Learning Through the Crisis

Insights in **community conditions** that led to success across our network.
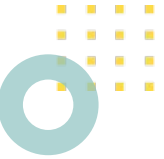
Teach For All
A Global Network

Learning Through the Crisis:

Insights from the Teach For All Network During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Teach For All
A Global Network

What is the Teach For All Network?

Teach For All is a global network of 59 independent, locally led and governed partner organizations and a global organization that works to accelerate the progress of the network. Each network partner recruits and develops promising future leaders to teach in their nations' under-resourced schools and communities and, with this foundation, to work with others, inside and outside of education, to ensure all children are able to fulfill their potential.

How did we create these insights?

These insights were inspired by the numerous stories and case studies that were drawn from our network over the course of 2020. You can view many of these stories from the #DontStopLearning campaign on the teachforall.org website.

A group of 35 fellows, alumni, social entrepreneurs and staff members from nearly 20 different countries, brainstormed and co-created these insights from their key learnings. We utilized the design-thinking framework during this co-creation process.

What did we research?

This briefing illustrates research we have done in our network in which we investigated 3 questions:

1. What does great **teacher leadership** look like in a crisis?
2. What have we learned about **distance learning** for how we can reimagine education?
3. What **community conditions** enable great outcomes to happen in a crisis?

How is this information organized?

This information is organized around 3 key questions and the insights that correspond to each of the key questions. Each insight also includes 3 examples and an opportunity to better understand how to apply this insight to your context. Should you choose to learn more, corresponding links to case studies, stories, and examples are included.

We have also included a number of policy recommendations aligned to each of our core questions, based on the insights we have seen to be true across our network.
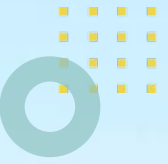
What **community conditions** enable great outcomes to happen in a crisis?

INSIGHTS

What **community conditions** enable great outcomes to happen in a crisis?

01 **Partnerships** between schools, nonprofits and government enable quick mobilization

02 Teachers, students and parents are equipped with **digital** and **learning-to-learn skills**

03 Teachers **feel a responsibility** to their student and school community.

04 There are **strong relationships** between teachers, students, and parents in the community

05 **Schools** are at the **center of community**, providing key services and supporting social and economic life

06 There is **existing infrastructure** for **distance learning**, which is built on or adapted, rather than created new

07 **Local leaders** can reflect, adjust course, innovate, and collaborate with other practitioners in the ecosystem

4

Teach For All | A Global Network

Partnerships
between schools, nonprofits and government enable quick mobilization

Photo courtesy of RISE - Rural India School Enterprise.

Across our network, the responses that were most effective in keeping students and communities safe and learning were those that built on existing partnerships and relationships. Typically, these involved initial collaborations between schools, community groups and NGOs, and resulted in the co-creation of initiatives such as raising awareness about the pandemic, providing food for families and children, ensuring all students were able to access to learning materials, designing and delivering blended learning. Local or national governments were often invited to provide support for the initiatives later on in the process.
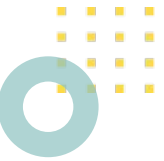
01 **Partnerships** between schools, nonprofits and government enable quick mobilization


Reading support in Malaysia

An alumni-run nonprofit in Malaysia called MYReaders partnered with schools and community volunteers to ensure students had access to reading classes in a low tech setting. Read more.

Televised teaching in Nigeria

Building on Teach For Nigeria's partnership with Ogun State, and his own community connections, teacher Martin Olufemi Odebowale reached millions of students via Ogun DigiClass. Read more.
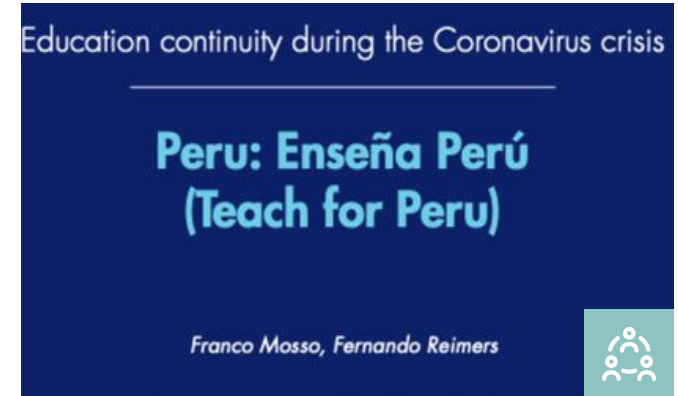
National strategy in Peru

Enseña Perú partnered with the ministry of education on four initiatives: TV and radio lessons; district leader training; family wellbeing and connectivity; a national dialogue. Read more.

