# Education continuity during the Coronavirus crisis

# Peru: Aprendo en Casa (I Learn at Home)

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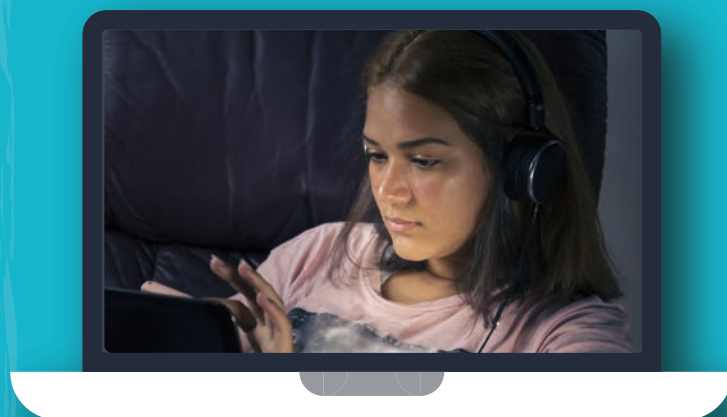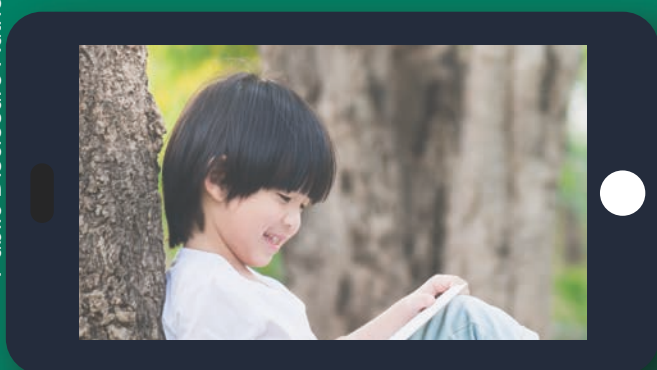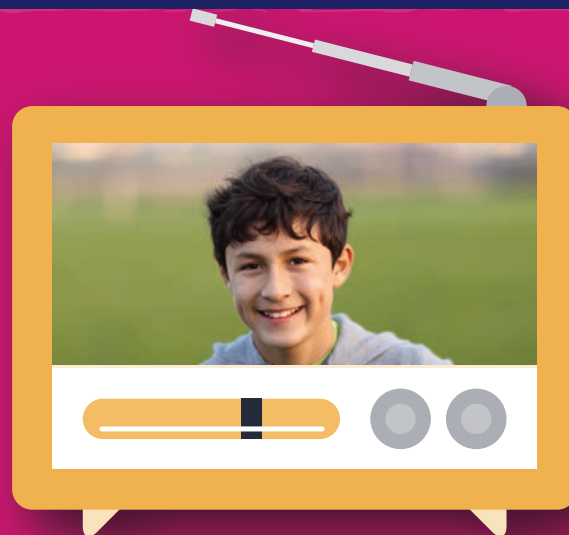
Peru: Aprendo en Casa (I Learn at Home)

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Type of intervention: Governmental (with private partnerships)
Website: https://aprendoencasa.pe/

General description

Peru's school year runs from mid-March to mid-December. Everything was ready to start classes on 16 March 2020; instead, the President announced a strict lockdown. The country only had 86 COVID-19 cases by this date, but the government worked quickly to close all 54 thousand schools to try to prevent further spread of the virus. Peru's Ministry of Education (MINEDU), with support from NGOs, technology companies, telecommunication operators, and broadcasters launched a multichannel remote learning initiative to mitigate learning loss as a result of school closures: *Aprendo en Casa* (Learn at home).

The initiative is noteworthy because MINEDU planned, developed and launched a comprehensive multimodal strategy to deliver remote learning at scale in just 12 days. The whole programme aligns to Peru's National Curriculum and has been designed to provide remote education through four channels: television, radio, web and printed material. Equally important, MINEDU's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, with the support of Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), began monitoring levels of adoption and satisfaction of the *Aprendo en Casa* strategy with principals, teachers, and families through regular phone calls.

