



Education services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Updates from the fourth round of

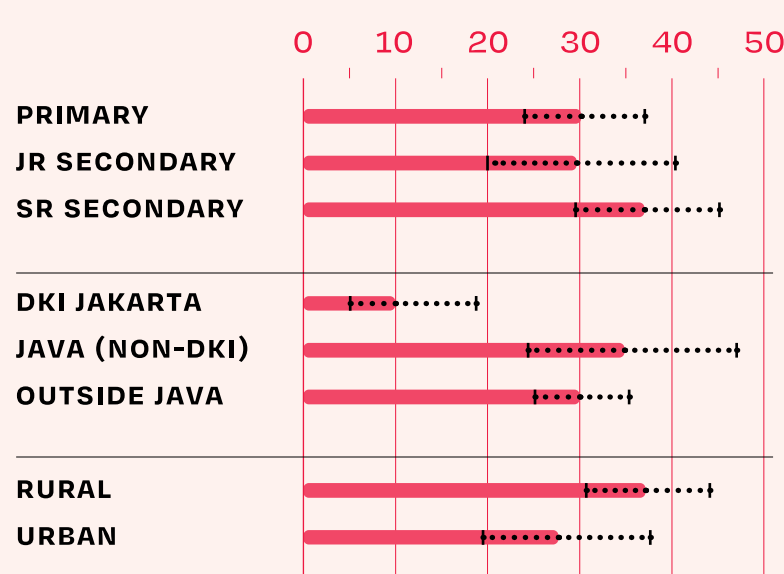
THE WORLD BANK (WB) HIGH-FREQUENCY MONITORING OF COVID-19 IMPACTS ON HOUSEHOLDS (HIFY)
03 – 15 NOVEMBER 2020

THE WB COVID-19 ONLINE SURVEY
27 NOVEMBER – 20 DECEMBER 2020



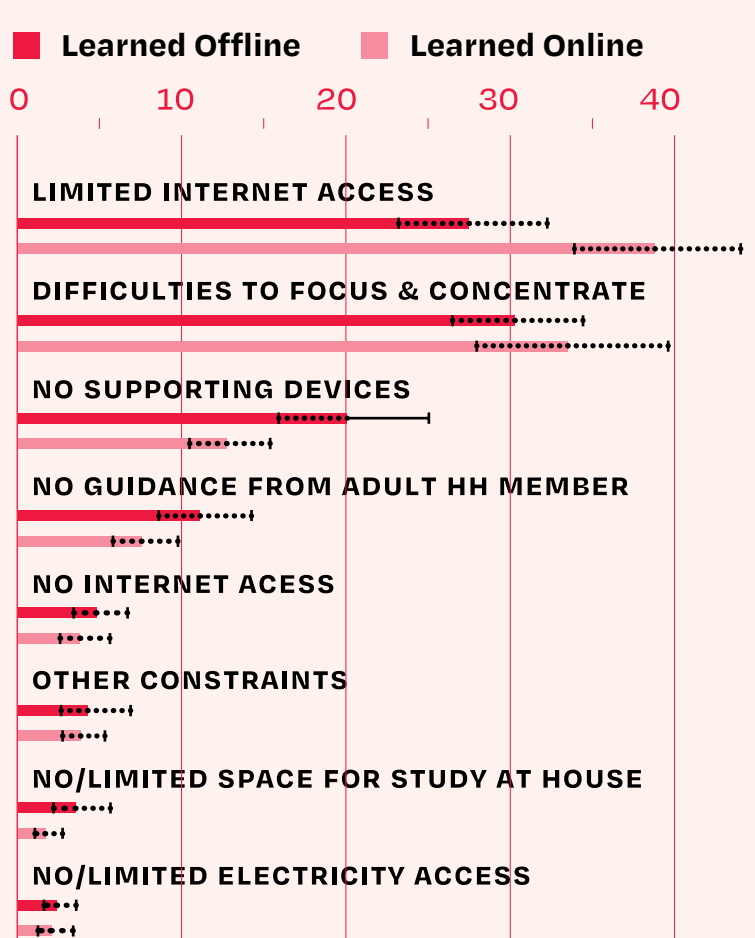
→ This brief presents an update on delivery of education services in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic using findings from the fourth rounds of (i) the HiFy Survey, a nationally representative panel survey of about 4,000 households across 40 districts and 35 cities in 27 provinces of Indonesia; and (ii) the Online Survey, distributed through Facebook, that collected data from 2,421 respondents. Ex-post survey weights were used to make the samples nationally representative.

