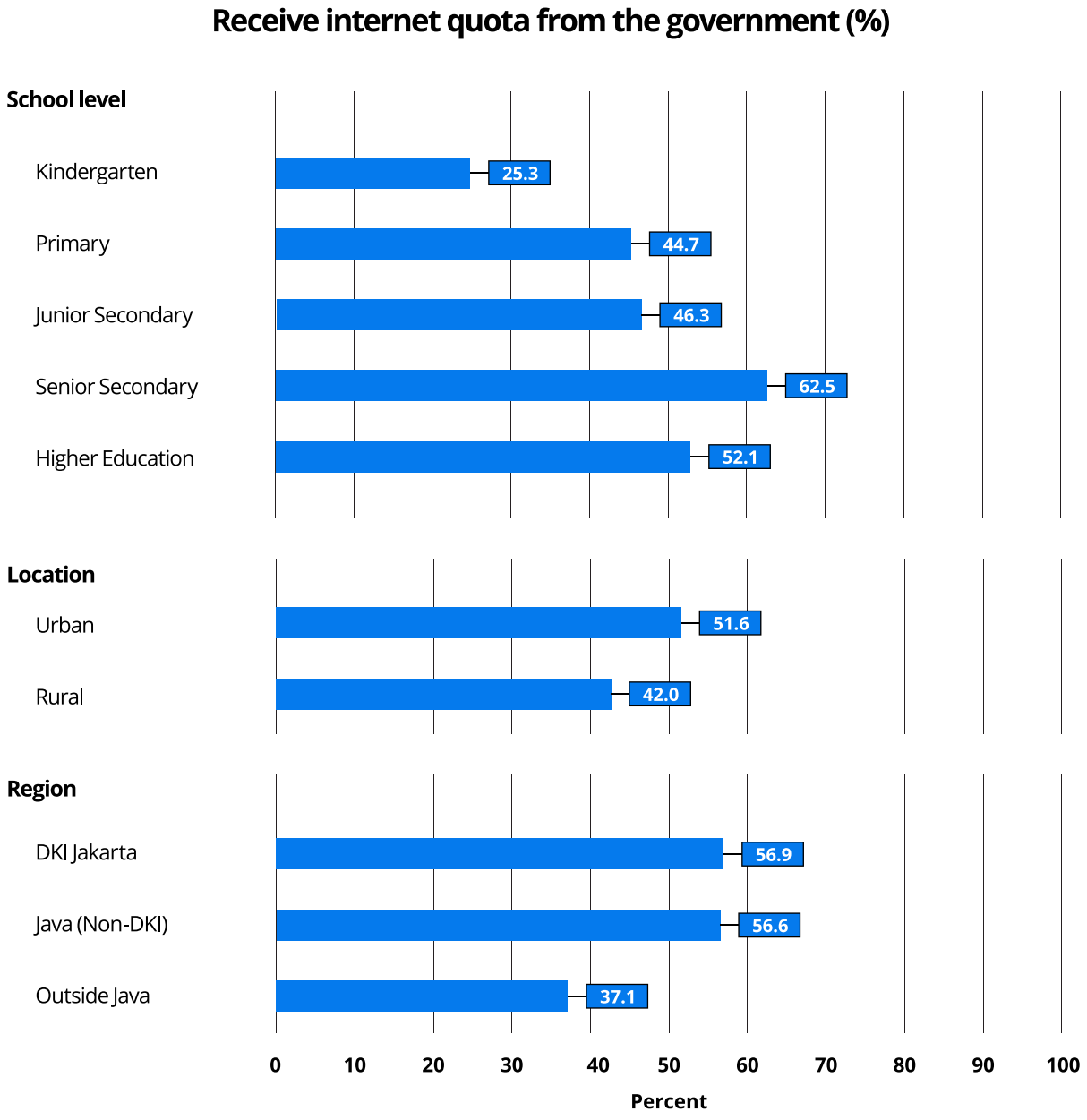


Figure 5 Percentage of students receiving the internet quota, by school level and region (HiFy, 2020, Round 4)