Results of the monitoring process are readily available for anyone to access through an interactive site (see the resources section), ensuring transparency. As of July 2020, data is available for April, May, and June 2020.

Access to devices and connectivity needed for remote learning varies across the country. Approximately 85% of households possess a TV, 84% a radio, 82% a mobile, and only 24% have connection to the Internet at home (data from UNICEF

and World Bank). Therefore, *Aprendo en Casa's* multimodal strategy was a viable approach to deliver remote learning solutions that could be scaled up rapidly to reach most if not all students while schools were closed.

Main problems addressed

As Peru's school year starts in mid-March, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented approximately eight million students (from pre-primary to secondary public and private schools) from starting the 2020 school year. The challenges were twofold: on the one hand, MINEDU had to deliver quality educational resources to all students in a country where household access to resources required for remote learning is highly unequal: for example, while almost 99% of urban homes have access to electricity, only 69% of rural ones do (UNICEF data). On the other hand, although MINEDU curated existing learning material, most of the content and platforms had to be developed from scratch. MINEDU's officials needed to come up with innovative solutions for this challenge in a short timeframe and in the middle of a strict lockdown in the country.

Mobilising and developing resources

MINEDU leveraged existing resources and engaged various stakeholders to build a multimodal remote learning solution that could be rapidly scaled at a national level. The ministry officials mobilised and developed resources in three key components of the remote learning strategy: infrastructure and connectivity, content, and delivery platforms.

Infrastructure and connectivity. With support from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the four major private telecommunication operators in the country agreed to a zero rate for *Aprendo en Casa's* digital site so that students and teachers could access all educational resources available through the website without paying for bandwidth. Moreover, MINEDU leveraged an existing partnership with Microsoft and developed a new one with Amazon Web Services to host the ministry's digital platforms.

Content. A large pedagogical team at MINEDU curated already existing content, which consisted of mainly educational videos and digital workbooks. This team also curated external content that third party organisations such as Plaza Sesamo (Mexico) and Paka Paka (Argentina) agreed to share for free with *Aprendo en Casa*. However, most content was created from scratch by a large team of pedagogical experts from MINEDU's department of Basic Education. Since mid-March, this team has developed lesson plans and scripts as well as coordinated the production for *Aprendo en Casa's* multimodal strategy.

Delivery platforms. To deliver the content, MINEDU leveraged existing partnerships with *TV Peru* and *Radio Nacional*, the government's television and radio platforms. The main private open signal TV channels have joined also this effort to transmit learning sessions for the last years of secondary education. With the support of Regional Directions of Education (DRE) and Local Education Units (UGEL), new partnerships have been developed with over 1 100 local radios to reach remote communities. Although the ministry already had *PeruEduca*, an online training and content repository platform, MINEDU's department of Educational Technology decided to develop a mobile-responsive digital platform from scratch to deliver *Aprendo en Casa* content at scale. This new platform can support an unlimited number of users at the same time and is "web-light" so that users can access its resources even in areas with low bandwidth ("Web Light" is a lighter and faster web page technology for people searching on slow mobile connections). MINEDU's officials also analysed and later partnered with more than 60 mobile applications to allow teachers and students access to free resources related to communication, class management, digital libraries, content management and online learning, among others.

Fostering effective use and learning

To foster effective use of educational resources and to ensure learning, MINEDU focused on three key aspects: first, align strategies with the National Curriculum and education level; second, select engaging learning facilitators and contextualise content; and third, support and foster communication between teachers, parents and students.

Alignment with the national curriculum. The remote education strategies implemented are aligned with the National Curriculum of Peru as well as with the curricular programmes of each education level: pre-school, primary, and secondary. Equally important, *Aprendo en Casa's* team has developed content for students with special needs and adult alternative education. As Peru has a competency-based curriculum, content can be flexible as long as students acquire the competencies required for their education level. This flexibility was key because it allowed the ministry to both develop its own content and curate content that had already been developed by other producers.

