### DRAFT AGENDA

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<td>13:00 – 13:15</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Review of key points from 4th TAG, presentation of the agenda and speakers</td>
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<td>Take-away messages from 4th TAG – UNESCO on behalf of the co-chairs</td>
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<td>Adoption of agenda</td>
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<td>TAG web page - WHO</td>
<td>Via the Chat Function</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interpreting various studies on school reopening by producing an</td>
<td>UNESCO Chair</td>
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<td>accompanying key takeaway document</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Presentation by Linda Jones, Senior Adviser, Education in Emergencies,</td>
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<td>WHO moderating chat</td>
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<td>Speaker’s name to be confirmed</td>
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<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>COVID-19: Drawing out preliminary findings relating to education and</td>
<td>UNESCO Chair</td>
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<td>Presentation by Maya Prince, Project officer, Section for Future of</td>
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<td>Learning and Innovation, Education Sector, UNESCO</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>14:15 – 14:25</td>
<td>Presentation of the WHO-commissioned study on the role of school nurses</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>which will be published in December 2020</td>
<td>UNESCO Chair</td>
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<td>Presentation by Erin Maughan, Georgetown University School of Nursing</td>
<td>WHO moderating chat</td>
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<td>and Health Studies</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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Note for the Record
Fifth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of Experts on Educational Institutions and COVID-19
Thursday 21 October 2020 13:00-14:30 (CET)


Participants: Martin Weber

Secretariat: Anshu Banerjee, Valentina Baltag, Chris Castle, Joanna Herat, Rosamund Lewis, Robert Jenkins, Abdi Mahamud, Gersende Moyse, Maya Prince, Sarah Karmin, Sylvain Séguy

Please consult the minutes of the fourth meeting that were sent to you by email by WHO for the action points from the last meeting. No comments recorded – most have been completed by now.

1. Take-away messages from 4th TAG meeting that took place on 17 September 2020

- WHO will share Shamez Ladhani and Neisha Sundaram’s Power Point presentations
- TAG members shared with TAG secretariat information on studies, or results of the studies, on the feasibility of implementing public health measures in schools to prevent SARS-COV-2 transmission
- A reference document on building back resilient was shared by UNESCO, for comments from TAG members
- WHO shared the draft of the school case investigation protocol and the Power Point presented by Isabel Bergeri
- WHO submitted for internal approval the paper led by Russel Viner on Understanding the evidence on the role of children and young people in the transmission of COVID-19. Please note that unfortunately “Unfortunately the COVID-19 Publication Review Committee did not approve for publication this paper. They acknowledge that it is clear and well written but want it to be supported by a more systematic review of available evidence. Here is the verbatim of their conclusion:

<table>
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<th>Summary: Thank you for your submission to the 14 October Publications Review Committee. Please find the Committee’s comments for your consideration:</th>
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<td>1. The PRC did not approve this document for publication. Although clear and well written, the PRC requests that this topic be supported by a more systematic review of available evidence in order to guide decision making in this critical area, including longitudinal studies or modelled estimations.</td>
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<td>2. Such a brief should use an established research typology, distinguishing between observational and interventional studies, with the appropriate designs (cohorts, case-control, etc. clearly labelled) and include a clear description of the methodology and references.</td>
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- We will get back to the COVID-19 & MNCAH Research Network – Working Group on Educational Institutions to ask if they want to continue working on this paper to meet the requirements, or it will be published as a peer review publication only.
2. Approval of the agenda

- Agenda approved.

3. A proposal for a new UNICEF-led working group: Interpreting various studies on school reopening by producing an accompanying key takeaway document

Presentation by Robert Jenkins Chief, Education and Associate Director, Programme Division, UNICEF Headquarters

- The proposal is to establish a UNICEF-led working group to interpret various studies and evidence on school reopening and producing an accompanying key takeaway document. The purpose of this document would be to guide the key decision makers (as well as the general public) who are wondering whether to reopen schools in their country/territory or whether to close them considering the second wave of infection, which is currently affecting several regions of the world.
- The general public and key policy makers do not always have the analytical capacity to critically review and engage with the scientific research produced. Most scientific information is relayed through the media. The working group proposed by UNICEF aims to mitigate the impact of misinformation on decisions taken by public authorities when it comes to reopening or closing schools.
- This group acknowledges the lack of correlation between opening/closing of schools and evidence on COVID-19 infection rates.
- In summary, this new working group would look at the influence of school opening and community transmission though 4 different lenses:
  - Review the latest clinical evidence
  - Student-to-teacher infection risks – focusing on the risks encountered by teacher in a classroom environment
  - Looking at contact tracing of students who have tested positive and understanding where/ and by whom they were infected. Did it happen inside the school or outside the school system?
  - Looking at the effectiveness of Personal Protective Equipment for school personal and health workers

Open discussion – Q&A:

A. **Comment from Dr. Rosalind Eggo:** She fully supports the creation of this new group and of this key takeaway document. She would like to be involved. The importance of modelling is key when it comes to linking the community epidemic and the school epidemic.