The Government of Indonesia also introduced financial support packages for contract personnel, including honorary teachers and related education personnel. Non-PNS teachers and education personnel under MoECRT and MoRA, including librarians and school operators, who receive a monthly salary below IDR 5 million, are eligible for the support if they are registered in one of the MoECRT or MoRA education databases (DAPODIK/PDDIKTI/EMIS/SIMPATIKA/SIAGA). Each person has received a total of IDR 1.8 million (USD124.32); MoECRT teachers received a one-time amount, while MoRA teachers received it in a three-month payment plan. In 2020, MoECRT allocated a total of IDR 3.6 trillion for all non-PNS teachers, lecturers, and education personnel. This includes more than two million teachers, lecturers, and education personnel,[20] in addition to MoRA's allocation of IDR 1.1 trillion for about 600 thousand teachers.[21] The payment process was to be completed by the end of June, 2021.

The effectiveness of financial support interventions is unknown. Repurposing the BOS Afirmasi and BOS Kinerja grants towards schools in need and supporting contract workers likely provided some needed relief. While the provisioning of data packages to support students and teachers is good, it is only valid for three months. A more sustainable way is needed to ensure that students and teachers can access the internet beyond the pandemic. While there is no information on whether the relaxation of BOS/BOP regulations had a significant impact, the limited guidance schools received from the government seemed to have made them hesitant to readjust budgets.

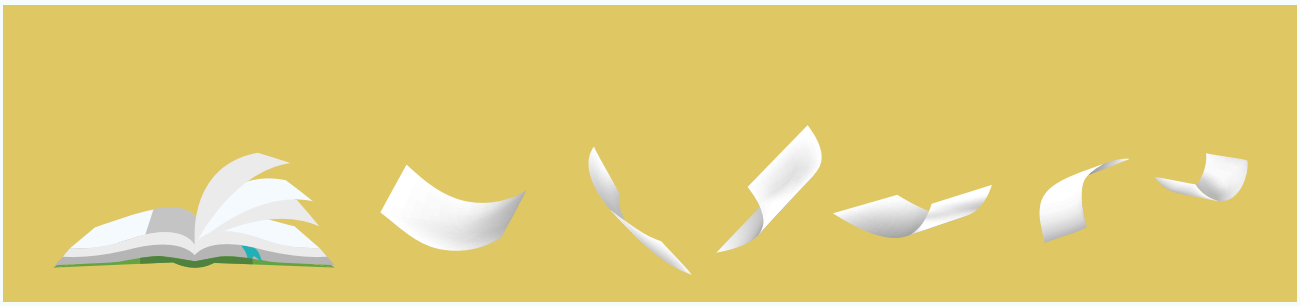
4. Efforts to reopen schools (June to November 2020)

A Joint Indonesian Ministerial Decree by the Ministries of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Religious Affairs, Health, and Home Affairs was developed in June 2020 to guide the reopening of schools. The Decree provides a step-by-step guide for the provincial government, different types of schools, and tertiary institutions to: identify which color-coded zone they belong to; determine their readiness to reopen by completing a centralized checklist; and to explain the roles and responsibilities of relevant role players to adhere to health protocols in different environments. In late November, this regulation was updated to give local government full authority to make decisions on reopening schools. Color-coded zoning was no longer used to make this decision, but local governments still needed to follow health and safety protocols regulated by Central Government. In March 2021, the regulation was updated once again to take into account that the vaccination program for teachers had started. The new joint regulation mandated all schools to reopen for face-to-face instruction in the beginning of the new academic year of 2021/2022, which will fall in mid-July, upon completion of vaccination for all teachers and education personnel. Schools, however, are mandated to provide learning through two modalities: (limited) face-to-face learning and distance learning. Parents will have the choice whether send their children back to face-to-face school.

