## Eighth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of Experts on Educational Institutions and COVID-19
### January 21st, 2021 13:00-14:30
#### DRAFT AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Purpose/notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 13:15</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Review of key points from 7th TAG, presentation of the agenda and speakers</td>
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<td>Take-away messages from 7th TAG and update on action points – UNESCO on behalf of the co-chairs</td>
<td>UNESCO Chair</td>
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<td>Adoption of agenda</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Via the Chat function</td>
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<td>13:17 – 13:20</td>
<td>TAG web page - WHO</td>
<td>Via the Chat function</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:20 – 13:55</td>
<td>Research prioritization exercise: Mapping out the research areas that TAG members would like to see developed in the coming months</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>Presentation by (TBD)</td>
<td>UNESCO Chair</td>
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<td>Discussion</td>
<td>WHO moderating chat</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:55 – 14:15</td>
<td>COVID-19 vaccinations and implications for educational institutions: next steps including producing a Q&amp;A piece</td>
<td>TBD presentation</td>
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<td>Presentation by UNICEF (TBD)</td>
<td>UNESCO Chair</td>
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<td>WHO moderating chat</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:15 – 14:25</td>
<td>Feasibility study of regular COVID-19 testing in universities – presentation followed by consideration of options for the TAG</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Presentation by Professor Elizabeth M. Saewyc, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia</td>
<td>UNESCO Chair</td>
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<td>WHO moderating chat</td>
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<td>14:25 – 14:30</td>
<td>Wrap up and closing</td>
<td>Concluding remarks</td>
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<td>Proposed date for the 9th TAG meeting: 18 February 2021 from 13:00 to 14:30 (CET time)</td>
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TAG Secretariat: Chris Castle, Anshu Banerjee, Valentina Baltag, Linda Jones, Abdi Mahamud, Gersende Moyse, Sarah Karmin, Joanna Herat, Abdi Mahamud, Sylvain Ségyu.

1. Action points from the 7th TAG meeting that took place on 16th December 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action point</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share link to the briefing paper</td>
<td>Completed  ➔ Building back resilient: how can education systems prevent, prepare for and respond to health emergencies and pandemics, UNESCO, UNESCO IIEP, 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share link to survey data</td>
<td>Completed  ➔ <a href="https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34700">https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34700</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share presentations</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share link to UNICEF/UNESCO statements</td>
<td>Completed  ➔ Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore: Teachers should be prioritized for vaccination against COVID-19.  ➔ Joint-statement by UNESCO and Education International: UNESCO and EI call on governments to consider teachers and school personnel as a priority group in COVID-19 vaccination efforts.</td>
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2. Approval of the agenda

➢ Agenda approved.

3. Declaration of interest

➢ No update.

4. Update on the TAG webpage

The TAG webpage has been created. Photos and biographies of TAG members remain to be added to the webpage. This should be finalized within 3 weeks maximum. WHO will be able to present the finalized webpage to TAG members during the 9th session of the TAG.

5. Research priorities for maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health in context of COVID-19 pandemic

Presentation by Dr. Valentina Baltag, Head of Unit, Adolescent Health Policies, Planning and Programmes, WHO HQ.
What are the objectives of research prioritization exercise?

- Prioritize key research areas specific to MNCAH in COVID-19 pandemic to address important knowledge gaps
- Encourage funders and researchers to translate the identified research priorities into research study(ies)

Methodology – Adapted CHNRI* methodology with EXPEDITED steps

- **Preparatory steps:** Define scope, themes and criteria for prioritizing research questions
- **Rapidly generate research ideas for each theme:** Large group of experts in various domains invited to submit research ideas on each theme
- **Curate research ideas and finalize research questions:** WHO research prioritization team
- **Scoring of research questions and ranking based on scores:** Online survey by WHO team to share information on process and online scoring

Steps for research priorities

- **Crowdsourcing research ideas/questions:** Targeted a very broad group of experts in research, program planning and implementation, policy making/government, funders/donors, etc. A total of 664 research ideas/questions received
- **Curating research questions-Steps:** Reviewed all research ideas/questions and classified in three groups:
  - Mother and newborn (M-N) = 237 (36%)
  - Child and adolescent (C-A) =226 (34%)
  - Cross-cutting (not specific to any age group; C-C) =201 (30%)
- Domain-specific experts curated the Qs in respective themes- removed duplicates, clarified idea, corrected language, put in PICO format, assigned to themes and domains

