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PROMISING PRACTICES IN BUILDING RESILIENCE OF EDUCATION ECOSYSTEMS

In January 2023, the [Leading Through Learning Global Platform](#) published a series of case studies, two of which featured promising practices in how education systems across the world responded during and after the COVID-19 pandemic: [Promising Practices in Implementing Accelerated and Remedial Education in COVID-19 Response](#) and [Promising Practices in Providing Psychosocial Support, Social and Emotional Learning, and Access to Protection Service in COVID-19 Response](#). The practices identified in the two case studies highlighted the ability for teachers, students, communities, and systems to be resilient in the face of a crisis.

In August 2023, these promising practices were discussed in consultations with regional education stakeholders in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The consultants' aim was to review the promising practices and understand if they resonated with participants' contexts and experiences and to identify gaps or areas requiring additional resources or research on different contexts in those regions. This brief summarizes the findings and recommendations that emerged from the two regional-focused consultations.

PROMISING ACCELERATED AND REMEDIAL EDUCATION PRACTICES IN AFRICA



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The consultation with education stakeholders in Africa explored promising practices in implementing accelerated and remedial education in COVID-19 responses. The participants discussed the relevance of the listed practices to their own contexts. Participants from Nigeria noted that the national program using television and radio to disseminate educational content was met with significant community participation, particularly from parents and local stakeholders who established community-based study groups. In Zambia, too, information communication

technology (ICT) such as WhatsApp and radio allowed teachers to share lessons and students to continue learning.

However, in both examples offered by consultation participants, several barriers highlighted the importance of equity considerations, including poor power supply; lack of access to television, radio, or smartphones; and economic disparities between families. Consultation participants working in Zambia, Nigeria, and Uganda noted a need for transformative and adaptive resilience capacity beyond ICT-related changes, such as an increased focus on collecting information for data-driven decision-making, supporting teacher and student motivation, and diversifying and increasing the number of implementing organizations to include more local nongovernmental and other organizations.

Participants shared several recommendations to strengthen equity and inclusion in the implementation of accelerated and remedial education and build resiliency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement proactive and early interventions to identify and support students at risk of dropping out before they leave the system.
- Be deliberate in addressing inequities, including targeted funding and tailored accommodations for disadvantaged groups, such as children with disabilities, girls, and those living in poverty.
- Collaborate and engage with relevant government offices to support distance learning and involve public actors in supporting children's learning with subsidized learning materials.
- Link educational improvements to broader economic and infrastructure development initiatives, especially in remote areas.
- Develop and maintain partnership with community-based organizations to leverage their expertise and community reach.

PROMISING PRACTICES ON PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (PSS) AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In the consultation with education professionals in the LAC region, participants unanimously recognized the relevance of the promising practices identified in the case study and noted that these practices could be adapted and applied to various educational systems on a national, state, or regional scale while also conforming to the constraints of resource-limited environments. For instance, Mexico initiated the *Educación para el Bienestar* (Educating for Well-Being) program, which provided crucial PSS support to educators. This program bolstered educators' resilience, equipping them with tools to navigate the emotional challenges of the pandemic.

Participants discussed the shifts in priorities regarding PSS, SEL, and access to protective services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, including the crucial role technology has played in facilitating access to these resources. With lockdowns and social distancing measures in place, technology emerged as a lifeline for education continuity. The collaboration with private enterprises and universities, along with the incorporation of technology, became pivotal to bridge resource gaps



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and extend PSS and SEL support to students. Platforms such as radio and WhatsApp were used to reach communities with limited connectivity. However, participants expressed concerns about the quality and effectiveness of virtual alternatives when compared with in-person interactions, particularly for children facing violence and complex social challenges. The digital divide between students with consistent access to internet and technology and those with less access highlighted the urgency of addressing these disparities to ensure equitable access to education and mental health services.

Consultation participants advocated for the integration of PSS, SEL, and access to protective services throughout the education system and into curricula rather than relying on isolated programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recognize that the adaptability and responsiveness of interventions to the immediate needs of both educators and students are vital components of successful initiatives.
- Provide teacher training, through digital resources, on ways of addressing the socioemotional needs of students—this is essential for resiliency.
- Emphasize data-driven decision-making to ensure interventions are evidence-based and tailored to the unique context of each country.
- Engage community members trusted by students as an effective approach to providing students with mental health support through connection with supportive community members.

Despite commonalities and general agreement on the need for SEL and PSS in educational programming and teacher training, the perceptions and ways of addressing SEL and PSS vary depending on country, needs, and programs. While some experts consider it fundamental to incentivize governments to pay attention to this, others think programs should act first to generate quality data and enhance reporting systems as a tool to mobilize government resources.

CONCLUSION

Both consultations underscored the need for **inclusive and equitable policies and practices**, including equitable financing and development as well as sustainable and adaptable community-driven solutions to strengthen the resilience of education systems. From recommendations and discussion with education experts in Africa, it is clear that **focusing on lasting changes in programming** beyond the pandemic and **more closely measuring impact for enhanced policymaking, programming, and implementation** are needed to ensure that accelerated and remedial education programs are inclusive and effective during and after a crisis. In the LAC region, education stakeholders emphasized and affirmed the relevance and sustainability of the adaptable PSS and SEL interventions showcased in the case study, citing the need for **inclusive policies and practices that prioritize socioemotional well-being within the education system**. As communities continue to navigate the complexities of learning recovery after the pandemic, the path toward a resilient education system continues, informed by these shared experiences and best practices.



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