As the first step of preparation for school reopening, the Government of Indonesia decided to include teachers and other education personnel as a priority for the national vaccination program. Vaccination for teachers began on February 24, 2021 and was expected to run until June 2021. The vaccination program

[20] https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/files/download/07ef0f41433fd3b

[21] https://diy.kemenag.go.id/10013-juknis-pencairan-subsidi-gaji-gtk-madrasah-dan-pai-sudah-terbit.html



is available for all teachers and lecturers, as well as other education personnel, including school operators, administration staff, and cleaning services personnel working at school. It is expected that about 5.6 million teachers and education personnel will receive vaccines through this program, which covers all schools across all levels of education, both public and private entities offering formal and non-formal education, including religious education. The vaccination program began with teachers at lower levels of education, considering difficulties in managing distance learning at that level. This means that pre-primary, primary, and inclusive education teachers were the first to get the vaccine (to be completed in April), with lecturers to follow (by June). Both MoECRT and MoRA worked with respective local education/MoRA offices to implement the program. The government is currently discussing an enhanced safe school reopening policy following completion of the vaccination program for teachers.

The Indonesian Joint Ministerial Decree aligns well with international health and safety guidance to reopen schools, yet it lacks guidance on how to ensure learning recovery, particularly for marginalized students. The UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP, 2020) *Framework for Reopening Schools* highlights some key dimensions to consider when planning to reopen schools. These include ensuring safe operations, a strong focus on learning, making sure that marginalized students are included, and focusing on student and staff wellbeing and protection. Underpinning all four of these dimensions is a supportive policy landscape and adequate funding arrangements. The Indonesian Joint Ministerial Decree responds well to providing guidance on health and safety protocols but does not provide guidance on how to develop learning catch-up strategies or include marginalized students who might have been worse affected by the pandemic. In an earlier publication in May 2020, the World Bank (2020a) recommended framing policy responses to schools in three stages:

1) Coping, which includes guidance on health, safety, and preventing learning loss through LFH. Indonesia's policy responses, discussed earlier, align well with this stage.

2) Continuity, which includes policy guidance on reopening schools such as preventing dropouts, health and safety protocols, managing social distancing, preparing teachers to assess learning losses and close learning gaps, and attending to the financing needs of schools and students.

3) Improving and accelerating, which includes policy responses to improve the system in the longer term, such as scaling up effective approaches for the future, focusing on building-back-better education systems, and enhancing education financing.

> "The Indonesian Joint Ministerial Decree responds well to providing guidance on health and safety protocols but does not provide guidance on how to develop learning catch-up strategies or include marginalized students who might have been worse affected by the pandemic."

III.

Proposed policy actions for bringing children back to learning

Recommendation 1:

Focus on learning and ensure engagement of children from marginalized groups and with special needs

Assist regions/schools with their readiness to reopen for face-to-face instruction by conducting readiness checks by local education offices before reopening, and conducting periodical check-ins. *[Primary responsible party: subnational governments].* This could be informed by finding out why only around a third of schools have completed the checklist to determine their readiness to reopen (MoECRT, 2021). Education offices should work with the education quality assurance agency in their respective provinces and districts to ensure all schools fill out and regularly report school readiness monitoring forms. This is important considering the GOI will need to weigh up the costs and benefits of keeping schools closed. Research studies are not providing convincing evidence that school closures are keeping infection rates significantly lower, but rather that social distancing and basic hygiene practices have a more pronounced impact on curbing the spread of COVID-19. In addition, most research findings shared here report concerning potential learning losses and widening learning gaps between students from lower and higher socioeconomic backgrounds. By assisting regions or schools to prepare to reopen, the process of getting students back to school and engaged in catch-up plans will be quicker. Another important consideration is that a focus on learning should include face-to-face and LFH instruction. Indonesia needs to continue its investment in distance learning options and to improve quality, reach and impact. This is relevant in the shorter term, since cohort or staged returns to school will still demand LFH engagement, as well as for the future, when other external factors, such as natural disasters, might influence schooling.

Reopen schools from lower grades first. *[Primary responsible party: National government].* The research findings suggest a different approach from that initially proposed by the Joint Ministerial Decree's recommendation to reopen from secondary school level. Secondary school students have stronger engagement with LFH, while students in lower grades need multidimensional interactions for continued engagement in learning. Face-to-face interactions, developing connections with teachers, and social interaction is a critical part of child development, especially at lower grades.