How to
Mobilize networks and partnerships

**Matt Hood**
Principal, Oak National Academy

In the UK, within a month of schools closing, a network of 60 teachers, many of them Teach First alumni, had come together with support from schools and nonprofits to launch a national platform with video lessons to support teachers and families. Oak National Academy resources have since been accessed over 20 million times. Read more here.

Teachers, students and parents are equipped with **digital** and **learning-to-learn skills**

Many educators across the network recognized that with students out of school for extended periods of time, it would be important for students and their parents to have the skills that would enable them to learn from home. As result, educators established initiatives to help students and parents build the digital skills to navigate online resources via computers or mobiles, and develop learning-to-learn skills like self-studying or self-assessment to manage their own learning. In many contexts, network educators also supported their fellow teachers with the transition of their practice from in person to virtual.
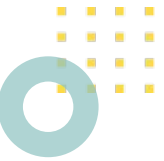
Teachers, students and parents are equipped with **digital** and **learning-to-learn skills**

Simple Education Foundation

In India, SEF, which is led by TFI alumni, adopted a variety of technologies and spread learnings through an easy to use toolkit that was shared schools and teachers across India. Read more.

WhatsApp support to parents

As Teach For Morocco works in early years education they focused on building the digital skills of parents so that they could support student wellbeing and learning over WhatsApp. Read more.

TikTok lessons in Malaysia

Arus Academy, a social enterprise run by Teach For Malaysia alumni that builds 21st century skills, switched to TikTok to roll out a set of experiences to enable independent learning. Watch the webinar to learn how.

How to
Grow digital and learning skills

Chandni Chopra
Director, Research & Design
Simple Education Foundation

In Delhi, SEF created a five step e-Learning model: educator designs or curates content; educator shares content via WhatsApp using audio notes and images; parent sends student work via WhatsApp voice notes and images; individual feedback provided on student by educator; Children appreciated on WhatsApp Group. They also created a toolkit with a variety of resources.

Teachers **feel a responsibility** to their student and school **community**.

In the communities that have best been able to adapt to the challenges created by the crisis, teachers have played an active role in supporting both the wellbeing and learning of their students and their families. These teachers have gone far beyond the expectations of their role, maintaining regular close communications with all their students and their families, distributing food and health advice, and developing new high tech, low tech or no tech pedagogies to ensure that all of their students still have access to learning. The leadership of these teachers is rooted in a deep sense of responsibility to the communities that they serve.
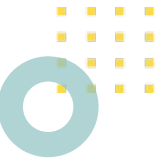
Teachers **feel a responsibility** to their student and school **community**

Family phone calls in Brazil

As the result of a hackathon Ensina Brasil fellows launched Ligação do Bem or 'Good Calling' to check in regularly with parents one on one over the phone. Read more here and here.

Health Guidance in Nepal

A Teach For Nepal fellow mobilized a team of student volunteers through a health and fitness club to give advice on hand-washing and hygiene. Read more.

Support networks in Pakistan

In Pakistan, Rida Rizvi mobilized a network of neighbors, shopkeepers and community leaders to ensure her students could keep learning whether or not they had online access. Read more.

