
TOOL 3.3

PLANNING FOR ACCELERATING LEARNING AND CATCHING UP



USERS

National education officials;
Local education officials;
Educators and administrators;
Implementers



PURPOSE

To identify which curricular resources are already available and which need to be developed/adapted to help learners develop essential competencies and catch up



ENGAGE

Learners (children and youth), families, and communities; Curriculum and instruction specialists; Child development and learning specialists; Teachers' unions

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Review the [COVID-19 Decision Tree](#)** to identify what type of adaptations need to be made to meet the needs of learners in your context, program, or school.
2. **If you plan to implement a catch-up program, you will need a condensed curriculum. Gather existing curricula and teaching and learning materials**, including any curricula for non-formal education, accelerated education, or catch-up programs that may already be condensed. Starting from the top of the Planning for Accelerating Learning to Catch Up Organizer, ask the series of questions about what adaptations you will need to make in order to prioritize competencies, teach essential social-emotional skills, and help learners get back on track.
3. **As you move through the organizer, take notes.** Notes may include which curriculum can be used as a starting point, where financial resources can be shifted, and what training and supports educators will need to carry out adaptations.

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INSTRUCTIONS (CONT.)

4. **Utilize the recommended resources** provided in the organizer, depending on which phase of the planning process your school or educational institution is in and your specific needs.
5. **When you complete this tool, answer the debrief questions** to identify what you have learned, what it means for the return to learning, and what must happen next.
6. **Finally, complete the Action Plan in [Tool 0.2](#)** to list strategies to enhance resilience of the education system and compile in a single plan the key actions for follow-up.

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ACCELERATING LEARNING TO CATCH UP ORGANIZER

A **catch-up program** is “a short-term transitional education programme for children and youth who had been actively attending school prior to an educational disruption, which provides students with the opportunity to learn content missed because of the disruption and supports their re-entry to the formal system.”

Accelerated Education Working Group, “COVID-19: Pathways for the Return to Learning,” (2020), <https://inee.org/resources/covid-19-pathways-return-learning>.

A **condensed curriculum** is a modification to a standard curriculum that identifies and maps out the most important knowledge and skills that learners need to achieve grade-level proficiency in a shortened time frame.

Accelerated Education Working Group, “COVID-19: Pathways for the Return to Learning: Guidance on Condensing a Curriculum,” (2020), <https://inee.org/resources/covid-19-pathways-return-learning-guidance-condensing-curriculum>.

A **scope and sequence** lays out a learning sequence that focuses instruction on the attainment of priority outcomes and includes revision of prerequisite knowledge and skills. It also includes the suggested number of lessons for each part of the learning sequence.

1. Do you need a **catch-up program**?

YES

NO → Return to the Toolkit

2. Is a **condensed, grade-level curriculum** available that aligns with national priorities (including high-stakes exams)?

YES

NO → Use the AEWG’s [COVID-19 Pathways for the Return to Learning: Guidance for Condensing a Curriculum](#) to condense the curriculum by prioritizing competencies, reinforcing skills, and integrating content.

3. Does the curriculum **prioritize competencies** with a focus on basic skills (reading, writing, math)?

YES

NO → 

4. Does it teach **essential health, safety, and social-emotional skills**?

5. Is a **scope and sequence/pacing guide** that sufficiently covers prioritized competencies available?

YES

NO → Consider developing or adapting teaching and learning materials and assessments, or support educators to make adaptations. ([See Tool 5.1](#))

6. Are **teacher guides and learning materials** (e.g., readers) that sufficiently cover prioritized competencies available?

YES

NO → 

7. Do existing **formative/summative assessments** sufficiently assess prioritized competencies?

YES

NO → Use [USAID’s Guide to Strengthening Equality and Inclusiveness in Teaching and Learning Materials](#) and [USAID’s Checklist for Conflict Sensitivity in Education](#).

8. Does the condensed curriculum **promote equity and inclusion**? Is it **conflict sensitive**?

YES

NO → 

9. Can the condensed curriculum be used effectively **in person, at a distance, or in blended learning**?

YES

NO → Use USAID’s Distance Learning Toolkit (forthcoming) and explore strategies for incorporating learner-centered pedagogy in person and at a distance.

10. Does the condensed curriculum incorporate **learner-centered or accelerated learning pedagogy**?

YES

NO → 

Ensure policy and financing support implementation of the catch-up program, and monitor access and learning achievements, particularly focusing on marginalized learners.

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PLANNING DEBRIEF

WHAT?

What have you learned from this tool? What decisions have you made? What is missing?

SO WHAT?

What implications does this have for planning the return to learning? Why is this important?

NOW WHAT?

What must you do next? What challenges must you address?