Ensure that the Joint Ministerial Decree guidelines on safe environments and are updated, implemented and monitored. *[Primary responsible party: National (strategic) and subnational (operational) governments].* This includes social distancing, wearing masks and basic hygiene, such as adequate access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities. It is also important to provide specific guidance to schools about protocols to follow if positive cases of COVID-19 are detected. Safe environments further include implementing the guidelines during and beyond the two-month transitional period, particularly as they pertain to classroom and other relevant environments. The Decree recommends classes taking place in shifts and capping class sizes at 18 students. These guidelines could be made clearer by specifying how schools could divide classes into cohorts, while also considering that most students would need additional support to catch up and that some aspects of the curriculum could still be incorporated into digital platforms to provide support through additional materials and learning opportunities.

Provide guidance to target inequalities. *[Primary responsible party: subnational governments for tailored interventions].* The impact of school closures and limited engagement in LFH are expected to be magnified for students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, with lower attachment to learning, possibly translating into school dropout, or delayed learning recovery. Inequalities in access to learning opportunities that many students have been experiencing during LFH, as well as expected increased socioeconomic inequalities resulting from financial pressures, require explicit policy attention. This will need to focus on giving students fair access to education, helping them continue with their education, and adjusting teaching and learning to appropriate levels. It might also require providing regions or schools flexibility when they devise innovative responses to target inequalities. Providing additional financial support to schools who serve students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds could help, such as providing school feeding schemes and assisting in more intensive efforts to implement catch-up strategies. A stronger research focus on the inclusion of marginalized students during and beyond the pandemic is also recommended, which should incorporate a specific focus on gender. The effects of the pandemic could lead to an increase in domestic violence, driven primarily by financial difficulties. Women and girls are the main targets of domestic violence, with husbands, biological fathers, step- or adopted fathers, and uncles the predominant perpetrators (CATAHU, 2020). Being at home is not necessarily the safest place for many women and girls. Ultimately, the inequality gap will only narrow when basic considerations of care are in place for all children (Yarrow et al., 2020).

"Providing additional financial support to schools who serve students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds could help, such as providing school feeding schemes and assisting in more intensive efforts to implement catch-up strategies."

Recommendation 2:

Acknowledge learning losses and emphasize learning recovery

Develop a concrete plan to assess learning losses, develop an academic catch-up strategy, and provide guidance and support to all stakeholders to implement the plan. *[Primary responsible party: National (strategic) and subnational (operational) governments].* Projections and research findings suggest there are deficiencies in student learning resulting from school closures. Thus, the question is not whether they will occur but rather to what extent they will occur and what can be done to close the learning gap. Some techniques to recover learning losses might include implementing diagnostic assessments on all students on their return to school, focusing on developing students from where they are in terms of the level of knowledge/skills and not assuming they have reached the expected curriculum standards. Providing teachers with a toolkit on differentiated teaching methods, such as additional days/hours of instruction, bootcamps, tutoring, etc. (Beatty et al., 2020) could also be effective. It is also important to keep in mind that future emergency responses might still be a reality. This implies that the sector needs to refine the special circumstances curriculum (*Kurikulum khusus*) and lesson plans so that schools are ready to introduce hybrid learning when circumstances change. All schools should be encouraged to implement the special circumstances curriculum. A uniform starting point could be to standardize teacher training and enable assessment of learning status among students. Such an organized approach would further allow targeted resourcing and aligned teaching and learning materials. Lastly, based on research findings shared earlier, the Indonesian government could consider repurposing the TVRI broadcasts as a means of sharing content as part of catch-up strategies or to re-run key lessons. In addition, the data packages that students and teachers receive up to May 2021 could be extended to allow catch-up via online platforms or educational technology applications (see Box 1). Teachers should consider the possibility of having to switch back-and-forth between face-to-face and LFH, which implies that lesson plans need to adaptable for both cases. A good example of how radio, television, and other forms of broadcasts have reached students in remote areas is the School of the Air initiative in Australia. Families living in isolated areas form learning communities and are guided by teachers or tutors who facilitate educational interactions over broadcast platforms.[22]

Use technology-enhanced learning as a tool to promote learning. *[Primary responsible party: National (strategic; infrastructure) and subnational (operational; contextual) governments].* Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have opened avenues to include more technology at all levels of education (see Box 1). However, moving towards a more blended learning environment will require policy interventions on infrastructure, teaching and learning quality, cyber safety and security, among others. The Indonesian government should consider increased investments in LFH to prepare for future school closures, to strengthen teaching and learning where LFH remain in effect, and to supplement teaching hours with a blended model where schools may be operating on partial or adapted schedules (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and WFP, 2020). It is unlikely, however, that the long-term issues (low and unaffordable connectivity and poor digital skills) that have kept rural populations from adopting digital technologies can be overcome quickly to rapidly scale up usage of digital solutions to mitigate learning losses.