Contextualised content. Curating and producing contextualised content and activities has been crucial to ensure effective learning. The pedagogical team of MINEDU's department of Basic Education not only developed lesson plans and scripts for learning sessions according to each education level, but also coordinated with the Department of Intercultural Education to translate all content delivered through radio to nine native languages. Additionally, since May, all TV learning sessions are supported with sign language and the website has been adapted for children with disabilities.

Engaging learning facilitators. Equally important was to recruit engaging learning facilitators to introduce TV or radio learning sessions. For example, TV learning sessions for pre-school level are introduced by Fatima Saldonid, a journalist, and the ones for primary and secondary are presented by Patricia Barreto, an actress. After receiving feedback from the teacher community, learning facilitators are now joined by experienced teachers who explain the main concepts and a student who usually performs a learning activity. For example, in the [Maths learning session for May 26th](#), Patricia Barreto, the learning facilitator, welcomes 5th and 6th grade students and presents the session objectives; Christian, the teacher, introduces the content for a probability class and guides the students through learning activities. A student, Mia, jumps in and participates. Patricia, Christian, and Mia interact throughout the session, with the aim of making the class even more engaging.

The importance of interaction and feedback. Even when implementing a remote education programme, it is critical to maintain constant communication and teacher-student interaction. Thus, to complement the content delivered through *Aprendo en Casa's* channels, MINEDU developed learning activities that students can use to practice what they learned through TV, radio or the Web. According to the ministry's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, 80% of students and parents had received support from teachers at least once in the prior week. According to information gathered in May 2020, 96% of teachers who contacted parents have requested their students complete and send their homework every other day. Students complete those activities and send them back to teachers mainly through WhatsApp. According to this survey, of those teachers who contacted parents and requested students to complete the learning activities, 90% had graded students' homework or provided detailed feedback, thus far.

Implementation challenges

When MINEDU started implementing the remote learning solutions in mid-March, several implementation challenges were faced. Among them were reaching students who live in rural areas in the middle of the pandemic, building a new platform, sustaining student engagement, and providing guidance to teachers while avoiding burnout.

- *Reaching rural areas*. For MINEDU, it was key to ensure that remote learning resources reach all students. It was particularly challenging to reach students in rural areas – 30% of rural households lack access to electricity, almost 20% do not have a radio at home, and 40% do not have a mobile

phone. In fact, MINEDU's department of Decentralised Education (DIGEGED) estimated that over 15% of students were not able to access any of *Aprendo en Casa's* main remote learning channels – TV, radio, and/or web. So how to communicate with them? A first solution was to distribute printed materials. But Peru's government imposed strict lockdown rules to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Thus, Local Education Units (UGEL) in coordination with local communities have developed different initiatives such as [retransmitting radio content](#) through powerful loudspeakers in community centres that children can attend while social distancing.

- *Technical strength*. Another difficulty was that MINEDU's digital resources were not prepared to deliver remote education at scale. For example, *PeruEduca's* platform could only support a few thousand users at the same time; the web was neither mobile-responsive, nor user-friendly. This challenge was addressed by building a web-light, mobile-responsive platform from scratch with the support of tech partners. According to Google Analytics, *Aprendo en Casa's* platform has had a monthly average of 4.5 million unique users, thus far.

- *Sustaining student engagement*. *Aprendo en Casa's* multimodal strategy launched successfully on 6 April 2020 and was praised in the press and social media. The delivery through different platforms allowed the ministry to reach millions of students in the first week. But how could MINEDU sustain this student engagement with content that was mainly delivered through modalities that did not allow for real-time interaction? One of *Aprendo en Casa's* pillars to maintain engagement was to use actors and actresses as learning facilitators, but this approach started to be criticised by the teacher community. MINEDU's department of Basic Education rapidly adapted the format to learning sessions that now have an expert teacher interacting with both the learning facilitator and a student.

