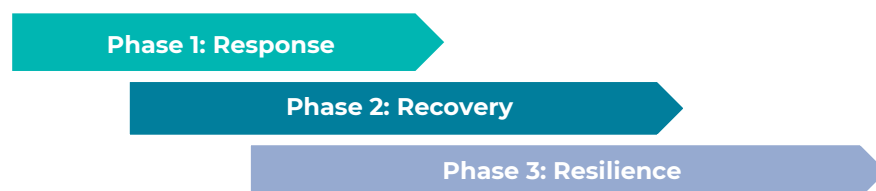# COVID-19 Response
Naweza

JRS

1.   JRS's Three-Phased Approach to COVID-19

An effective approach to the COVID-19 pandemic has to address acute needs brought on by the virus itself, and by mitigation efforts such as closures of public services and social distancing policies, as well as the longer-term needs that arise as a result of these mitigation efforts, such as loss of learning, post-traumatic stress, and service system disruption. Further, given the likelihood of recurrence of COVID-19 outbreaks, or the outbreak of other infectious diseases and the occurrence of other emergencies, a strategic approach should also seek to build resilience to the shocks brought on by these events.

JRS is therefore adopting a three-phased strategic approach to COVID-19:

- **Phase 1 – Response to Urgent Needs:** immediate needs that arise in response to the virus and mitigation efforts
- **Phase 2 – Recovery from Long-Term Impacts**: longer-term effects resulting from both the disease itself and lockdown policies put in place, such as potential discrimination or post-traumatic stress, and learning loss due to disrupted access to services.
- **Phase 3 – Building Resilience:** changes in project design, processes, or service delivery, to withstand the disruptions of an infectious disease outbreak or other emergencies in the future.

Phase 1: Response

Phase 2: Recovery

Phase 3: Resilience

The Mission of JRS will remain constant while the response approach and subsequent recovery will lead to greater resilience.

2. Programmes: Education

Overview

An effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic will need to address both acute needs brought on by mitigation efforts such as school closures and social distancing policies, as well as the longer-term needs that arise as a result of these mitigation efforts, such as loss of learning, post-traumatic stress, and education system disruption. Further, given the likelihood of recurrence of COVID-19 outbreaks, or the outbreak of other infectious disease, a response strategy should also seek to build resilience within education systems to the shocks brought on by these events.

Response

- **Phase 1 – Response to Urgent Needs**: Immediate needs that arise in the event of mitigation efforts
- **Phase 2 – Recovery from Long-Term COVID-19 Impacts on Education**: Longer term effects resulting from both the disease itself and the mitigation policies put in place, such as potential discrimination or post-traumatic stress, and learning loss due to disrupted schooling
- **Phase 3 – Building Resilience to Infectious Disease Outbreaks**: Changes in project design, processes, or service delivery, to withstand the disruptions of an ID outbreak

Each of the three phases of the Education Response will be guided by the key principles thereby ensuring staff and beneficiary safety and on-going support while focusing on continuity of learning. As the COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing and rapidly changing crisis, this response plan will be updated as new information, guidance, and resources emerge. This report provides an update of the response and recovery efforts of the Naweza project, according to the larger JRS and education-specific approach to COVID-19.

3. COVID-19 Response & Naweza

Updates			
Project Area	**Progress**	**Key Successes & Opportunities**	**Challenges & Constraints**
Tertiary Scholarships	• Repatriation of Naweza tertiary students from the public and private universities due to the closure of education institutions announced by the Government of Malawi on 20th March 2020. • Briefing of Naweza tertiary students at the camp on the way forward following the closure. The briefing centred on sharing preventive measures against contracting the novel coronavirus and brainstormed on the likely needs of the students during the closure period, such as pocket money and internet data for continuity of learning. • Provision of monthly stipends and an allocation of 6GB monthly internet data each to support continuity of learning using the schools' platforms and/or self-study. • Established a WhatsApp group to maintain communication, support scholars, and receive ongoing updates about their specific needs. • Distributed Personal protective equipment (PPE) including face	• All students were safely repatriated from the various public and private universities to the camp. • Staff from JRS and the social workers briefed the students and distributed some of the leaflets containing the preventive measures of the corona virus. • Monthly stipends were successfully provided to the tertiary students as well as 6GB internet data. • Students have been appreciative of JRS's gestures and support.	• There were few challenges during the repatriation, other than some students left behind person items. These have since been collected • Students were initially anxious about the personal protective equipment (PPE) including use of face masks and hand sanitizer.