[22] https://www.australian-children.com/school-of-the-air/about-school-of-the-air

BOX 1
The potential of educational technology to respond to learning deficiencies

Like many other countries, Indonesia has had to help students catch up on learning opportunities lost during school closures. While accessing technology requires basic infrastructure, appropriate devices and digital skills, using educational technology in classrooms offers four comparative advantages:

1. **It allows for scaled instruction.** Schools in rural areas or under-resourced schools could benefit from pre-recorded or live lessons delivered by qualified educators, distance education, and distributing hardware preloaded with educational materials.

2. **It facilitates differentiated instruction.** For students who do not respond to a 'one-size-fits-all' teaching and learning approach, technology could potentially help by providing them with instruction and opportunities for practice that adjust to the level and pace of preparation of each individual (known as 'computer-adaptive learning' (CAL); or through live, one-on-one tutoring.

3. **It expands opportunities for practice.** In many instances, lesson times are not active learning spaces. Technology, such as computer-assisted software, could help students work through practice exercises and review topics at their own pace.

4. **It increases student engagement.** Technology could provide an engaging platform for students to participate in class discussions or engage with their teachers or peers, for example, by using video tutorials for self-paced learning or presenting exercises as games and/or gamifying practice.

Sources: Ganimian, A.J., Vegas, E., & Hess, F.M. Realizing the promise: How can education technology improve learning for all? https://www.brookings.edu/essay/realizing-the-promise-how-can-education-technology-improve-learning-for-all/

Recommendation 3:

Support teachers and principals

Intensify teacher training, support, and guidance. *[Primary responsible party: National (strategic; policy-level) and subnational (operational) governments].* Policies to support teachers, particularly pertaining to training (i.e., managing different teaching-learning contexts, student mental health support, new teaching techniques, use of educational technologies, and catch-up strategies for teaching and learning) need to be developed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and to mitigate the impact of school closures. Teachers need to have access to training using differentiated teaching methods, some of which could be provided via platforms already created for teacher support (such as *Guru Belajar*). Importantly, the research shared in this report indicates a lack of guidance for teachers to adjust the curriculum for LFH, which resulted in uncoordinated efforts. Providing more concrete guidance to teachers on how to develop and implement catch-up strategies will improve the impact such efforts will have. This could be a responsibility of local education offices in support of school reopening. All these efforts, while essential for helping teachers cope more effectively as schools re-open to face-to-face instruction, will also be valuable in the longer term for improving the quality of teaching in Indonesia's schools. Learning from other efforts to enhance teacher support could be a good starting point. For example, INOVASI's work in supporting teachers to teach numeracy and literacy identified the need to create supportive systems (curriculum, assessment, supervision), and a cultural shift (from seeing education as knowledge transmission, to knowledge construction) to make sustained changes to practice (Heyward, 2020). Related to pursuing sustained changes in practice, an important consideration is to move from a focus on training for specific skills or interventions, towards an approach that embraces Continuous Professional Development (*Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan*). The quality of teaching in general will improve by developing set standards for teacher proficiencies, and providing regular, incentivized opportunities for teachers to expand their proficiencies.