Scoring process

- Scoring of each research question based on six pre-defined scoring criteria (answerability, effectiveness, deliverability, maximum potential impact, equitable, timeliness)
- **Process:**
  - Identified experts for scoring
  - Invited all MNCAH experts contacted for generating research ideas
  - Stratified random selection of experts to ensure balance of expertise and profile (researchers, program experts, government officials)

Online scoring survey

- Online survey with instructions how to score was sent to those who agreed to participate
- More than 150 MNCAH experts were invited to score a particular area of expertise
- Scoring online survey was completed by 10 December
- Analysis the data to rank each research question
- Draft analysis will be ready by Jan 2021

Research question related to educational institutes in the top 20 questions related to CAH

- What are the effective and safe strategies for in-class education during COVID-19 pandemic?
- What interventions (e.g. face masks, cohorting, physical distancing, hand disinfection/washing, etc.) are effective for prevention of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in schools, by age/school year and by type of school (e.g. day vs boarding)?
- What is the effect of reopening schools on Covid-19 transmission among different age groups in the general population (based on real-life experience).
6. Polling exercise

**Question 1 (on Zoom): Do you agree with these 4 areas of research mentioned below?**
- 84% of responding TAG members agreed with these 4 areas of research.
- One potential new area of research was proposed in the chat function: Role of schools & ethical / medical considerations for mass testing & vaccination

**Question 2 (on Mentimeter): What levels of education are a priority in research for the TAG? Please rank in order of priority.** The results of the ranking were as follows:
- In first position: Primary
- In second position: Secondary
- In third position: ECCE
- In fourth position: Tertiary/ higher education
- In fifth position: Residential/Boarding school environments
- In sixth position: Adult/lifelong learning

**Question 3: Given the role and mandate of the TAG, what do you think is the most important for its role in research? Please rank.** The results of the ranking were as follows:
- In first position: Highlight and popularize key new research
- In second position: Identify key research gaps and recommend priorities
- In third position: Invite periodic presentation of research findings at TAG meetings
- In fourth position: Incorporate key relevant research into guidance, policy support and other tools to support countries
- In fifth position: Commission research

7. Discussion – Reactions from the TAG members

- **Erin Maughan:** Praised the presentation that has just been made. It is good to take some time and distance to think about the areas of research that we want to prioritize.
- **Rosalind Eggo:** Hopeful that we can do more than what we are currently doing in identifying research gaps.
- **NOTA BENE – Gersende Moyse:** For those who are interested to join the COVID Research Network WG on COVID-19 and Education Institutions that will be today, 21 January 2021 from 3:30 to 4:30, please use the same zoom link and same password you used to connect to the TAG. If you are interested in being included in the distribution list, please send an email to Gersende, moyseg@who.int.
- **Venkat Raman:** Other areas of research to be explored could include looking at young migrants - whether they are in transit from one country to another or already settled in their new country. Migrants are severely affected by the pandemic. The TAG also needs to answer the question of what contribution it makes to policy decisions made at the country level. We should go into the various aspects of educational planning.
- **Faten Ben Abdelaziz:** What I would like the TAG to support more programme development. The TAG is also perceived as a scientific group which can spotlight gaps of implementation. We also have an issue with issuing recommendations at the right time. They are arriving too late. We should address these delays with recommendations. It is difficult keeping up in this very fast moving.
- **Habib Benzian:** These questions go back to the fundamental identity question related to existence the TAG: How can we translate the recommendations into tangible action? Deplores
the lack of guidance from the TAG Secretariat. TAG members would be happy to take more active role and lead a bit more in terms of setting priorities and agenda items.

- **Vivian Barneko**: The TAG Europe group tries to make recommendations around specific areas of research, including: keeping schools open is a key objective; children in vulnerable situation; identify changes in the school community and looking at children and adolescents’ participation in decision-making processes.

- **Valentina Baltag**: TAG was created as an entity to support research finding into policy advice. We can update the ToRs in this sense. All the current guidance related to COVID19 and schools was linked to TAG members’ advice. The TAG is drawn up in a two-way process: The TAG Secretariat is not always able to see or identify research priorities, research gaps and so on. The role of the TAG members is also to bring the Secretariat attention to those gaps.