	masks, a 400 ml bottle of hand sanitizer, and gloves.		
Secondary Scholarships	• Repatriation of Naweza secondary boarding students due to the closure of education institutions announced by the Government of Malawi on 20th March 2020 • Briefing of secondary school students on the way forward following the closure period to ensure their safety and continuity of learning. • All 24 secondary school students have been provided with a smartphone each for them to participate in online learning being facilitated by the Government of Malawi and their own self-study. Each student will be provided with 6GB monthly internet data to facilitate their continuity of learning through online studies. • The secondary school students have been oriented on the best use of the smartphone (including risks). • Established a WhatsApp group to facilitate ease of communication, provide ongoing support, and receive ongoing updates about their specific needs. • Installed solar power at the Naweza office to enable the	• All the 24 boarding students were successfully repatriated from their schools to Dzaleka camp. • JRS Malawi staff, the Naweza social workers, and the Mother's Group welcomed the girls at the camp, and are providing ongoing support. • All the 24 smart phones are in excellent condition and the girls are continuing their studies. • Solar power has been installed including the charging portals for the phones. • Students have been appreciative of JRS's gestures and support.	• There were no major challenges faced during the repatriation. • Naturally the girls were apprehensive about the future of their education, but they were given adequate information on the way forward and ongoing support is being provided. • There were no challenges on the phones and data received • Before the solar power was installed at the Naweza office, most girls were having to pay to charge their smartphones at the market because there is no electricity within many of the homes in the camp. In one case, a girl's battery was taken out of her phone. Though it was eventually recovered through the intervention of JRS staff, this scenario will be avoided. The installation of solar on the Naweza office not only provides a place for ongoing learning, but also increases girls' security by mitigating situations like the one described here. • Also, going into crowded places, such as the market, where people were not using PPE was

	secondary school girls to charge their smartphones. • Distributed Personal protective equipment (PPE) including face masks, a 400 ml bottle of hand sanitizer, and gloves.		a big challenge/risk. This has been mitigated.
Girls' & Boys' Clubs	• JRS has negotiated with Yetu Community Radio in Dzaleka camp for time slots to air content related to Girls' and Boys' Clubs, every every Wednesday from 14:00 to 15:00 hours. • 500 radios provided by UNHCR and distributed.	• Radio delivery has potential to reach a larger audience. • Content on sexual health rights, issues of education, building confidence, preventing early marriages amongst others, etc. is reaching a larger audience. • The distribution of radios to 500 families has increased the listenership to the various programmes, including Naweza.	• We are still negotiating with Yetu Community radio to add another one-hour slot to air Club content for 2 hours a week. • More families are eager to receive the radios.

Community Social Workers & MHPSS	• Community social workers have been reoriented to support continuity of learning activities and provide mental health and psychosocial (MHPSS) support in response to the Covid-19.
	
	• The Mother's Group has been reoriented on its role and are providing accompaniment and safeguarding of the girls during the closure of schools.
		• Working with JRS's larger psychosocial staff to engage Naweza's Community Social Workers in larger response.
		
		• Ongoing support seeks to identify girls who might be at risk of dropping out of school after prolonged absence.
			• Currently unable to conduct community awareness meetings because of the pandemic. We are also negotiating a radio slot.
			
			Mother's Group:
			
			• To continue to function efficiently, the Mother's Group urgently needs:
			
			  - stationery supplies for record keeping and reports,
			  - seed money to embark on additional income-generating activities; and

			-(at least) quarterly training sessions to evaluate work, upgrade skills, and to improve impact.
Distribution of MHM Kits	• Provision of Dignity Kits has continued with prevention measures in place. Hand sanitizer and soap being added to the kits. • Those packing and distributing the kits have been provided with personal protective equipment (PPE).	• All students have been provided with the dignity kits	• No challenges have been faced in the distribution of the kits
Other:	• Recruitment of the next Naweza Project Director has begun (applications have been received, currently short-listing candidates) • Installation of solar power on Naweza office.	• 784 applications have been received for the position of the Naweza Project Director. Shortlisting to come up with the best 20 applicants is underway • "Electrification" of the Naweza office provides many new opportunities for the office to be an ongoing hub for learning and girls' empowerment activities.	• A huge number of applications will make the shortlisting exercise difficult. • Prioritizing the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the solar infrastructure amongst other priorities.

5. Human Interest Story

The Naweza Mother's Group Inspires Girls

"It's a beautiful ceremony on a memorable day!" These were the sentiments expressed by the President of the Naweza Mother's Group on the day the secondary girls received their smartphones.

The Mother's Groups have proved to be a hugely successful initiative. Comprised of mothers from the school's catchment area, the Mother's Groups aims to support girls in their education. During the COVID-19 crisis, the Mother's Group has been reoriented in its role. They are providing accompaniment and safeguarding of the girls during the closure of schools. They are being provided mobile credit to listen to the unique concerns needs of the girls, as well as report and follow-up on cases of abuse that might occur during this period of confinement.