Recommendation 4:

Build a more resilient education system through the empowerment of schools and communities to respond to emergencies

Provide more guidance to schools on how to adjust budgets. *[Primary responsible party: subnational governments].* Currently, the relaxed BOS/BOP guidelines to manage school budgets that are in place need to be continued and made more explicit, as some reports claim that school principals are unsure what the parameters of the budget shifts are. The Joint Ministerial Decree tasks school leaders to prepare budgets for capacity building, hygiene, and sanitation provision, and holds subnational governments responsible for providing appropriate financial assistance to schools. Clear communication channels to support principals with these tasks are vital. Both ministries need to ensure that all local education offices understand these changes and are ready to support school principals in implementation. The broader financial impact of the pandemic is likely to cause an increase in student dropouts (see Box 2). At the national level, MoECRT and MoRA should work with BAPPENAS (Ministry of National Development Planning) to update the National Strategy on Out of School Children developed in 2019. Subnational governments also need to work with schools and communities to devise innovative strategies to keep children in school. In addition, helping schools implement innovative school feeding programs or redirecting funds through more flexible school budgets could soften the pandemic's financial blow.

BOX 2
Efforts to keep students from dropping out

Save the Children estimates that 586 million children, or almost one in three children globally, were living in poverty in low and middle-income countries before COVID-19, and this could increase by up to 105 million more if countries fail to take urgent action. In Indonesia, this could further lead to between seven and ten million children dropping out of school.

International examples of interventions to keep students from dropping out include an increase in school transfers from the Equitable Education Fund in Thailand, which has helped nearly a million low-income primary school children; providing cash vouchers along with school meals have supported children and their families in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Kingdom; and Burkina Faso uses a back-to-school campaign to raise awareness about the importance of girls' education. They are also contributing by offering scholarships, school kits, and meals for the most vulnerable.

In Indonesia, innovative community engagement strategies might work to keep students in school. In the *Pangkajene* region, South Sulawesi, students are learning by using worksheets while helping their parents to sail boats during school closures through the *Kelas Perahu* program. This program started in 2016 when local leaders realized that many children were still sailing during regular school hours. When approached, children indicated that they dropped out of school because they were afraid of the teachers as they often came late to school. School principals, supervisors, and local leaders collaborated to develop special lesson plans and worksheets to accommodate their needs and routine activities. The pilot and

subsequent program implemented in 2019 have proven successful. Through this program, teachers conducted regular home visits to help students learn, distribute new learning materials, and collect student assignments. This model showcased a resilient and responsive model of an educational approach that has incorporated local wisdom and conditions.

With an expected increase of 90,000 Indonesian student dropouts due to the pandemic, it is important to identify student learning gaps, provide extra support to students who have been most negatively affected, and differentiate instruction based on their learning levels.

Sources: Gupta & Khairina, 2020; Save the Children, 2020b; UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, WFP & UNHCR, 2020; https://kompak.or.id/id/article/kelas-perahu-mendukung-pembelajaran-jarak-jauh

Strengthen networks with local clinics and hospitals and arrange on-call support. *[Primary responsible party: subnational governments].* Schools need school nurses. Where there is no dedicated school nurse, schools should have close communication with local clinics and hospitals and be ready to make decisions when children/staff feel unwell.

Provide psychosocial support to school stakeholders. *[Primary responsible party: subnational governments].* This might include helpdesks for principals and teachers and hotlines for communities. School counseling maybe useful, if affordable. School reopening is a challenge for all stakeholders, so it is important that principals and teachers receive help and advice from local education offices, which can establish (separate) helpdesks for principals and teachers to provide consultation and advice. Communities also need contact information for raising issues and concerns, and hotlines can be considered.

Enhance parental engagement in education through increased home learning support and teacher-parent ties. *[Primary responsible party: School leaders, with support from subnational governments].* This also includes informing school/madrasah committees about school activities and involving them in decisions about school re-opening and possible re-closing. Communities and parents are important stakeholders of education. They should always be informed and need to ensure compliance to school and children's health protocols. In addition, partnerships between schools, parents, and the broader community could result in innovative and contextually relevant strategies to combat student dropouts and create a stronger educational culture. The success of such partnerships will lie in moving away from school-centric and teacher-driven models of parental involvement, towards making parents, communities, and the circumstances of living the point of departure. If done well, learning recovery can be expedited by refining and supporting home learning (i.e. homework) in combination with face-to-face education.