- *Teacher support*. When MINEDU started implementing *Aprendo en Casa*, teachers received guidelines that stressed the importance of observing learning sessions through the channel of their preference, communicating with students and parents, subscribing to online learning courses through *PeruEduca*, among other activities (see resources section). In addition, Regional Directions of Education (DRE) elaborated complementary guidelines to accompany what MINEDU had developed, and Local Education Units (UGEL) in turn designed complementary guidelines to accompany what the Regional Directions of Education (DRE) had produced. For example, the local education unit in Lambayeque, a region located in the north of Peru, requested teachers to submit daily reports of their remote work with students. Moreover, on 21 May 2020, MINEDU published additional requirements: teachers needed to submit a monthly report with evidence of their remote work and had until the end of May to submit reports from March and April. This whole 'support system' ended up generating teacher burnout and discontent. Peru's National Teacher Union (SUTEP) submitted a formal complaint on 27 May 2020. After listening to teachers' feedback, MINEDU reacted quickly and adjusted the guidelines and requirements on 29 May 2020, to reduce administrative workload.

Monitoring success

MINEDU's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit has regularly monitored the adoption *of Aprendo en Casa*, the support given by teachers, and the satisfaction of principals, teachers and parents with the strategy through phone calls once a month (information from principals was only gathered during the first month). This effort started just one week after the strategy was launched. More than 37 thousand members of the education system have been surveyed between mid-April and early-June of 2020. Phone calls gathered data related to *Aprendo en Casa's* reach, channels used by students to access remote learning and support from teachers to students, among other information. Results of the monitoring process are readily available for anyone to access through an [interactive site](#). Information gathered is based on representative samples; results from April and May 2020 are described below.

- *Principals*. In April 2020, 97% of principals surveyed said they were informed about MINEDU's guidance note for the COVID-19 response. 98% of those contacted had access to *Aprendo en*

Casa's resources from home, but only 59% had a computer with Internet and 51% a smartphone. 73% received support from the DRE and 78% were satisfied with it. 84% of principals had communicated with all teachers from the school at least once.

- *Teachers*. In April, 95% of teachers contacted knew about the remote learning guidance note developed by MINEDU. 99% of them said they could access *Aprendo en Casa* resources from home, but only 53% had a computer with Internet and 74% a smartphone. In May, 92% of teachers said they communicated with the school principal and with other teachers in the past week. While in April, 94% of teachers had communicated with parents and/or students in the past week, in May, 98% of teachers indicated they had had communication with parents and 94% with students in the previous week.

- *Parents and students*: 91% of parents contacted in April knew about *Aprendo en Casa*, and from those, 95% said their children were using the resources provided. In May, 95% of those contacted knew about *Aprendo en Casa*. On average, in April, 74% of students had accessed remote learning through TV four days a week, and 59% were satisfied with the strategy. Satisfaction of parents with the TV strategy increased to 65% in May and 82% for children. In April, 17% of those contacted accessed learning through the radio three days a week on average and 44% were satisfied with this strategy. Satisfaction of parents with the radio strategy also increased in May to 56% and 64% of children reported they liked it. Finally, in April, 19% of students used the *Aprendo en Casa's* website 4 days a week and 68% were satisfied with it. Once again, satisfaction of parents with the website increased in May to 81% and 87% of students reported they liked it.

Adaptability to new contexts

Aprendo en Casa's multimodal remote learning strategy has successfully managed to reach over 85% of the student population in Peru and aims to serve the remaining students through alternative methods (such as radio transmission through loudspeakers in community centres).

The programme was planned, designed and implemented nationally in 12 days; thus, it is easily scalable at a national level even in countries with complex geographies and profound gaps in terms of households' accessibility to devices needed for remote learning.