Figure 1 Share of students for whom school was open for face-to-face learning



Note: 90% Confidence Interval

Figure 2 Constraints faced in distance learning



While most schools across Indonesia remained closed for face-to-face learning, the vast majority of students were engaged in distance learning and a small minority had dropped out. In the November round of the HiFy survey, schools were open

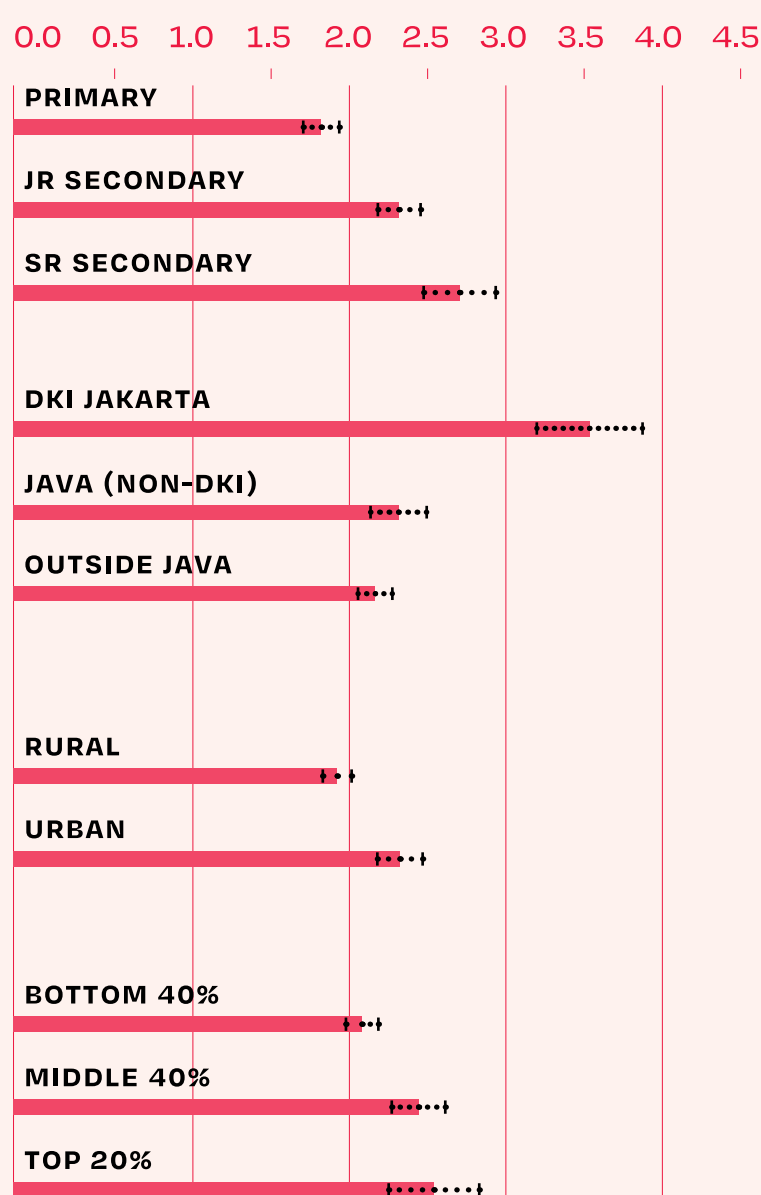
for face-to-face learning in the week prior to the survey for just over a third of those enrolled in primary and secondary schools¹ (figure 1). Most of these students attended school for only a few days a week, with only 10 percent attending full time. Further, 93 percent of all students continued to engage in distance learning in the week preceding the survey.¹ Most Indonesian schools thus adapted to the pandemic by implementing some form of distance learning, and 25 percent of students were covered by a “hybrid” learning model that combined face-to-face and distance learning. Finally, a small minority had dropped out: 2 percent of children aged 5 – 18 years who had been enrolled in school up to March 2020 were no longer enrolled in November.² 27 percent of these had delayed further education temporarily, while nearly one in five did not wish to continue schooling. Just under a third were out of school due to lack of money for tuition.