Provide support and materials to parents and enhance communications between teachers and parents to better track students' learning and provide individualized support. *[Primary responsible party: School leaders, with support from subnational governments].* Parents and students need to be informed about catch-up plans and what their respective roles are in making sure students catch up on learning losses. Schools can be encouraged to engage with students and parents to discuss expectations and processes.

"In addition, partnerships between schools, parents, and the broader community could result in innovative and contextually relevant strategies to combat student dropouts and create a stronger educational culture."

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Annex 1 Policy responses to COVID-19, March 2020 to March 2021

Topic	MoECRT Regulations	MoRA Regulations
Cessation of regular activities		
COVID-19 prevention in school, madrasahs, and universities	**March 9, 2020** Ministerial Circular Letter No. 3/2020	**March 14, 2020** Circular letter (DG of Islamic Education) No 285.1/2020 Circular letter (DG of Islamic Education) No 697/03/2020
Cancellation of national examination (UN) School closure, nation-wide learning from home Online student acceptance (PPDB) BOS and BOP relaxation	**March 24, 2020** Ministerial Circular Letter No. 4/2020	**March 24, 2020** Circular letter No B-686.1/DJ.I/Dt.I.I/PP.00/03/2020 Circular letter No B-699/Dt.i.i/PP.03/03/2020
Introducing new learning approaches		
Guidance on Distance Learning (for parents, schools, and local education offices)	**May 18, 2020** MoECRT General Secretary Circular Letter No 15/2020	**September 18, 2020** Guideline for Parents to Support Learning From Home During COVID-19
Special Circumstances Curriculum (during COVID-19 pandemic)	**August 4, 2020** Ministerial decree No. 719/P/2020	**May 18, 2020** Decree of DG of Islamic Education No 2791/2020
Reformed education financing for continued education		
BOS and BOP relaxation (technical guidelines)	**April 9, 2020** MoECRT Ministerial Regulation No. 19/2020 MoECRT Ministerial Regulation No. 20/2020	
Subsidized internet quota for student and teachers	**N/A**	**May 13, 2020** Circular letter No B-894/DJ.I/Dt.I.I/PP.05/05/2020
Expansion of BOS Afirmasi and BOS Kinerja (to support regions most impacted by COVID-19)	**June 18, 2020** MoECRT Ministerial Regulation No. 23/2020 MoECRT Ministerial Regulation No. 24/2020 Ministerial decree No. 581/P/2020	**N/A**

Topic	MoECRT Regulations	MoRA Regulations
Tuition (UKT) subsidy for university students	**June 18, 2020** MoECRT Ministerial Regulation No. 25/2020	**June 12, 2020** Ministerial Decree No 515/2020
	August 5, 2020 Circular Letter DG of Higher Education No. 67816/A/BP/2020	**January 22, 2020** Ministerial Decree No 8/2021
Temporary wage subsidies for non-PNS teachers	**October 2, 2020** MoECRT Ministerial regulation No. 44/2020 **November 5, 2020** MoECRT General Secretary Regulation No. 21/2020	**December 10, 2020** Directorate of Teacher, Circular Letter, No. B-2953.1/ DJ.I/Dt.I.II/KU.05/12/2020
Free internet quota for student and teachers	**September 18, 2020** MoECRT's General Secretary Regulation No. 14/2020	**N/A**
Internet data quota package for 2021	**March 1, 2021** MoECRT's General Secretary Regulation No. 4/2021	
Introduction of new school governance with decentralized school reopening decisions		
Guidance on Learning Activity During COVID-19, Academic Year 2020/2021 (i.e school reopening guidelines)	**June 15, 2020** Joint Regulation MoECRT – MoRA – MoH – MoHA Number 01/KB/2020, Number 516 of 2020, Number HK.03.01/ MENKES/363/2020, Number 440-882 of 2020 **August 7, 2020** Joint Regulation MoECRT – MoRA - MoH – MoHA Number 03/KB/2020, Number 612 of 2020, Number HK.01.08/ Menkes/502/2020, Number 119/4536/SJ **November 20, 2020** Joint Regulation MoECRT – MoRA - MoH – MoHA Number 04/KB/2020, Number 737 of 2020, Number HK.01.08/ Menkes/7093/2020, Number 420-3987 **March 30, 2021** Joint Regulation MoECRT – MoRA - MoH – MoHA Number 03/KB/2021, Number 384 of 2021, Number HK.01.08/ MENKES/4242/2021, Number 440-717 of 2021	