B. **Comment from Dr. Erin Maughan:** She is also supportive and expressed her interest to be involved. She suggested this analysis to be broken down to primary vs secondary schools.

C. **Comment from Dr. Murthy:** He also supports this initiative. Reminds the importance to be mindful of some of the challenges. In India, just few have reopened up. On 20 October, in India, around 30 primary-level students were tested positive. They were all transported in the same bus to go to school. Three of the students’ families were also tested positive to COVID19. It is hence very hard to trace and pinpoint transmission and infection rates can prove to be a very hard and challenging task.
D. **Comment from Valentina Baltag:** On evidence – which threshold of transmission. We cannot do better than in the guidance for school reopening. We laid out 4 scenarios based on SARS-CoV-1. However, the initial idea is to help people to understand the discussion about risk and community/school transmission. Take the risk-prevention approach. Many people will not be able to critically appraise the value of scientific/academic research but will read the media. Therefore, we need to guide people on how to understand scientific research / evidence and how it is divulged to the wider audience.

E. **Comment from Carlos Navarro from UNICEF:** WHO is currently producing a guidance on public health and social measures: It aims at guiding countries to deal with second waves of COVID-19. This document a section focusing on reopening of schools. He expresses concerns that, in the current draft, it seems to be mentioned that closing schools at an early stage is advised. This major piece of guidance from WHO has been released. He suggests to TAG members to request to be involved in the drafting of this document.

F. **Comments from the chat:** Many TAG members express their interest to join this working group. Some comments highlight the necessity to link schools with the wider community. Schools are not a closed microcosm. They are the reflection of what is currently happening in the communities.

**UNICEF’s response:** This new document is intended for decision makers at top level to inform and guide them in deciding whether they wish to open or close schools. Currently misinformation of the supposed correlation between school reopening and community infection is spreading, including in high income countries. There is increasing evidence to show that opening and closing schools is not a lever to see if transmission will reduce within the community.

⇒ **Action point**

Chair thanks TAG members for their comments verbally and via the chat. He acknowledges the wide agreement on the usefulness of this working group. Its purpose is ambitious but worth the effort. UNICEF will contact the TAG members who have expressed their interest to join. It will then convene a meeting with all the interested members. Together they will draft a set to Terms of Reference.

4. **Update from the Research Network on COVID-19 and Educational Institution**

Presentation by Joanna Herat, Senior Programme Specialist, Section of Health and Education, UNESCO

⇒ **A systematic review is being conducted led by Russell Viner and Silvia Minozzi to assess the systemic review of indirect effects of school closures**

  - They have identified 24 published articles and are completing finished data extraction on these. They have also finished the pre-print searches and identified a large potentially relevant group of studies. The results are likely to be ready in November and will be presented in the next TAG meeting.

**NOTA BENE:** If TAG members know about potentially relevant articles please send these to the TAG Secretariat at Gersende’s Moyse email,
moyseg@who.int. Please send us any relevant articles you may know before 23 October 2020.

- As one example, we have identified a study in the UK on suicide rates amongst teenagers from the National Child Mortality database that shows a 40% increase in suicide of <18 year olds during school closure and lockdown in England. There is also a report by the Royal Society which reports estimated economic impacts of loss of learning due to school closures.

**Understanding influence of COVID-19 on children’s and adolescent’s school experience and subjective well-being**

- Initial results of this multi-country study were presented to the group last week. Multi-country focus is a result of the WG acting as a platform for bringing together researcher with similar interests, able to share research protocols, and therefore multiple replicable approaches.
- The researchers will be invited to present to the next TAG meeting, but quick ‘teaser’ shows that this multi-country study could provide some relevant information to inform future policy making. Not much research on young people’s attitudes and thoughts – critical to listen to children to ensure safe and healthy responses.

**Back to school – barriers and facilitators to guideline adherence: A protocol for implementation research to inform Policy Dialogue**

- There are a growing number of national and international policies and guidelines that aim to support the re-opening of schools safely for students and staff. The WHO/UNESCO co-chaired Working group on educational institutions (WG of the COVID-19 Research Network) has been facilitating discussions about on-going research and a gap has been identified.
- this initiative aims to understand how things work (or do not work) in real life settings towards improvement. The intention is not to duplicate ongoing efforts by UNESCO, the World Bank and UNICEF, particularly with the monitoring and development of national policies, guidance and briefs. In fact, it is envisaged that findings from this initiative would feed into development work of these organizations. The initiative will explore four facets required for effective implementation: feasibility, fidelity, implementation cost and sustainability.
- Interested in identifying potential research findings, and may present to a forthcoming meeting of the TAG>

5. UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National education responses to COVID-19: Drawing out preliminary findings relating to education and health

Presentation by Maya Prince, Project officer, Section for Future of Learning and Innovation, Education Sector, UNESCO

- Second survey conducted between July – September 2020. Mainly reports on the brief re-opening experiences in June + Expectations for future re-openings.
- First wave conducted in April/May 2020
- Please click here to consult the regularly interactive UNESCO Map: Global monitoring of school closures caused by covid-19
JOINT SURVEY 2nd WAVE: Modules, scope and coverage

- 2nd wave completed by 149 countries, covering at least two thirds of the global student population (pre-primary through secondary)
- Made available in AR, EN, FR, RU, SP
- Modules build on wave 1 – repeating some questions, rephrasing others, and adding new ones. Mainly around the health and safety measures for re-opening, a more elaborate model on distance learning and perceptions of how well it’s working and how engagement is being tracked, and on the kinds of supports to students and teachers (skills development, deployment of ICT tools + improving connectivity, support to use distance learning, psychological support etc.)

