

Tips, Resources and Recommendations during **COVID-19**

Aga Khan Development Network *Supporting Primary School Educators to Help Students Learn*



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Challenge: Our New Reality

COVID-19 has affected all aspects of our lives. It is clear that self-isolation and physical distancing are key strategies in 'flattening the curve' of new coronavirus infections. Consequently, schools buildings across the world have been closed. But 'school', in the sense of our 'community of learners', remains open.

With little or no preparation, teachers and school leaders have stepped up to the challenge of distance learning with commitment, skill, perseverance and flair, often without access to technology. We have already seen classroom teachers quickly adapt and innovate to become new pioneers in delivering distance education for millions of children throughout the world.

Yet we know that meeting the demands of supporting students to learn during COVID-19 can be overwhelming for educators. Whether it is navigating thousands of new online resources or managing offline learning needs for children disconnected from the internet, it has become increasingly stressful and tiring for educators to adopt and adapt new online/offline learning materials for their students during the pandemic. Hopefully this resource can help.

Support for Primary School Educators

We thank and applaud all primary school educators for what they are already doing during this difficult period. The following resources have been gathered by colleagues at the Aga Khan Development Network to provide primary school educators with a curated list of practical tips, offline and online teaching resources, and a handful of programmatic recommendations to best support primary school-aged students' learning and psychosocial wellbeing during COVID-19. We hope the following resources can provide you with some actionable ideas for the journey ahead.

I. General Tips to Engage Students

In response to COVID-19, we have gathered **11 tips** to help primary school educators think about ways to best support their students' learning during this time. We want to reassure educators that there is no right or wrong approach. You know your context and your students and what will work best for them.

1. **Connect with each student:** The personal connection between a student and his/her teacher remains incredibly important during COVID-19. Communications from teachers to their students should be frequent, clear, relevant, and aligned to the different needs of each learner. Consider using live or pre-recorded videos to have your students see you and for you to see your students. If video is not possible, call your students over the phone and ask about their day. It shows respect and sensitivity to agree on a mutually convenient time before connecting one-on-one with your students and their parents/caretakers. Smile and provide lots of reassurance. This will help students feel more secure, cared for and will maintain their motivation for learning from home. It is important to encourage students' perspectives and honour their voices, whether they are learning in school or at home. It is important, therefore, to take time to learn what students are interested in and what is (and is not) working for them. Ask open-ended questions and encourage them to talk about their feelings and experiences. Personal connections with each student lasting even 5 to 10 minutes each day can make a profound difference.
2. **Maintain social interactions between students:** Connections between students are very important during COVID-19. Where possible, link students using video conferencing, other technology or by phone so that they can see and/or talk to each other on a regular basis. Engage students in developing home learning challenges both for themselves and for their peers. Encourage them to help each other with their lessons, play games together or talk with each other in groups about their personal hopes and frustrations. Virtual group games can also be helpful in cultivating social connections between students. If possible, however, it is best to help students avoid uninterrupted screen time lasting longer than an hour each day.
3. **Build relationships with families:** Now is a great opportunity to maintain and/or form stronger connections with your students' parents/caregivers. Connections now will also help improve parent/caregiver engagement in their child's learning throughout the new 'normal' during COVID-19. Clearly communicate how families can best support their students' academic and non-academic needs. Show how parents/caregivers can easily reach out to you with any concerns or questions about their students' learning. Perhaps suggest 'virtual office hours' during which parents can send you text messages or join a group call. Guided instructions for parents/caregivers shared over individual phone calls, WhatsApp groups, or through virtual parent meetings will help reinforce your appreciation of the role that families continue to play in their children's learning. Remember to be sensitive to the pressures that families are facing and create structured opportunities for parents to give feedback about the remote learning programmes and their child's needs. Educators have a duty to make sure students and parents/caregivers are not being overloaded or overwhelmed.
4. **Maintain consistency and communicate expectations:** Creating a consistent and predictable routine for learning provides reassurance for students about what to expect and how to manage their day. That might mean having regular check-ins with your class on the same day and time every week. While you may wish to replace face-to-face lessons with continuously live virtual interactions, these will often be difficult to sustain over time. It is important to maintain a consistent format for delivering virtual learning activities for your students. Your choice of layout and style should be predictable. If you are using technology, choosing a consistent learning management platform will also help you and your students feel more comfortable and confident over time.