Distance learners faced differing challenges, while the time they spent on learning varied significantly across regions and socioeconomic groups. 71 percent of students engaged in distance learning faced at least one challenge while using these services. The most frequently reported constraints were limited internet access (no internet access was a constraint for very few), difficulties in focusing/concentrating, lack of devices needed to use the services, and lack of adult guidance (figure 2). In this context, it is not surprising that the average number of hours spent daily on distance learning activities varied widely from nearly 3.5 hours per day in DKI Jakarta to 2.3 and 2.2 hours elsewhere on Java and outside Java respectively. Primary school students, those in rural areas, and those in the bottom 40 percent spent on average less time daily on distance learning than others (figure 3).

¹ Even 84 percent among those whose schools were still closed for face-to-face learning had communicated with their teachers, the vast majority via WhatsApp.

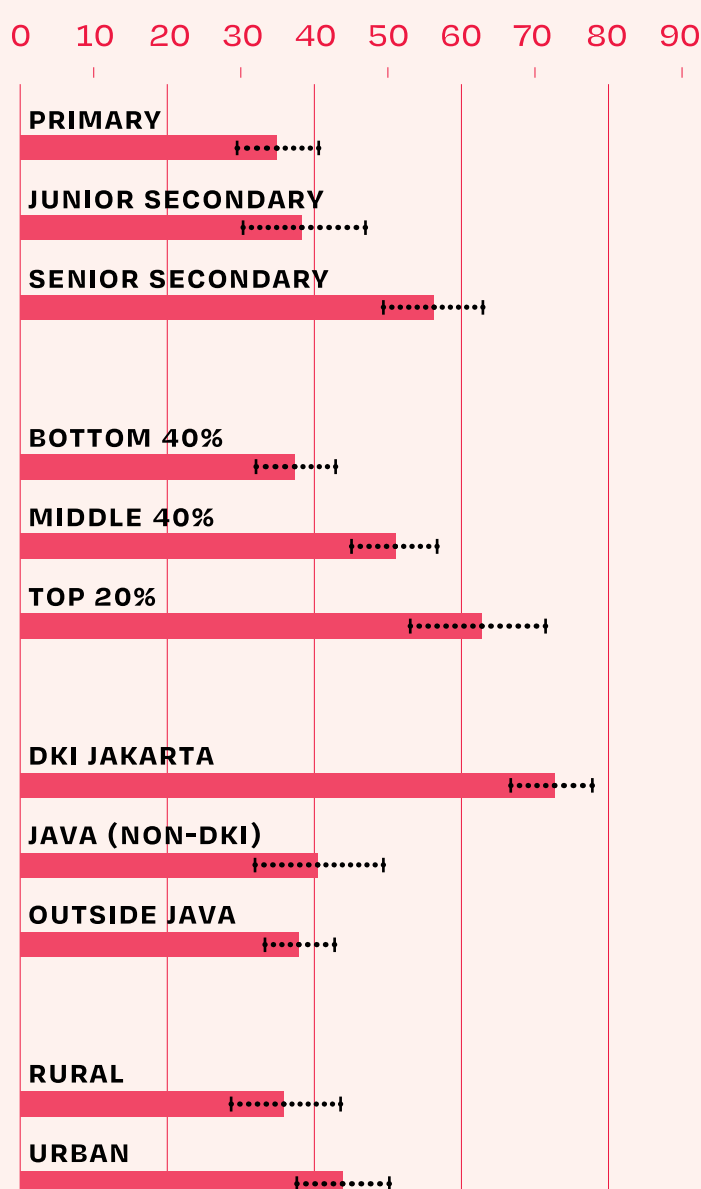
² The numerator for the dropout rate includes those who were no longer enrolled at the time of the survey but did not graduate in June 2020 from any level of schooling, as well as those who graduated from kindergarten, primary or junior secondary school. Those who graduated from senior high school but were not currently enrolled were excluded, as they had completed the 12 years of compulsory education.

Figure 3 Average number of hours spent per day on distance learning activities



Note: 90% Confidence Interval

Figure 4 Share of distance learners using online/mobile technologies, November 2020



