PACIFIC Response to COVID-19 and Education Data Issues and Challenges

UIS PACIFIC REGIONAL VIRTUAL MEETING

15 MAY 2020

UNESCO APIA Office

COVID-19 Situation and Coverage in Region

Highlights

◦ Pacific island countries are at risk due to weak health systems, natural disasters and geographic isolation.

◦ 13 countries in the Pacific including PNG have declared a State of Emergency (American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, Nauru, CNMI, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu)

◦ 6 countries have instituted a combination of partial and full lockdowns, and curfews including Guam, Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Tonga and Vanuatu

Effect on Education

School Closure and Monitoring
◦ Micronesia (Federated States of), Samoa, Fiji, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Tuvalu closed the schools
◦ However some countries already opened their schools such as Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Cook Islands, Samoa etc.

https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse

o During school closure, lack of preparedness of teachers, learners and families

o Challenges in information dissemination, including lack of reliable information and misinformation on coronavirus that could lessen the psychosocial stress, anxiety and stigma negatively affecting teachers and students

o Need for guidelines that can support school re-opening and safe return of teachers and learners to schools

o Need for define targeted approaches for more disadvantaged students, including students without internet, students with disabilities, those on remote islands and others that may not fully benefit from a standardized approach

COVID 19 and impact on (EDUCATION) data production

❑ Census in Marshal Island has been delayed for 3 months . The country is undertaking HIES –but get delayed due to the dengue outbreak. This delay on the HIES, further causes delay on census

❑ Postponement/rescheduling of National Examination and assessment : Fiji, Palau, Samoa, Tonga

Possible negative effect on:

▪Timely reporting of education data and monitoring reports

▪Production of Census and household survey based data and statistics

▪Monitoring of learning assessment

Pacific Sub Region- Areas of Interventions

Pacific Humanitarian Response Plan Appeal (under review for approval)

Key areas addressed by the plan:
- Immediate needs in education, food security, livelihoods, water and sanitation, nutrition, protection, logistics, as well as emergency telecommunications.
- UNESCO is included in the Education and Food security clusters

- **The immediate needs identified in relation to Education**
  - **Contingency and response** to ensure coordinated and evidence-based solutions
  - **Continuity of learning in case of school closures and interruptions**
  - **Safe school operations f**or schools that remain open or may reopen soon

- **Emergency and livelihood assistance in relation to Food security**
  - **Strengthening national and household level food systems**
  - **Traditional food systems** revitalizing sustainable traditional food production and reviving traditional fishing (pilot projects)
  - **Country focus**: Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati

Pacific Sub Region- Areas of Interventions (Contd..)

Education Monitoring and School Status Tracking.

Key needs identified by countries:
- Need for online education platforms (i.e. Moodle) and optimizing existing ones.
- Need for resource curation and curriculum alignment.
- Capacity building of teachers on lesson planning and lesson delivery using mixed technology (Internet, TV & Radio).
- Capacity building on monitoring learning progress and tracking, especially on offline learning (TV and Radio).

Continued efforts in mobilizing resources within the Pacific countries for the Global Coalition.
- MOU between Vodafone, the Samoa MESC and UNESCO to allow online education resources to be reached by students.
- SMS Campaign focusing on COVID-19 awareness raising supported by Vodafone Samoa.

Continued efforts in mobilizing partners for the Global Coalition.
- Establishment of online education platforms (i.e. Moodle) and optimizing existing ones – Moodle.
- Resource curation and curriculum alignment – Khan Academy.
- Training of teachers on lesson planning and lesson delivery using mixed technology (Internet, TV & Radio) – Commonwealth of Learning.
- Training on monitoring learning progress and tracking, especially on offline learning (TV and Radio) – Commonwealth of Learning.

UN Joint Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in the Pacific

- UNESCO is part of the UN Taskforce coordinated by the Fiji RCO, and participates in:
  - **Pillar 2: Protecting People: Social Protection and Basic Services**
  - **Pillar 5: Social Cohesion and Community Resilience**
  - **Country focus for UNESCO:** 15 PICTs -Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Tokelau-

- **Social Protection and Basic Services:** Diagnosis of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education services across the PICTs.
  - **Impact on classes of vulnerable** people and communities
  - **Data on educational disruption** and development of technical and vocational skills;
  - Issues related to **displaced learners and teachers**

- **Social Cohesion and Community Resilience:** Diagnosis of the impact on wellbeing, cohesion and social equity in the PICTs
  - The impact of movement restriction and confinement on **wellbeing and social cohesion**
  - **Interruption in actively exercising cultural practices**, including access to traditional governance systems (link to Intangible Cultural Heritage)
  - **Economic impact on livelihoods** based on culture and creativity, including linked services such as tourism

Challenges and Opportunities

Opportunities

- **Building back better** after Covid-19
  - Risk-informed development cooperation
  - Research and policy development towards crisis preparedness
  - New focus on resilience not only sustainability
  - Rebuild and reimagine economy for environmental sustainability

- **Proliferation of ICTs** in communication and programme delivery

Challenges and limitations

- Disruption in humanitarian assistance

- Economic impact, incl. decreased investment and increased indebtedness

- Social impact incl. increased inequality and poverty, decline in democracy

Needs

- **Cooperation and coordination** between involved actors
- **Global surveys** that look into the intersection of education and culture and social sciences