Annex 2 Studies consulted

Author	Year	Title	Scope of Study	Sampling Methodology	Data Collection Methodology	URL
INOVASI	2020	Learning from home: Experience and lessons learned from INOVASI's partner districts	Teachers and parents in 19 INOVASI partnered districts	**Convenient sampling**	April - June 2020 Online surveys, phone-based survey for those without internet access, qualitative interview	*Not available for public. Presented during Basic Education Working Group meeting*
J-PAL	2020	Assessment of home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in urban schools. Preliminary findings	Elementary school, DKI Jakarta	**Multi-stage random sampling**	27 July - 28 August 2020 Online survey for teachers and students, phone interview with parents, teachers, and school supervisors	*Not available for public. Presented during Basic Education Working Group meeting*
MoECRT	2020	*Analisis Survei Cepat Pembelajaran Dari Rumah Dalam Masa Pencegahan COVID-19*	34 provinces. Teachers, and school principals (all level of education)	**Random sampling (clustered)**	13 - 20 April 2020 Online survey (through SIM PKB application) and phone-based survey for teachers located in 3T areas	**https://puslitjakdikbud.kemdikbud.go.id/produk/buku/detail/313734/analisis-survei-cepat-pembelajaran-dari-rumah-dalam-masa-pencegahan-covid19**
MoECRT	2020	*Survei Belajar dari Rumah Tahun Ajaran 2020/2021: Responden Guru dan Siswa*	34 provinces. Teachers and students (all level of education)	**Random sampling (clustered)**	8 - 15 August 2020 Phone-based (for teachers) and online survey (for students)	**https://puslitjakdikbud.kemdikbud.go.id/assets_front/images/produk/1-gtk/buku/06_200910_Survei_Belajar_dari_Rumah_kepada_Guru_dan_Siswa_Semester_2020_2021.pdf**
World Bank HiFy Survey	2020	Indonesia COVID-19 Observatory: Education Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Household survey, nationally representatives	**Stratified sampling**	6 rounds of panel survey, 20-30 minute phone interviews with about 4,000 households, every 3 6 weeks for the first 3 rounds and every 3 months for the following rounds Source	**https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/ documentdetail/763051612328096488/indonesia-covid-19-observatory-education-services-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-november-to-december-2020**

Author	Year	Title	Scope of Study	Sampling Methodology	Data Collection Methodology	URL
Save The Children	2020	Indonesia COVID-19 rapid needs assessment report	Community leaders, teachers, and parents in 32 provinces	**Purposive sample (for the interviews) and snowballing sample**	April 2020 Key informant interview with heads of villages, school principals, and teachers + online survey to parents and teachers	https://www.stc.or.id/sci-id/files/a2/a28a607e-64c4-40dd-b983-fe121e4e3167.pdf
RISE SMERU	2020	Schooling from home: Challenges and strategies to address learning inequality during COVID-19 pandemic	Applicants of pre-service PPG training 2017	**Random sampling**	Survey and qualitative interviews	http://rise.smeru.or.id/sites/default/files/event/EduTech%20Webinar%20-%20Florischa.pdf
Tanoto Foundation	2020	*Mapping Survey and Recommendations: Meaningful Learning From Home*	School principals, teachers, students, and parents in 5 provinces	**Random sampling**	14 - 30 May 2020	https://docplayer.info/189179500-Survei-pemetaan-dan-rekomendasi.html
UNICEF	2020	U-Report Poll Result on Young People's Perspective about School Reopening 5-8 June 2020.	Students in 34 provinces		18 - 29 May 2020 U-report channels (text message, Whatsapp, and Facebook messenger)	https://indonesia.ureport.in/opinion/4283/
UNICEF	2020	Learning from Home Survey 2020.	1032 students, and 575 parents	**SMS survey using RapidPro**	May 2020	*Not available for public. Shared by UNICEF during Seknas SPAB (Safe School Secretariat, MoECRT) meetings in 2020.*


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