The Naweza Mother's Group

While activities are now being adapted and evaluated for COVID-19 Response, Recovery, & Resilience, the normal activities led by Mother's Group include:

- Guidance and counseling sessions on a range of issues including MHM, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and child rights, and personal safety.

- Community awareness campaigns on the importance of education to challenge negative attitudes and perceptions, especially those towards the education of girls.
- Income-generating activities, such as maintaining school gardens and selling produce, provide financial support to vulnerable girls to cover the costs of uniforms, learning materials, and items to meet basic needs, including such as food.
- Identification of girls and boys who have dropped out of school and casework with them and their families to encourage and facilitate a return to education. They also encourage parents to become more involved in their child's schooling by looking through exercise books and asking about school each day.

The Naweza Mother's Group meets every fortnight, on Tuesdays, and provides a wide range of services for our girls in the camp and the community. In meetings, they explore factors that deter girls and boys from school and devise possible strategies to overcome these.

5. Images

Installation of Solar Infrastructure on Naweza Office
will strengthen project response during COVID-19 and beyond.

A Naweza Tertiary Scholar, studying Nursing at the Catholic University of Malawi, has been interning at the Dzaleka Health Clinic since her repatriation to the camp.

A Naweza Tertiary Scholar, studying Social Work at the Catholic University of Malawi, continues her learning online at the Naweza Office.

COVID-19 Response in Dzaleka Camp: Quarantine Tents

Naweza Secondary Scholars received smartphones, mobile credit, and PPE to support their continuity of learning.

PPE items were added to monthly distribution of Dignity Kits.

6. Gender-Responsive Education Considerations

Globally, refugee girls are vulnerable to exclusion from education opportunities due to their intersectional identity. They are often excluded first, by being girls, and further by being refugees. To address inequalities, JRS seeks to design and implement gender-responsive education (GRE) projects, or rather, programming that considers gender norms, roles, relations, and a difference in opportunities, and that target gender-based barriers to achieving equitable education outcomes. Gender-responsive projects are generally associated with improved development and humanitarian outcomes. Addressing gender-specific needs results in improved services for girls and women, boys, and men.

In times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, gender norms, and pre-existing inequalities disproportionately impact girls and women. This response plan recognizes that the COVID-19 situation affects girls, boys, women, and men differently. Gender, along with other factors, including age, disability, education level, ethnicity, gender identity,

geographical location, etc. intersect to further compound gendered impact and intensify barriers to education. The crisis will impact all aspects of girls' lives; we know this from the Ebola and Zika outbreaks, as well as the HIV pandemic. Lessons learned from these experiences have taught us to apply a gender lens to our work, including gender analysis and informed gender-responsiveness into all phases of education response planning.

During COVID-19, restricted movement and strategies such as 'shelter-in-place' may put girls and women at greater risk. They might be confined with their abusers indefinitely. Access to overwhelmed health services, including sexual and reproductive health (SRH) will likely be reduced. Given the associated economic downturn, girls and women are more likely to turn to coping strategies, including transactional sex, other sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including trafficking.

For these reasons, **it is important to include girls' and women's voices in response plans.** This pandemic – and the strategies we adopt in response – also present an opportunity to use gender transformative approaches to help address ongoing barriers to girls' and women's education. The participation of girls and women in all phases can help to facilitate important economic and social changes that benefit communities at large.

As it relates to the education sector specifically, learning will be disrupted by school closings, disruptions in other education-related activities, and the preventative measures needing to be put in place. The responsibilities placed on girls and women will likely increase, as they remain at home. As continuity of learning moves to online platforms, we must remember that girls and women have less access to connectivity around the globe.
Where e-learning is possible, issues of cyber abuse and exploitation are new realities. Reduced economic activity will aggravate the reasons for and risk of early marriage and pregnancy. Lessons from other crises teach us that adolescent girls are at a higher risk of not returning to school after prolonged breaks.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has published the following resources that are relevant to our education programs, and other areas of intervention during COVID-19 Response. Both are worth reading. However, knowing that JRS staff in the field overwhelmed, this guide seeks to synthesize notes that are related to our work within the education sector.

Key Resources:

- IASC Interim Guidance on COVID-19 – Gender Alert (English, French & Spanish)
- IASC Interim Technical Note: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) during COVID-19 Response - Version 1.0 (English, Arabic, French, Russian & Spanish

JRS Education COVID-19 Response Framework:

Guiding Principles	Gender-Responsive Considerations for COVID-19 Response
Cross-cutting Considerations Across all Principles	- How are girls and women, and others who might be excluded in decision-making processes, being consulted to understand their distinct and specific needs? - How are you analyzing the unique needs and risks of sub-groups of girls and women, including disabled girls, pregnant girls, and child-headed households? - How are you collecting age and gender-disaggregated data that currently does not exist, and that might help to inform and strengthen future GRE interventions?
Protecting the health of students and staff	- How is hygiene, protection, and sanitation information being tailored to and shared with girls and boys? - How and where are zero tolerance for Sexual Exploitations and Abuse (SEA) messages being communicated? - How and where are advocacy and community mobilization efforts being strengthened as part of preventative efforts? - Do these plans account for gender-based differences in literacy levels and access to information and tools, such as mobile phones and internet? - Are prevention messages available in different formats, through multiple media options, and in diverse languages? - Are prevention messages being developed and delivered in gender-neutral language and with gender-positive examples and illustrations?