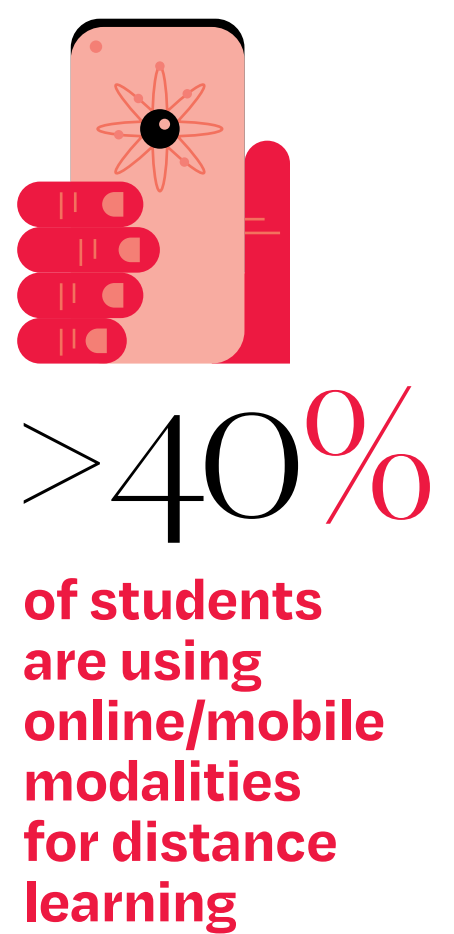
Note: 90% Confidence Interval

The share of students using online/mobile modalities for distance learning did not change between late May and November, hovering at just over 40 percent of distance learners. In August 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture allocated IDR 7.2 trillion in social assistance in the form of internet data packages to support use of online/mobile learning modalities among students and teachers conducting long-distance learning over the course of four months.³ By November, the data packages had reached 51 percent of students, of whom 82 percent reported successfully using them. However, the share of distance learners who used mobile learning applications or participated in online schooling in the week prior to the survey did not change significantly and hovered around 40 percent between late May/early June and November. At the same time, only half of those who received the packages were using an online/mobile modality for distance learning in November, and those who received the packages spent on average 30 minutes more on distance learning per day than those who didn't. One hypothesis to be examined in further work is that while the program may not have impacted adoption of online/mobile learning among students who weren't already using it, it may have intensified use among existing users.⁴

The Indonesian government needs to ensure implementation of infection control measures in schools, sensitizing the public on measures taken and their results in a transparent and timely manner. While the rise of COVID-19 cases remained largely uncontrolled across Indonesia, public concern about infection in schools was very high. 74 percent of online survey respondents were very worried that children in their households would contract the coronavirus while at school; another 22 percent were somewhat worried. Not surprisingly, thus, over half ranked part-time face-to-face learning combined with distance learning as their preferred schooling method until the pandemic was over; a quarter preferred full-time distance learning, and only 13 percent preferred full-time face-to-face learning. In this light, while reopening of schools is a positive sign, it is imperative for GOI to ensure implementation of rigorous infection prevention measures in schools and sensitization of the general public on measures taken and their results.

During 2021, most schools will likely need to offer part-time face-to-face learning combined with distance learning; the scope of impacts on learning remains hard to quantify. Distance learning is not a substitute for face-to-face learning, in terms of the time students are currently spending on it and given that it is a completely new teaching modality for teachers and students. As such, it is likely that it will only partially mitigate the learning "lost" due to school closures, the extent of which will be revealed once national learning assessments are reinstated. Similarly, the extent to which inequalities in learning outcomes that predate the pandemic will be exacerbated in its wake is also not yet clear. In the November round of the HiFy survey, schools were likelier to be open for face-to-face learning for students who have historically lagged behind (those in rural areas or in the bottom 40 percent) but the differences were not statistically significant. At the same time, those who were wealthier or in urban areas like DKI Jakarta – groups also benefiting disproportionately from GOI's phone/data package subsidy – were better positioned to make up for the losses through distance learning enabled by digital technologies (figure 4).

Provision of distance learning needs to be customized to the needs of rural populations, for whom adoption of digital technologies may not be feasible in the short run. The share of distance learners in rural areas using online/mobile technologies stood stagnant at 36 percent between late May and November. In contrast, 51 percent of these students had been learning at home by watching an educational TV program in late May. It is unlikely that the long-term issues (low and unaffordable connectivity and poor digital skills) that have kept rural populations from adopting digital technologies can be overcome quickly in these places to rapidly scale up usage of digital solutions to mitigate learning losses. It is thus critical for GOI to focus in the short run on getting high-quality learning content to these students through the distance learning modalities most easily accessible by them, e.g. TV programming, rather than relying primarily on online/mobile solutions that remain inaccessible to most in these areas over 10 months into the pandemic.



³ <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/08/27/ministry-provides-rp-7-2-trillion-in-phone-credit-data-packages-to-support-distance-learning.html>

⁴ This also seems consistent with the finding that the better off were more likely to receive the data packages i.e. those in Java, in urban areas, and not in the bottom 40 percent, groups that were already more likely to participate in online learning back in late May.