5. **Plan Carefully:** Keep in mind that distance learning will be a new experience for most of your students. Take your time and plan for less, not for more. Ensure that all your students have access to any content that you provide. You may need to use different delivery approaches (offline versus online) for different students based on their individual living circumstances. Be aware and attentive to individual student needs. Some learners will need more support and time than others. For many students, although not for all, distance-learning tasks will take longer to complete at home, than they would in a normal classroom environment. There are also valid concerns about students' increased amount of screen time while learning at home. In response, try to include learning activities for students that are offline as much as possible.
6. **Be concise and simple:** Primary school students, especially those in junior grades, are dependent on the support from older family members for distance learning. Therefore, each home activity should clearly outline the role that parents/caregivers are expected to play and how they can best support their children while also building independence. Make sure students (and their parents) know exactly what they must do, when to do it, why they are doing it and how to complete the task successfully. Resist the temptation to over explain or provide too many examples. Consider making the learning task as simple and familiar as possible and one that can be managed at home without too many resources or assistance. Rather than providing many separate activities, consider giving a few weeklong, open-ended play ideas, puzzle challenges, or interactive games that can integrate multiple academic subject areas in one extended task. Consider providing instructions in students' mother tongue so that family members who may not be fluent in the language of official instruction can also easily help students with their assignments.
7. **Foster independence:** While younger students may need some guidance, not all learning needs to be teacher or parent directed. Provide opportunities where students can work independently or with minimal support. Offline, project-based learning activities that are open-ended help students tap into their creativity and discover new ways of engaging in the world around them. More details about project-based learning are outlined below in the next section. If you can, give students choices in how they present their learning to you.
8. **Provide feedback:** Brief but frequent feedback is incredibly important during COVID-19 when teachers and students continue to be physically separated. Reassurance and acknowledgement of students' effort, progress and achievement will go a long way to sustaining learners' levels of personal motivation, engagement and overall learning pace. It will give them and their parents/caregivers a sense that their learning is purposeful and taken seriously and that they are on the right track.
9. **Test and check:** If possible, have suggested home learning resources checked by colleagues or parents/caregivers, before sharing with students directly. If parents/caretakers do not like or understand the home learning resources, offer them an informal, easy way to let you know. Try a survey, telephone call or WhatsApp message. Based on their feedback, consider modifying your learning materials. These 'test and check' processes of preparing learning activities should also include attention to spelling, punctuation, layout, grammar and assessment of the intellectual property and accuracy of the content being provided. The quality assurance of distance learning 'kits' or new content is particularly critical. Once resources are sent out, they are like a spaceship – if something was not on board when it was launched, it will be difficult to complete the mission. Don't forget to also test and re-test the functionality of the technology you use to increase familiarity and minimise frustrations.
10. **Monitor students' engagement levels:** Monitor absences closely. Not every student will attend or engage in distance learning. Some may lack the necessary support or adult supervision, while others may struggle to sustain motivation. The challenge in distance learning is that non-attending or disengaged students tend to 'disappear' and can be hard to track down or contact. In response, try to intervene early and make direct contact with their families when students do not attend or participate regularly. Consider linking them with another student or spend extra time to understand the issue and provide specialized support.

11. Pay attention to safeguarding: Whether students are at school or home, their safety and yours remains the top priority. There are new concerns emerging over child safeguarding in online environments as more children are connected in virtual learning experiences. Make sure students can complete all offline and online activities without harm to themselves or to others. It is wise to establish protocols for communication between you and the students. Thoroughly check the suitability of a website or a link before recommending it. Make sure to click through all the links and read/watch the entire resource through to the end. Finally, remind parents of the available resources to help children remain safe online. [Click here](#).