- 2nd wave
- Includes more space to provide details, recognizing that approaches to re-opening differ from country to country and are based on the latest scientific evidence available at the time.
- Some questions may have been misunderstood/misinterpreted in the first wave, so now provided more elaborate definitions of the terms used.
- A more user-friendly design

Examples of the questions asked and basic results:

- Managing re-opening:
  - About 60% of countries across income groups, report adjustments to school and classroom physical arrangements in order to ensure proper social distancing.
  - A quarter of countries report changes in school feeding programmes (either cutting them or expanding them). However, low income countries in particular (about a third of them) report expansions to school feeding programmes.

- Health protocols/guidelines for prevention and control of COVID-19 in schools [NEW Module]
  - Nearly all the surveyed countries produced or endorsed specific health and hygiene guidelines and measures for schools, with almost no variation by income group.
  - Virtually all countries reported including measures to reduce person to person transmission in their guidelines by promoting distancing, increased handwashing practices and the use of masks (80%).
  - At least 75% reporting also improving handwashing facilities and intensifying cleaning services in schools. About 50% reported that their guidelines included something on the management of hazardous waste.
  - About 60% included guidelines on the isolation of staff/students or track them when infected or having to do temperature checks in schools. Very few guidelines included a recommendation to test in schools (less than 20%).

The survey also tried to capture the kinds of psychological and emotional support to teachers, students and their families.

- Provision of psychosocial support and childcare were key areas of support provided by governments during lockdowns, though provision of these vary by income level.
  - While 61% of high-income countries offer psychological counselling for -at least a proportion of- parents and children, only 26% of lower-middle-income countries reported providing this support.
  - In some cases, social media groups facilitated peer support and the exchange of best practices between teachers. Many countries set up hotlines and chatbots to offer psychosocial support to both children and parents.
  - In some cases, psychologists and pedagogical experts were called upon to support teachers and students, and to reach out to vulnerable children of parents.
working in vital sectors and to those living in precarity at home (mostly in high-income countries though)

- **Financing**
  - Resources to implement health and hygiene protocols. Overall, 74% of countries reported that they have enough resources, commodities such as soap and masks, and infrastructure such as clean water and handwashing facilities to ensure the safety of learners and all school staff. Still, there are wide variations by income level. Only around half of low-income and lower-middle-income countries reported having enough resources, in comparison to 80% of upper-middle-income countries and 95% of high-income countries.
  - About 10 per cent indicated that school feeding budgets are also likely to be cut either this fiscal year or the next. The economic impact of such cuts could be dire for poor households where the value of a school meal can be equivalent to about 10 per cent of a household’s monthly income (WFP, 2020).

Open discussion – Q&A:

*Comment from the chat:* Would it be possible to assist to the launch on the 4th co-convened UNICEF-World-UNESCO Webinar on 4 November 2020.

*Response from UNESCO:* Yes, it will be open to all. The invitation will be shared with all TAG Members

6. **Presentation of the WHO-commissioned study on the role of school nurses which will be published in December 2020**

Presentation by Erin Maughan, Georgetown University School of Nursing and Health Studies

- **Methods**
  - WHO, Global School Nursing Research Research Consortium, School Nurse International & European Union for School and University Health
  - Cross-sectional, descriptive study
  - Survey in English, Spanish, French, Russian and Chinese
  - Snowball sampling
  - Extended to 30 October 2020

- **Topics**
  - School closure
  - School Health Role (virtual vs. in person)
  - Training and guidance received (and needed)
  - Level of stress

*NOTA BENE:* We would be most grateful if you could please disseminate the survey to your respective networks:

https://georgetown.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aWNv42OUTBvyvXQF

We would also be grateful if you could please inform the Secretariat of any school health workers’ unions/associations that we could contact.

**Action points:**

- TAG members to express interest in joining the UNICEF-led subgroup
- UNICEF to share TORs for the document
- WHO to set up the webpage about TAG
- WHO to share the Power Points from the previous meeting if available for sharing
- TAG members to disseminate the information about the public consultation on Global Standards for Health Promoting Schools, and to provide inputs themselves as relevant to their expertise
- TAG members to disseminate the information about the survey with school nurses
- UNESCO will circulate the final version of the Build Back resilient document

**Concluding comments and remarks:**
- The chair expressed thanks to the TAG members.
- The next 6th TAG meeting will take place on **17 November 2020** from 1pm to 2:30 pm (Paris/Geneva Time). It will be chaired by UNICEF.