8. **COVID-19 vaccinations and implications for educational institutions: next steps including producing a Q&A piece**

**Presentation by Linda Jones, Senior Adviser, Education in Emergencies, Programme Division, UNICEF, New York**

- UNICEF has drafted a Q&A piece about schools and the roll out of the vaccine. There are many questions out there about Covid19 vaccination. UNICEF has included general information through links about the vaccine in the Q&A. Some of the key questions that this Q&A piece is trying to provide answers to are:
  - Will schools play a role as vaccination centers?
  - What are the medium and long-term plans for the vaccination roll out?

- None of us have all the answers but we are providing the most up to date information and we talk about previous vaccination strategies.
- UNICEF proposes to share this Q&A piece (on 22 January) with TAG members for their review, reactions and comments.
- Timeline: 2 weeks’ time.

**Discussion:**

- **Chris Castle**: The Q&A format is quite popular. It is easy to understand and it provides links to existing resources. It can be easily updated and made available through our respective websites (i.e. UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO).

- **Valentina Baltag**: the more tools we have like this, the better. The Q&A on Adolescents and Covid-19 has been updated on the WHO website. Please do disseminate it and use it.

- **Anshu Banerjee**: Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine: Some States are going to use the vaccine for adolescent 12+ onwards.

9. **Feasibility study of regular COVID-19 testing in universities – A COVID rapid test pilot in student housing in Vancouver, Canada**

**Presentation by Elizabeth Saewyc, PhD, RN, FSAHM, FCAHS, FAAN, FCAN School of Nursing, University of British Columbia**

- Regular rapid testing to reduce COVID19 asymptomatic & pre-symptomatic spread
  - Health Canada sponsoring pilots in various settings:
    - Airport (YVR)
    - Long term skilled nursing care facilities (Manitoba)
    - University student housing (UBC in Vancouver)

Goal is to identify feasibility of repeated (2x weekly) on-site rapid testing protocol to identify and manage asymptomatic transmission / UBC’s Orchard Commons residence ~1200 first year students
- Implemented with nursing students and instructors
- 2000 tests per week for 8 weeks, with protocols for PCR confirmatory follow-up for + tests, isolation protocols

- Primary evaluation for the pilot: + tests, uptake, costs
  - Additional research
  - Willingness to be regularly tested
  - How youth interpret negative tests
  - Changes in perceived risk of infection
  - Changes in mental health/moods

- 8 weeks study with results expected around end of April or early to mid-May.

- What other research questions might be useful to the TAG?

**Discussion:**

- **Anshu Banerjee:** Issues linked to new variants: looking at the impact on transmission is important. It’s such an uncertain pandemic.
- **Elizabeth Saewyc:** We will be saving a follow-up PCR testing with the potential of analyzing the effect of the variants.
- **Chris Castle:** Some countries are also looking at mass testing at secondary-level: any implications on your research?
- **Elizabeth Saewyc:** In West-Canada, they were asking about this for secondary-schools. Our concerns, regarding self-testing is: Will young people be capable of self-testing? If they are indeed positive, will they automatically quarantine, alert people they will have been in contact with? How people might misinterpret the negative results? Does it have an impact on how young people might drop using masks and other protective measures (if they found out they are negative after multiple tests)? These concerns echo the same concerns regarding young people self-testing mechanisms for STIs.
- **Abdi Mahamud:** In terms of the software used for geo-localizing the students: Are you looking into this and how young people are going to school, transportation, etc.?
- **Elizabeth Saewyc:** In this case, UBC is not offering in-person classroom. There are some limited courses in-person. The learning process is currently online. We do not have the capacity to do geo-tagging.
- **Valentina Baltag:** You should also look at compliance with the testing. In the first wave, you might get support and willingness to test. But if 10% of young people are in quarantine because of the results of the testing, they might be not willing to do the test again afterwards.

**10. Wrap and closing**

- **WHO** is organizing global science dialogue – to assess the current knowledge on the virus. WHO is organizing one dialogue on the transmission of COVID among children on Tuesday 26 January 2021. There will be one presentation focusing on research gaps and priorities. The second section will focus on the indirect effects of the COVID19 pandemic. How can we quantify the indirect effects? Already more 900 people registered to this dialogue. WHO will circulate the invitation.
- **Next date for the 9th Session of the TAG:** Thursday 18 February 2021 (from 1pm to 2:30pm – CET)