How to
Take shared responsibility

Sumanth Uppuluru
Indus Action

After hearing that 5,000 migrant workers trying to return to their rural homes were at risk of starvation, the team at Indus Action switched from their core focus on education equity to mobilize a group of local community champions, government officials, and seven other non-profit organizations to ensure that the workers were fed. Read more.
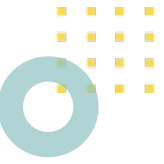
There are **strong relationships** between teachers, students, and parents in the community

Photo courtesy of Teach For Uganda

Relationships are at the foundation of community resilience. Across the network, those communities that were best able to respond to the challenges created by the crisis were characterized by the strong relationships that already existed between teachers, parents, students and other community members. These existing relationships made it easier to collaborate and coordinate responses, nurture wellbeing, communicate quickly and clearly and continue to support student learning.

There are **strong relationships** between teachers, students, and parents in the community

Home visits in Uganda

Each week in Uganda, Wamala Isaac visited the homes of his students to give health advice, check their wellbeing, bring learning materials and teach lessons. Read more.

Engaging Parents in Austria

In Ottakring, Vienna, Ingo Bergmann spent months building relationships with parents through texts, calls and in person meetings. These were invaluable for connecting in the crisis. Read more.

Community Ties in Afghanistan

Thanks to strong relationships built with community leaders and parents, Teach For Afghanistan fellows were able to reach all of their students even in rural zero tech settings. Read more.

How to
Build strong relationships

**Ingo Bergmann**
Teach For Austria

Having built strong relationships with his students through the use of authentic listening practices, Ingo Bergmann spent months engaging parents using texts, calls and in person meetings, slowly building trust through his commitment to turning up. With strong relationships in place, he uses a <u>World Cafe Method</u> to help the group take shared action.

Schools are at the **center of community**, providing key services and supporting social and economic life

At both a local and national level, communities and countries that prioritized students and schools in their decision-making saw immediate benefits for students, their families and the wellbeing of educators, as well as secondary benefits for society and the economy, as people were able to return quickly to work. Schools are not only fundamental for student learning, but can also play an intersectional role in public health, local economic development, government and community wellbeing.
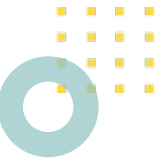
05 **Schools** are at the **center of community**, providing key services and supporting social and economic life

Community hub in the UK

Reach Children's Hub coordinates education, health and social services for the whole community from a school. This enabled a wide-ranging response to support families in the crisis. Read more.

Indigenous education in India

Shiksharth is an NGO in rural Chhattisgarh that has brought 4,000 children back to school despite conflict and Covid-19 by rooting education in local indigenous practices. Read more.

Feeding families in Liberia

The Teach For Liberia team, along with its fellows, designed a community-based feeding program as part of its deep commitment to community partnerships. Read more.

How to
Put school at the center of community

Mei Lim
Reach Children's Hub

Based at Reach Academy in Feltham, London, the Reach Children's Hub works with young people in the area from 'cradle to career' by supporting the local system around children and young people. The school and hub are a center for prenatal care, early years, and careers support, as well as a school and center for community organizing. Read more.

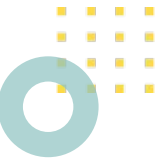# There is existing **infrastructure for distance learning**, which is built on or adapted, rather than created new

Photo courtesy of Teach For Austria

Effective responses to the challenges created by the crisis typically built on or solved problems with existing infrastructure for distance learning, instead of creating entirely new infrastructure. The most important factor was the creative capacity of local leaders such as teachers, parents, school leaders, nonprofits to work with or adapt whatever infrastructure was already in existence, whether mobile phones with WhatsApp or internet-enabled laptops.

There is existing **infrastructure for distance learning**, which is built on or adapted, rather than created new

La Radio Enseña in Chile

A network of 90 teachers worked with the government and hundreds of radio stations to ensure children throughout Chile had access to ongoing lessons over the radio. Read more.

Online learning in Malaysia

Teach For Malaysia and their allies made a simple site for school leaders, teachers, parents and students to access online learning. Read more.

Wifi access in the US

Teach For America Hawai'i, Hawai'iKidsCAN, local teachers, schools, and businesses collaborated to bring internet access to rural communities. Read more.

How to
Build on existing infrastructure

**Mara Niculescu**
Teach For Romania

Teach For Romania used its network and ministry connections to join forces with three other NGOs to <u>launch a website</u> within five days of schools closing. This website provided teachers with support in learning how to use digital tools, ideas about how to keep in touch and tips on how to adapt educational content for primary school children online. <u>Read more</u>.