II. Offline and Online Resources

This section includes a list of **50 suggested online/offline resources** to support primary school educators in providing their students with quality distance learning opportunities and informed psychosocial support. This is not an exhaustive list. While there are many online resources available, it can be difficult to sift through and access those that are of high quality and appropriate for primary school-aged students, especially those relevant to low-resource contexts. Furthermore, many students do not have reliable internet access or the necessary technology hardware to engage in online resources. Therefore, the resources provided below are separated into four sections that provide primary school educators with ideas about both offline and online teaching activities:

- a. 7 Offline Teaching Activities to Help Students Learn at Home
- b. 25 Online Teaching Resources Help Students Learn at Home
- c. 10 Offline Activities for Primary to Help Students' Psychosocial Wellbeing
- d. 8 Online Activities to Help Students' Psychosocial Wellbeing

7 Offline Teaching Activities to Help Students Learn at Home:

1. **Encourage project-based learning:** Project-based learning activities that take place over extended periods of time strengthen students' skills in creativity, problem-solving, and early critical thinking. Project-based learning enables teachers to seamlessly integrate multiple academic subjects within an open-ended learning task or challenge. It also allows each student to use their own living situations in different ways to achieve the same learning goal. Primary school educators may consider allocating additional time with students to discuss and reflect on what they have learned from their projects.. Here are some creative ideas you may consider exploring with your students to kick off a series of project-based learning tasks:
 - a. **Grow a garden:** If families have small gardens or even potted plants, provide simple instructions for students to plant, care for and observe flowers and/or herbs over time. Students can measure the plant as it grows and write about the results; thereby easily integrating mathematics and writing skills while also helping with a household chore. When students present their results to you, they can also practice oral communication and presentation skills. Presentations may be done via WhatsApp.

- b. **Create a public art gallery from children's windows and virtual classroom museum:** Invite your students to create a public art gallery for their neighbours and community by creating artwork or messages to hang outside their windows for others to see. The artwork could have a theme for each week. This can help lift the morale of neighbours and community members passing by. It is also fun for students to then watch and observe the reactions of some of their visitors passing by. If possible, the artwork can be shared over WhatsApp and a virtual museum of students' drawings can emerge with the curation by the teacher.
- c. **Design a book:** You can ask students to design a new book to help others learn how to manage being at home and lead a happy COVID-19 compliant lifestyle. It could provide instructions about exercises to keep family members moving during the day or provide a new family cookbook that illustrates specific nutritional benefits of various meals and highlights family favourites. It could also include chapters about how to maintain close relationships with family members and friends even with social distancing restrictions. You could encourage children to create fiction and non-fiction chapters to their books about living and thriving during COVID-19 and share excerpts with you over the phone or via WhatsApp.
- d. **Encourage students to become journalists:** Have your students interview their grandparents, parents and friends (over the phone if they are not in the same place) about their new daily routines or their overall experience with COVID-19. Encourage them to write an article, record a video, or create a radio broadcast through a voice recording or phone call. Use the phone or simple text messaging to have students present their work to you and/or their peers. Perhaps collect all of the news briefings and create a classroom news station with various students playing the role of the news anchor and reporters from the field. Templates and tips on writing news stories can help students succeed in the project.
- e. **Encourage students to create their own country and create a new world as a class:** Asks students to imagine being the founder of a brand-new country and starting it from scratch. Provide a set of 'independent study' instructions for each student that invites them to have fun while creating a new nation. You could ask each student to create a new country and then together, create a new world together as a class. Each student would need to imagine and present the core elements of their new country such as: a) their form of government; b) their design of a flag; c) currency; d) special traditions; e) and even a new language. There are many variations of the **create-your-own-country** project. It can provide teachers with an extended lesson/unit that grows over time and encourages students to not only think about their country, but also how they might relate to other countries created by their classmates.
- f. **Suggest collaborative poetry:** Challenge your students to read poetry and then write some of their own. Share some poetry verses via phone, text or over WhatsApp. Show your students both the intrinsic beauty of poetry and how it can be used to learn about other cultures, places and times. If possible, students can then virtually collaborate with others to read, discuss and co-write poems. If you are connected with your students via WhatsApp, consider building a virtual poem chain where each student contributes a sentence or verse before 'passing it on' to another student or back to you as the teacher.
- g. **Challenge your students to design new solutions to environmental issues:** Are people doing enough to ensure that the next generation inherits a healthy planet? Challenge your students to answer that question by diving into an independent project about the environment and use household items to represent the challenges and potential solutions facing their challenges at home and throughout their community.

h. **Conduct homemade science experiments:** Consider contextualizing instructions from this dynamic collection of home-based STEM activities that your students may enjoy with household items: [Click here](#). If possible, perhaps host a virtual class science fair where students present the results of their homemade experiments and scientific discoveries.

