Access to education in the context of Covid-19

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Closure and reopening of Caribbean schools (Mar ’20 – Jun ’21)

School closures (complete or partial) have forced all countries to employ multiple remote learning strategies at various times

- Synchronous online classes (live virtual classes)
- Online delivery of learning materials and assignments
- Direct delivery of learning materials and assignments
- Asynchronous online classes (recorded video/audio lessons)
- Use of online platforms to organize learning materials and assignments
- Face-to-face classes for selected groups of students
The implementation of remote learning placed huge demands on teachers

- Adaptation of their teaching methods
- Technological challenges and constraints
- Increased workloads
- Additional care responsibilities
- Some teachers were overwhelmed
- Teachers need tools, training and mutual support
Providing devices proved easier than providing internet connectivity

- Measures were implemented to facilitate remote learning
  - Distribution of digital devices
  - Online platforms to access learning materials
  - TV or radio educational programs
  - Internet connectivity at home
- In many countries, there was distribution of digital devices, but relatively fewer countries implemented measures to connect households to the internet
- WhatsApp and text messages can be used as substitute means to send materials and videos (but with obvious limitations)
- Remote education reinforces the case for internet connectivity to be regarded as a public good
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Recommendations on remote learning

- Strengthen programmes that support students’ internet access at home
- Support families in the use of technology for remote learning
- Support teachers in adapting to the use of technology
- Support students in their remote learning
- Consider the longer-term role of technology as a tool to improve education for marginalized populations
- Better equip teachers with ICT competencies in teachers’ initial training and professional development
Remote learning has mitigated the impact of the pandemic on children, but can never be a substitute for face-to-face schooling

- School closures have negatively impacted on the learning achievements, social and emotional learning, mental health and well-being of children
- Remote education has not reached all children
- The longer children remain out of school, the less likely they are to return
- Achieving high levels of vaccination among teachers (in addition to the wider population) is crucial to successful school reopening
Risk-reducing measures for school reopening

- Hygiene measures (frequent hand washing, temperature control at entry)
- Education about the pandemic
- Social distancing
- Mandatory school masks
- Circulation changes (staggered start and finish times, staggered break and lunch times)
- Schedule changes (differentiated days or time of attendance for smaller groups)
- Class size reduction
- Transport arrangements
Thank you