Local leaders can reflect, adjust course, innovate, and collaborate with other practitioners in the ecosystem

Local leadership was the common factor in all of the responses to the challenges created by the crisis that we saw across the Teach For All network. In those cases, the conditions were in place that allowed that local leadership to flourish, either through the attitudes, culture and history of the community, the right policies, access to funding, or local capacity building efforts. Conditions enabled and grew the reflective, innovative, collective leadership that made communities resilient.
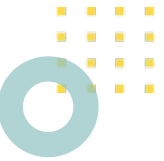
07 **Local leaders** are able to reflect, adjust course, innovate, and collaborate with other practitioners in the ecosystem

Parent power in the US

Springboard Collective, a US-based social enterprise that uses parent educator partnerships to fire student learning, scaled up rapidly during the crisis. Read more.

Institutions in Colombia

In Colombia, Enseña Por Colombia's Daniel Agudelo is working with UNICEF to build the capacity of local government institutions, including schools, to respond to the crisis. Read more.

Collective action in the UK

A nationwide alliance of hundreds of schools and nonprofits, the Fair Education Alliance mobilized nationwide collective action to tackle the risk of growing inequalities. Read more.

How to
Create the right conditions

Folawe Omikunle
Teach For Nigeria

In Ogun State, Teach For Nigeria fellows and alumni were involved in a multitude of innovative responses to the crisis from community health to televised teaching to millions of students, teacher training to home visits with resources. These resulted from the conditions established by the partnership between TFN and the governor of Ogun State. [Read more](#).

Policy Implications

What **community conditions** enable great outcomes to happen in a crisis?

Prioritize schools at the center of society and community 01

The current crisis has made even clearer the integral role that our schools play in the health of society and the economy. In the future, policymakers should place keeping schools open and children safe and learning at the highest level of priority in a crisis response.

Establish a supportive enabling environment for the generation and growth of solutions on the ground 02

There is vast leadership capability within schools and communities to support children's wellbeing and learning by responding quickly, establishing partnerships, and innovating solutions. Governments can enable this leadership through providing political, financial and even technological support to valuable grassroots initiatives.

Remove infrastructure barriers while growing local leadership capability 03

Significant progress can be achieved through removing infrastructure barriers - by ensuring, for example, that online learning materials are free to access on mobile data plans. It is even more important to invest in the capacity of local leaders, particularly teachers, school leaders and ministry officials to respond to challenges with creativity.

Acknowledgements
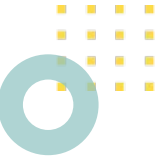
We are deeply grateful to the teachers, alumni, and educators from the 59 Teach For All Network organizations who co-created these insights and made these resources possible. Thank you to the following educators who volunteered their time, energy, and ideas to these resources:

- Adib Reyhani
- Alejandro Gibes de Gac
- Anisha Gupta
- Ashish Shrivastava
- Bernardo Echavarri Gonzalez
- Bibek Kandel
- Chandni Chopra
- Claudia Anthony
- Daniel Agudelo
- David Miyashiro
- David Vasquez
- Elsie María Ducreux Karica

- Emefa Kumaza
- Emmanuel Kumili
- Francisca Chadwick
- Ingo Bergmann
- Jayashree Deenakirubakaran
- Kelvin Tan
- Mara Niculescu
- Martin Olufemi Odebowale
- Matt Hood
- Mayuresh Bhoyte
- Mei Lim
- Mihaela Bucsa

- Muslimat Fatokun
- Nadia Labiad
- Prerna Kalra
- Pritish Sammaddar
- Rabiah Chaudhry
- Raghbendra Yadav
- Rida Rizvi
- Shadab Rafi
- Shadman Absar Choudhury
- Sumanth Uppuluru
- Tom Rose
- Wamala Isaac

If you are a part of the Teach For All Network and are interested in contributing additional stories, case studies, tools, and templates to this resource, contact us at virtual@teachforall.org.