2. **Supplement television and radio learning content with more interactive, personal learning activities:** In many countries, national ministries of education and private companies are airing curriculum-aligned learning content through television and radio broadcasts while schools are closed. Unfortunately, only so much information can be covered through mass media. However, these programmes can reduce your need to develop new content as an educator and instead focus on designing learning extension activities for your students. You can use the content of the radio or television broadcasts to check for understanding or create follow-up questions. Be sensitive of students who may not have access to either radio or television.
3. **Encourage students to create 'homemade obstacle courses':** Encourage your students to create an indoor obstacle course using household items, designing different 'learning' and 'doing' stations along the way. These could be academic challenges such as singing math facts or writing a special poem. Here is a video about one parent's [indoor obstacle course](#) that she made for her students as a source of inspiration. Have students think about what they can use from their homes to make similarly engaging obstacle courses. Invite students to create special obstacles courses for their siblings or other family members to navigate and explore. If possible, you could then host a 'virtual Olympics' with students showing other students about their special obstacles courses. Students can share photos or small video clips over WhatsApp or mobile phones. Sharing each other's obstacle course ideas can also help other students and their families develop fun ideas about what to do while at home, too.
4. **Learn new vocabulary through 'Word Jars':** Ask your students to write down words that are new to them on pieces of paper and place them in a Word Jar. You can also provide weekly challenge words for their 'Word Jar'. Then ask students to pick out a word from the Word Jar each day to practice during different times of the day – either with family members, over a meal, or during a virtual class session. Students can then be encouraged to write new phrases or sentences with their words and to share what they have learned with you or the class over the phone.
5. **Encourage reading:** Consider creating or sharing daily short stories via WhatsApp or SMS with your students, which they can read with their families or independently. Challenge your students to write and share a short story with their classmates to read over SMS or WhatsApp. Consider pairing students together as 'reading and writing pen pals' and ask for students to share what they have learned about each other at the end of each week.
6. **Encourage students to write a song:** Students love to sing and make their own music. Have your students take their favourite song and teach it to their family. They might even like to accompany themselves with a homemade instrument, or one that they create. Based on the tune, students can then write another verse. If possible, consider hosting a virtual talent show for students to share their favourite song or new verse. These can be shared via video or audio recordings sent over WhatsApp or mobile phones.
7. **Dive into areas of the curriculum that are often 'squeezed out' during busy school days:** Consider using this time away from school as an opportunity to focus on areas of the curriculum that are often 'squeezed out' of available timeslots during students' busy school days (i.e. art, music, drama, creative writing, physical education). Consider asking students what they would like to learn more about over the next week outside of the formal school subjects. Their answers may surprise you and help inspire new extra-curricular exploratory activities in areas of theatre, sports, or technology. This could also inspire new after-school activities once your schools reopen after the COVID-19 related restrictions.

