



Delivering education at home in 12 African Member States amid the COVID-19 pandemic: **Status Report**

APRIL 2020

Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia

Webinar: Distance learning in Africa during COVID-19 school closure. Organized by UNESCO IICBA and ADEA, 29th April, 2020



Ushirika wa Maendeleo ya Elimu Barani Afrika
الرابطة لأجل تطوير التربية في إفريقيا
Association for the Development of Education in Africa
Association pour le Développement de l'Éducation en Afrique
Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Educação em África



2

Context

- COVID-19 pandemic heavily impacting lives and social and economic development.
- Education heavily affected, with the closure of learning institutions in many countries.
- Governments have instituted measures to promote continuity of education from home with some success, but challenges remain.
- ADEA engaged 12 African countries to map the national situation in education sector, to help formulate relevant support strategies and facilitate peer learning.
- Feedback from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, and Zambia.



3

National strategies to ensure continuity of learning

- Multi-sectoral high-level committees and working groups for management and pedagogical continuity of education.
- Diversified use of traditional and digital communication platforms and tools for educator and learner needs.
- Negotiating free/reduced rates with mobile telecommunication providers for educators and learners to access platforms and resources.
- According priority to learners in examination classes at the different levels and those with highest enrolments; organizing remedial lessons.
- Establishing review and validation systems for program content from private and public actors.
- Providing "electronic listening service" via a toll-free number and email address to support learners, educators and parents.



4

Teaching and learning platforms and tools

- Most of the countries using diverse teaching and learning platforms and tools:
 - Dedicated public, private and community radio and television channels with clear lesson schedules.
 - Ministry of Education and related institutional websites and portals, with learning resources.
 - Interactive audio and videoconferencing platforms and applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Eneza, Google Classroom, WhatsApp and Skype.
 - Various other digital learning applications



5

Stakeholder engagement

- All indicated working with a diversity of stakeholders at different levels.
- Public sector:
 - supporting ministries and government institutions such as finance, internal security, health, planning and ICT, media, information & broadcasting
 - teachers' unions, school management committees, parents' associations.
- Private sector (includes the private radio and television media houses, telecommunication companies, and EdTech companies) development partners, civil society.



6

Addressing inclusion

- Beyond the use of the radio and television for flighting lessons across all the countries, with the addition of sign language, there is little evidence of deliberate initiatives aimed at addressing the issue of inclusion.
- Specific interventions include:
 - Burkina Faso – NGOs and community associations providing different interventions in non-formal education to reach all groups.
 - Morocco – courses are re-broadcasted during the weekends (Saturday and Sunday) and provision of financial support for households in difficulty.
 - South Africa – zero-rated access to educational content to ensure poor communities also benefit without incurring data costs, having agreements with network providers to provide education solutions, including assistive devices, to learners with special educational needs.
- Inclusion remains a major challenging, including:
 - Households without TV or radio and where parents or guardians are not literate.
 - Learners with increased household chores and learners with visual and/or hearing impairment.



7

Gaps / challenges in implementation

- Inclusion – limited access due to insufficient or low radio, TV and internet coverage. Very few countries referred to the use of mobile applications for educational content.
 - Also the monopoly of radio and/or TV in some homes, especially where there is only one of each.
- Lack of time for adequate educator preparation for online lesson delivery:
 - Not trained to work from home as this requires a different pedagogical approach.
 - Lack of clarity on how they will be capacitated to adopt and use ICT solutions.
 - Nonexistent or inadequate guidelines to assess learners, beyond the homework/assignments.
- Inadequate financing.
- Weak parental supervision in some households.
- Weak quality assurance in assessments.
- Little or ineffective monitoring and evaluation (M&E), except for private schools.



8

Good practices

- Ensuring country ownership of the process through the establishment of state-led multi-stakeholder educational committees at national and sub-national levels.
- Use of the diverse media and tools for continuing education through interactive communication between educators, learners and parents.
- Prioritizing initial focus on learners in examination classes – due to the sudden and unplanned change in the mode of education delivery.
- Demonstrable public-private-partnership.
- Validation of education content offered by private players, and successful agreements with telecommunication providers.
- Having a central forum where learners, educators and parents can interactively engage with education experts through toll-free calls, text and emails.



9

Lessons learnt

- The present health crisis has highlighted the ability to pool the skills and resources of different players in the public and private sectors, both national and international.
- Optimizing use of dedicated national radio and TV channels helps to reduce inequalities in the provision of digital learning.
- Commitment, general mobilization and responsible civic involvement of all actors important for the success of any national distance education project.
- Prior development of great expertise in the field of distance education is of necessity.
- Intensive use of 4IR tools and remote mechanisms to access educational content essential in times of crisis; they require significant investment.
- The need for a strong collaboration is critical as governments alone cannot manage.



10

Reflections on the findings – embracing the new normal

- AU STC-EST notes the importance of closing learning institutions but raised concern regarding the worsening of existing weaknesses in Africa's education systems, including disruptions of the education calendar and social safety nets.
- Population of out-of-school children and youth, including girls, likely to increase.
- Need increased investment in STEM and research.
- Educator preparation – introduction of distance learning has brought new challenges for educators, many of whom are overwhelmed, with little support.
- Potential rise in child abuse due to increased domestic abuse.
- Inclusion challenge remains – reaching vulnerable and hard-to-reach learners and LSNs.
- Other areas worth focusing on: examinations and assessment, guidance and counselling remotely, added value of MOOCs and OERs, financing, data management and utilization.



Conclusion and recommendations

- Africa's education sector needs a well-resourced *Ubuntu/Utu Education Plan* to insulate education from disruptions due to disasters and emergencies.
 - Leverage technology and invest in virtual learning, take advantage of available digital learning resources, with proper QA provisions on the contents.
 - In line with regional integration, harmonize course contents and pool resources and skills in home education, for increased to promote skills and workforce mobility in the continent
 - Enhance infrastructure in learning institutions to improve the general learner hygiene.
 - Incorporate critical aspects emerging from the Covid-19 situation in EMIS to inform the sector's mitigation plans and strategies against learning disruption and discrimination.
 - Build management and teaching workforce capacity in distance and online education and assessment.