

TEACHING – LEARNING RESPONSE TO COVID 19: THE CASE OF MALAWI

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

- COVID 19 and closure of schools
- Efforts to provide teaching and learning during closure
- Challenges of online learning
- The impact of school closure
- Preparation for reopening
- Situation after reopening

COVID 19 AND CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

- ❑ The Government of Malawi declared a state of health emergency on 20th March, 2020
- ❑ On 23rd March, Government ordered the closure of schools
- ❑ The closure affected over 5 million learners most of whom (mostly primary and secondary school learners) remained with only two weeks
- ❑ There was no immediate direction given on the way forward

EFFORTS TO PROVIDE LEARNING DURING CLOSURE

- As days passed, it was felt there was need to explore alternative avenues for continued teaching and learning
- The avenues included use of radio, online learning portals and teaching notes shared through WhatsApp and other social media platforms
- Students, teachers and communities were sensitized on the proposed online teaching and learning
- Some radios were procured and distributed to needy students

CHALLENGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

- Few family households (33%) have radios and those (radios) procured were not adequate
- A lot of students did not have gadgets with which to access online materials
- Access to internet is very limited (only 16% of the population has access)
- Most students and even teachers were not digital literate – they could not use computers successfully
- Lack of parental support in the learning process as most parents are not computer literate
- Data bundles are very expensive
- Teaching and learning materials were not online friendly mode

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE

- A lot of girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy
- Private schools had challenges to maintain their staff on the pay roll – this impacted a lot of families
- Students on study leave with time frame for their studies were affected
- Courses which are season dependent, were disturbed
- School calendar has been disturbed and it will take time to recover

REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

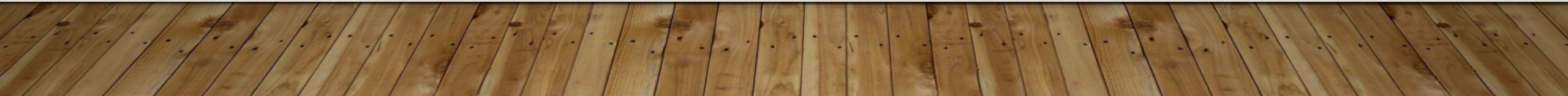
- Government ordered the reopening of schools from the 7th September, 2020
- To monitor the situation and to reduce congestion, reopening was done in a phased approach starting with examination classes
- In higher education, institutions were given freedom to decide which group should come first since they were at different stages of learning when they closed

PREPARATION FOR REOPENING

- Government developed guidelines for reopening of schools with emphasis on balancing the right to education and the right to life
- Health measures emphasized included; disinfecting facilities, masking all the time, physical distancing, hand washing, sanitizing etc.
- Psychosocial support was also emphasized very much

PREPARATION FOR REOPENING

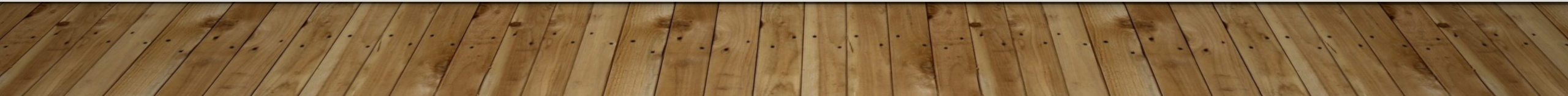
- Head Teachers, Teachers, Parents, School Management Committees, Mother Groups, Community Leaders and Religious Leaders were all trained on how to manage schools amidst COVID 19
- In addition, the training covered mask making to make sure that needy students have masks
- Government in collaboration with GPE made resources available to schools (primary and secondary) for procurement of COVID 19 preventive materials
- Using the resources, schools were disinfected, hand washing facilities, hand sanitizers and cloth for masks were procured
- When the date for reopening came, schools were ready and students went back



LIFE AFTER REOPENING

- Enthusiasm among students, teachers and parents is very high
- Monitoring visits have been made and things are moving
- To avoid congestion, classes have been split
- To accommodate increased number of classes, some schools have introduced double shifting

So far, so good



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

May God Bless You All