25 Online Teaching Resources to Help Students' Learning at Home:

Online Teaching and Learning Tools and Platforms for Primary School Educators

1. **Google Classroom:** Allows teachers to connect with students, create assignments, design quizzes, and link to curated spreadsheets, documents, and YouTube. Also allows other language inputs, if used in combination with Google Translate. A mobile friendly website. The App is available on Playstore. [Click here](#)
2. **Edmodo:** Online learning platform that allows teachers to connect with students, assign tasks, create assessments and administer quizzes. Can connect with Google Drive, OneDrive, and Office365. Edmodo has also uploaded a toolkit for distance learning with recorded webinars about how to use online resources. It is a mobile friendly website. [Click here.](#)
3. **Classdojo:** Online learning platform that allows teachers to connect with students and provide feedback on activities to parents. Options for tasks are media-friendly (submission of photos or videos by students) and provide learning portfolios of individual students. The website is not optimized for mobile screen, but the app is available on Playstore. [Click here.](#)
4. **Schoology:** Online learning management system with tools that can be used by teachers to create classes and groups with learning objectives, assign tasks with links, and create assessments. It is multi-media friendly. It also has public resources from other teachers, like downloadable worksheets. The website is not optimized for mobile screens. Available as an app on Playstore. [Click here.](#)
5. **Seesaw:** Online learning management system that creates a powerful learning loop between students, teachers, and their families. [Click here.](#)
6. **Screencastify:** One of the most used online tools for teachers to personalize their online teaching/ learning sessions for students. It allows teachers to bring themselves into the screen (most important element of keeping the relationship with students and the teachers), and offers a variety of screen options – zooming in, writing, etc. It is a free extension on Chrome. Works on desktops/laptops and is compatible with Chromebooks and some tablets. Not compatible with Android phones. Free for up to 5 minutes of each recording; paid upgrade required if single recording is more than 5 minutes. [Click here.](#)
7. **Buncee:** Supports educators to create and share visual representations of learning content and assignments with students, including media-rich lessons, reports, newsletters, and presentations. [Click here.](#)
8. **PearDeck:** Helps educators engage with students' solutions in learning and formative assessments. Facilitates the design of engaging instructional content with various integration features. [Click here.](#)
9. **Guide to Help Student Learning at Home:** A Guide to Distance Learning by Altitude Learning' provides simple guidelines for educators about how to create a learning plan and daily structure to engage with learners at all ages. [Click here.](#)

Online Teaching and Learning Resources for Primary School Educators

- 10. Khan Academy:** Provides a range of subject and grade specific teaching and learning resources for children; including independently sequenced learning modules with recorded teaching assistance for students of all ages. Also provides tutorials for teacher professional development and tips for delivering distance education. [Click here](#)
- 11. Scholastic Learning:** Project-based, week-long learning units for grades K-9. [Click here.](#)
- 12. PBS Learning Media:** Curated daily, subject-specific, age appropriate teaching and learning materials. [Click here.](#)
- 13. We are Teachers:** 1000+ resources for supporting learning at home, listed by grade and subject. The resources are curated by teachers. [Click here.](#)
- 14. Amazing Educational Resources:** 1000+ crowdsourced resources for educators to use for distance learning during COVID-19 that are searchable by subject and age. [Click here.](#)
- 15. Explorify:** Provides science activity ideas for educators in primary school; some of which can be done at home. Can be sorted by theme and age group. A Facebook group is available where primary school educators can request to join and participate in online discussions about teaching science to young children. Mobile-friendly website. [Click here.](#)
- 16. Nrich Math:** Provides resources and exploratory activities for primary school educators to support student mathematics at home. Mobile-friendly website. [Click here.](#)
- 17. Geogebra:** Interactive resources for primary school educators that can make groups and assign tasks, including the use of interactive teaching tools for mathematics. Apart from geometry, the site enables visualization of mathematical concepts. Mobile-friendly website and apps are available on Playstore. App can be used in offline mode. [Click here.](#) Webinars on YouTube about how to integrate Geogebra resources with online learning management systems, like Google Classrooms are also available. [Click here.](#)
- 18. Phet Colorado:** This website has materials, teacher notes, and interactive games for teaching physics, chemistry, biology, maths, and earth science. Teachers can have the students engage and experiment with different STEM-related concepts online. [Click here.](#)
- 19. YouCubed:** A free math resource from the Stanford Graduate School of Education with resources helping cultivate mathematical mindsets and problem-solving skills among students. Educators can use the activities for designing their lessons. [Click here.](#)
- 20. Wonderopolis:** Daily lessons about fun topics that children wonder about on a daily basis. Click [Click here.](#)
- 21. Discovery Audible Stories:** A library of 1000+ audible stories for children and young people searchable by topic and age. [Click here.](#)
- 22. Edraak:** K-12 learning platform that offers digital open educational resources in Arabic and English. These resources can be used in and out of the classroom and offers sequential learning materials for teachers and students. The platform adopts a competency-based approach to learning, while also providing material that can be used by teachers in a blended learning settings. [Click here.](#)
- 23. Learn at Home Primary School:** The materials on the 'Learn at Home' pages are designed to provide supplementary learning resources for primary grade students across multiple academic subjects. [Click here.](#)