	• Are alternative or temporary educational facilities being outfitted with separate WASH facilities for girls and boys? • **MHM needs:** If girls receive Dignity Kits / Menstrual Hygiene Management support, are plans being made for alternative and safe distribution of sanitary and other materials related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH)? If distribution of Dignity Kits is not a regular activity, are there unique needs and reasons to begin distribution during this response? • How are remote learning strategies (digital delivery, radio, TV) reinforcing good hygiene practices?
2) Ensuring learning continues	• How is the equal participation of girls and boys being promoted during school closures and through alternative, remote-learning initiatives? • Are preventative measures being put in place to minimize the risk of students dropping out of school permanently, especially girls? • Are learning materials being developed and delivered in gender-neutral language and with gender-positive examples and illustrations? • If school feeding programs have been suspended, are alternatives being established that will ensure that girls have time to participate in alternative instruction and study and the burden of increased household duties are mitigated? • How are technological alternatives to classroom learning taking into consideration the potential tech-access divide between girls and boys, and/or for female-headed households? • How are you creating and ensuring a cyber-safe space where e-learning is being used to ensure continuity of education? • Are there new or increased risks, related to commuting to school, social distancing, or other public health measures (i.e. changes of schedule, checkpoints, etc.)? If so, how are these risks being mitigated to prevent school absences/dropout, especially for girls?

3) Providing protection and emotional support to students and teachers	- Are preventative measures being put in place to ensure that girls are not exposed to risks due to being out of the supervision of the school system where education activities/school are suspended? - What safe and accessible reporting channels are being established or strengthened to receive complaints and promote a speak up culture? - Do these channels account for gender-based differences in literacy levels and access to information tools, such as mobile phones and internet? - Are they available in different formats and in diverse languages? - How are teachers, school staff, and other relevant community members being sensitized on the increased risks of GBV and SEA?

Gender – Key Terms

This list of terms is borrowed from another key resource, the INEE Guidance Note on Gender: Gender Equality in and through Education available in four languages (English, French, Portuguese & Spanish). It includes key terms referenced in this document.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, responsibilities, and identities for women and men and how these are valued in society. They are culture-specific and they change over time. Gender identities define how women and men are expected to think and act. These behaviors are learned from family, schools, religious teaching, and the media.

Since gender roles, responsibilities, and identities are socially learned, they can also be changed. Gender, together with age group, sexual orientation, and gender identity, determines roles, responsibilities, power dynamics, and access to resources. This is also affected by other diversity factors such as disability, social class, race, caste, ethnic or religious background, economic wealth, marital status, migrant status, displacement situation, and urban or rural setting.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private. Examples include:

- Sexual violence, including exploitation, abuse, and harassment;
- Forced and early marriage;
- Domestic and family violence, which may be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual;
- Harmful cultural and traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting, honor killings, and widow inheritance; and
- Denial of resources or opportunities, such as education.

Gender-neutral policies and approaches are not aimed specifically at women or men and are assumed to affect women and men equally. However, because they operate from an assumption that there is no distinction between the sexes, gender-neutral approaches incorporate biases in favor of existing gender relations and so tend to disadvantage women.

Gender parity means that there is a 50:50 ratio of males and females in a given area, such as accessing education, in the workplace, or holding public office. Analyzing gender parity in education means comparing the participation of female and male learners in education. This can be analyzed in regard to a wide range of indicators and at each education level, including early childhood development programs, primary, secondary, tertiary, and non-formal education programs, as well as among teaching staff and other education personnel.

Gender-responsive means addressing the different situations, roles, needs, and interests of women, men, girls, and boys in the design and implementation of activities, policies, and programs. A program, policy, or activity that is gender-responsive addresses gender-based barriers, respects gender differences, enables structures, systems, and methodologies to be sensitive to gender, ensures gender parity is a wider strategy to advance gender equality, and evolves to close gaps and eradicate gender-based discrimination.

Sexual and reproductive health addresses the reproductive processes, functions, and systems at all stages of life, and is aimed at enabling men and women to have responsible, satisfying, and safe sex lives, as well as the capacity and freedom to plan if, when, and how often to have children. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education is a key feature of gender-responsive curricula in crisis contexts.