Aprendo en Casa's multimodal remote learning programme has been designed to be sustainable over time as a complementary resource for on-site classroom-based education. In order to ensure a successful adaptation, ministry officials need to assess the student population they can reach through various channels and clearly identify those who are not able to access resources to provide alternative solutions for them.

Key points to keep in mind for a successful adaptation

1. Strong leadership is needed to guarantee a rapid design and implementation of a multimodal remote learning strategy aimed at reaching all students in the country, including those who have limited access to resources, those who speak different native languages and those with disabilities.

2. When designing the remote learning plan, select public and private partners that support the goal of ensuring learning sessions are delivered through different formats at scale and free of cost for all students.

3. When implementing, actively collect and respond to feedback from the education community and be flexible to adapt when needed.

4. Provide guidance and support to teachers and ensure that they are not overburdened with administrative work that inhibits their ability to be pedagogically effective. Remember that remote teaching is new for most teachers and overburdening them can impact their ability to support children, pedagogically as well as socio-emotionally.

5. Sustain student engagement by producing interactive content and complement it with teacher-student interaction.

6. Install a monitoring and evaluation system to track the remote learning programme's reach and effectiveness, as well as to provide relevant data for continuous improvement and further decision-making.

Resources for further information

Peru's National Curriculum (in Spanish): http://www.minedu.gob.pe/curriculo/pdf/curriculo-nacional-de-la-educacion-basica.pdf

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA): https://www.poverty-action.org/country/peru

Monitoring and Evaluation results of Aprendo en Casa (in Spanish): https://tinyurl.com/osee-use-aec2020

Household access to the Internet: https://tcdata360.worldbank.org/indicators/entrp.household.inet

Students affected by school closures: https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse

Plaza Sesamo (in Spanish): http://sesamo.com/Paka Paka (in Spanish): http://www.pakapaka.gob.ar/

National TV channel (in Spanish): https://www.tvperu.gob.pe/

National radio programme (in Spanish): https://www.radionacional.com.pe/

Free mobile applications available through Aprendo en Casa: https://aprendoencasa.pe/#/descubre-mas-recursos

Pre-school curricular programme (in Spanish): http://www.minedu.gob.pe/curriculo/pdf/programa-curricular-educacion-inicial.pdf

Primary school curricular programme (in Spanish): http://www.minedu.gob.pe/curriculo/pdf/programa-curricular-educacion-primaria.pdf

Secondary school curricular programme (in Spanish): http://www.minedu.gob.pe/curriculo/pdf/programa-curricular-educacion-secundaria.pdf

Content for students with special needs: https://aprendoencasa.pe/#/planes-educativos/level.basica-especial

Content for adult alternative education: https://aprendoencasa.pe/#/planes-educativos/level.basica-alternativa

Content translated in nine native languages for radio: https://www.youtube.com/user/perueduca/playlists

UNICEF DHS, MICS and MIS data on the assets for remote learning among households: https://public.tableau.com/profile/unicefdata#!/vizhome/EduViewv1_0/home

National press on the planning and launching of Aprendo en Casa (in Spanish): https://especiales.elcomercio.pe/?q=especiales/aprendo-en-casa-ecpm/index.html

Guidelines for teachers (in Spanish): https://resources.aprendoencasa.pe/perueduca/orientaciones-generales/generales-docentes.pdf

Additional requirements for teachers (in Spanish): https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/729925/RVM_N__097-2020-MINEDU.pdf

Formal complaint of Peru's Teacher Union (in Spanish): https://sutep.org/articulos/avance-magisterial-del-29-de-mayo/

Adjusted guidelines and requirements for teachers in response to the complaint from Peru's Teacher Union (in Spanish): https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/750756/RVM_N__098-2020-

MINEDU's M&E Unit survey estimates that 95% of students are accessing AeC's resources. This percentage was adjusted to 85% because in April's survey 9% of families were not aware of AeC (0.95*0.91=0.86) and there was a lower response rate in rural areas: https://tinyurl.com/osee-use-aec2020

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