24. **Minecraft for Education:** Consider perusing this website about how to use the globally popular Minecraft game platform as a virtual classroom tool for distance learning. [Click here.](#)
25. **Scratch:** An MIT-based platform for creating digital games, stories, and animations to share with others for students to use to practice computational thinking/digital literacy. [Click here.](#)

10 Offline Resources to Help Students' Psychosocial Wellbeing

1. **Identify remote psychosocial support in your country:** Many countries are providing increased remote support for children and adults to reach out when they have anxieties or psychological needs. It is recommended that teachers identify what is available and advice families and students about how these services can be accessed. These may be provided by government or non-government providers.
2. **Identify local counselling professionals:** Many of our communities have trained counsellors, social workers, even paraprofessionals within them. Where you identify a need with a student or family, consider linking them to a professional to provide support that is more personal. Engage local community leaders to disseminate key messages to families via the phone.
3. **Small Group Interactions:** Organize video or phone calls with small groups of students, where you can talk about their day, how they spend their time, and explore other questions they may have about non-academic issues. Make sure to listen to their concerns and answer their questions in an age appropriate manner; do not overwhelm them with too much information. Listen for social or emotional stress including within the family and, if required, connect them with your designated supervisor for follow up.
4. **Physical Exercise:** Include examples of physical exercises as part of the learning routine/package for your students and encourage families to provide opportunities to exercise at least twice daily. This could be dancing to a favourite fast tempo song or creating their own fitness routine. Focus on activities that don't need additional resources; and remember to exercise different parts of the body - twisting, stretching, curling, jumping, lifting, pulling, etc.
5. **Family routines are important:** Encourage families to keep a routine. It can be as simple as always having breakfast together or sharing quiet reading time every afternoon. We all respond well socially and emotionally to a sequence of experiences that we can anticipate. Extend empathy and understanding to students who may find it difficult to keep a strict routine.
6. **Health and Safety are Important:** Promote proper handwashing techniques as a general health and safety recommendation either as a reminder when speaking to students or through health science or social studies education. Help children understand the basic concepts of disease prevention and control. Use exercises that demonstrate how germs can spread. To minimize stress, remain sensitive about what information is shared and how you share it. See more on age appropriate discussions. [Click here.](#)
7. **Supporting Connections:** Model a calm, safe learning experience through your tone of voice when communicating with children over the phone or via voice messages. Invite students to work through challenges and encourage them to take breaks when it feels overwhelming. Let students know you are thinking about them. A personal message via phone may help a student stay connected to you and their learning goals. Incorporate personal interests of students to encourage a response. Streamline communication and reduce volume of information sent to students or family members.

8. **Lead a Mindful/Meditation Session:** This can be a simple 10-minute session with students. Have the students sit up straight, close their eyes and imagine they are in a field of flowers. Have them smell the flowers deeply. Then the students should imagine they are blowing out a candle at their birthday party. Smelling a flower and blowing out a candle is a simple way to get students to breathe deeply.
9. **Organization is key to emotional well-being for students:** Teachers are always helping students to keep classwork organized, follow schedules, and complete tasks. These self-management skills are even more critical to students' emotional wellbeing now that they are studying from home. Encourage students to create to-do lists, checklists or to schedule deadlines. If you can access your students online via WhatsApp or emails, you can send wellness reminders to students—everything from a quick message like, "Take a quick movement break!" to sharing a mindfulness activity like, "Think of three things you're grateful for today."
10. **Inspire students to express themselves:** Teachers can often get a sense of a student's emotional wellbeing from a quick conversation after the bell rings or checking in at the end of a challenging week. With distance learning, it is just as important to create a comfortable and safe space for students to express emotions. Teachers can ask students to create a "reflection journal" and write about their distance learning experiences. If your students have internet access, you can also invite students to write or record blogs/ video blog posts and share with other students. This way students can both share their thoughts, and also see one another, hear each other's voices, and comment on each other's messages.

8 Online Resources to Help Students' Psychosocial Wellbeing

1. **Stress Busters** – Save the Children's suggested resources are available [here](#).
2. **'No Limit Generation' short videos and exercises** – Access energizing, empowering, and calming exercises for children. - [Click here](#)
3. **Yoga for Kids** –There are many videos online about Yoga for children. [Click here](#)
4. **Calm breathing techniques and mindfulness activities.** [Click here](#).
5. **Progressive Muscle Relaxation.** [Click here](#).
6. **6. The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families:** A children's mental health charity offers resources for schools and educators, including activities for self-care. [Click here](#) and [here](#) for suggested activities. They also have a free downloadable guide with guidance for schools. [Click here](#)
7. **The Child Bereavement Network:** Advice on supporting grieving children during the coronavirus outbreak. Guides to help children and adults stay connected during the illness are downloadable by clicking [here](#).
8. **Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies:** The INEE guidance note has strategies on psychosocial support and socio-emotional learning for children. [Click here](#).

Recommendations: Support to Programmes

This section includes a set of 12 recommendations for organisations, school systems and education programmes working with and supporting primary school educators during COVID-19:

- 1. Align with Government Priorities:** If your country's Ministry of Education has issued guidance or resources to support primary educators, follow that guidance and only use the ideas and resources from this resource packet that you think will complement the government and other efforts from trusted partners in your context.
- 2. Translate Available Resources:** Adapt and translate the above recommendations for primary educators to use with students by ensuring that the language is culturally and contextually appropriate and relevant in your context.
- 3. Context Matters:** Review the recommended synthesis of available resources and only include the resources that are contextually relevant and appropriate for your context, being aware that some of the available resources require reliable Internet.
- 4. Identify Local Strategies that Work:** Include any other primary educators' resources that are already available and working in your country context. Collect strategies from local AKDN agencies, government partners or other reliable sources, including local primary educators.
- 5. Disseminate in Your Context:** Consider conducting webinars that can be recorded to disseminate these tips, recommendations and resources, especially in the languages that are mostly used by the primary educators in your context. The recorded webinar (or parts of it) could then be distributed via WhatsApp, Facebook or other low-cost media channels.
- 6. Use Radio and TV for Sharing Messages:** If the Internet is not reliable in your country, consider disseminating some of these tips or resources through local radio or TV stations. Collaborating with the government in disseminating these resources via radio and/or TV can also be a good way to show the government your commitment to responding to the COVID-19 crisis and support their strategic response.
- 7. Leverage Existing Social Networks:** Connect with your local education departments to disseminate resources to remote areas. Work with teacher-educators / teachers' supervisory cadre (e.g. in India, the Cluster Resource Coordinators) to call teachers in small groups, share resources and develop lessons that work in that context. If your programmes have existing education communities of practice among secondary educators that use texting, WhatsApp or other social media, these networks can be great ways to disseminate tips and resources for the educators.
- 8. Less is more:** Encourage teachers to choose a few strategies and a few online resources at a time. Encourage spending enough time for a fair assessment of whether a resource is working well for their students. In this assessment they should be able to articulate how they know something is/is not working and how they've adjusted their teaching to support their decision.
- 9. For large school systems:** Create an online drive that organizes all materials for remote teaching and learning. Record a video to highlight useful resources. Organize regular virtual collaboration events (webinars, WhatsApp, Facebook, surveys) to get feedback from teachers about resources in the drive so the platform can remain an active and useful resource for teachers.

- 10. Academic calendar** - Build a calendar that can be used by educators to guide parents and interact with students effectively. This can be aligned with the curriculum, linked to online and offline resources, and divided into monthly and weekly plans. In this way, educators also have a sense of routine and can devote time to focus on effective engagement strategies. For example, in India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has developed an alternative academic calendar that can be downloaded by educators. [Click here](#).
- 11. Helplines** - Have helplines for educators where they can get support and advice on how to address specific challenges faced by their students. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry of Education and Science has announced the launch of nationwide hotlines to provide psychological support for students and pedagogical support for educators.
- 12. Explore alternate technologies for educators:** There are a few technologies that may not seem relevant to education directly but can be explored further to improve student connections and teacher professional development. For example, mobile survey collection platforms and tools that work can be suitably modified to become training / e-learning platforms for teachers. Integrated Voice Response Systems (IVRS) can be used in combination with other virtual platforms to build remote learning possibilities for teachers. IVRS can also share voice-recorded messages to phones, and survey capabilities can be used to set assignments. These services are not free. Some examples from Africa and India include Viamo [here](#), Commcare [here](#), and Dhwani Rural Information Systems [here](#).