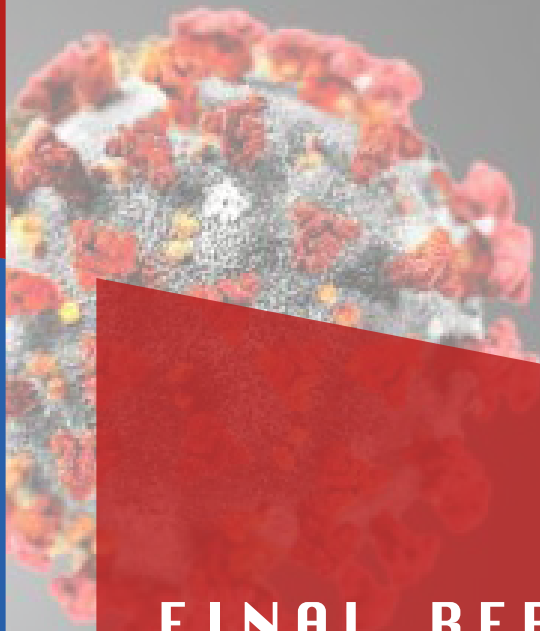
ADEA

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON AFRICA'S EDUCATION

Reflecting on Promising Interventions and Challenges, towards a New Normal



FINAL REPORT

Ushirika wa Maendeleo ya Elimu Barani Afrika
الرابطة لأجل تطوير التربية في إفريقيا
Association for the Development of Education in Africa
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened inequalities in societies and made it difficult to stabilize the prevailing socioeconomic status, a target constantly in motion. This calls for a rethink of how to deliver quality education equitably and inclusively, and the role of technology as one of the key enablers. Governments can turn this 'unusual situation' into an opportunity through out-of-the-box ideas and strategies backed by a multi-pronged approach aimed at 'leaving no learner behind'. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) has been engaging African countries at the policy and implementation levels since March 2020 on their strategies for continuous learning, the reopening of learning institutions, and the future's "new normal". The foregoing are some highlights resulting from this engagement.

Governments are using blended approaches to manage the current situation, for the continuity of education, albeit with several challenges. The national strategies put in place for remote learning have generated mixed results for the different education levels and learner groups. Countries have deployed single strategies or a combination of strategies, like the use of radio and television channels, digital tools and platforms, and the distribution of printed self-study educational support materials for learners not reached by tech-enabled solutions in non-urban areas and marginalized communities. The non-formal education sub-sector continues to be a challenge in most African countries, worsened by the current situation. The study found a lack of consistency in the recording of protection-related risks to learners and evidence of remedial action is limited. Although there is a positive move in using new online and offline learning tools, platforms, and materials, it benefits only a small proportion of the learner population. Additional financial support to the education sector for managing the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has largely been from the national stimulus or special fund as well as from external sources, particularly from major international and regional development organizations such the World Bank Group (WBG), the African Development Bank Group (AfDB), and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), to name but a few. A major gap exists, however, in financing and sustaining a solid mechanism for the education sector in Africa to manage crises like COVID-19 and to guide remote education on a mid to long term perspective.

National policies put in place to guide the reopening of learning institutions are drawn from the existing education policies and adjusted constantly according to the risk-level of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, which evolves with time. The procedures and protocols in place are aligned to the sector policies – the challenge is in their implementation. Additional financial and/or material resources (sector or ministry budget) devoted to reopening of learning institutions vary in availability and adequacy. While there is some evidence of monitoring of psychological and psychosocial support for the well-being of teachers and learners, particularly those affected by COVID-19, it is not robust enough. Strategies for assessments, examinations, and evaluations require review based on the COVID-19 experience and its implications in the education delivery.

Moving forward, African countries need to put in place a comprehensive and well-resourced Ubuntu or Utu[1] Education Plan to insulate the sector from disruptions due to disasters and emergencies. This plan could include developing a comprehensive remote education policy, instituting strategies to incorporate critical aspects of the COVID-19 experience in Education Management Information System (EMIS) to inform education sector reform, and leveraging the lessons learnt from the successful and failed partnerships and collaborations during the COVID-19 crisis to improve future stakeholder engagement in times of crisis.

Among the key recommendations for the new education delivery model is a review of the overall policy and regulatory guidelines to mainstream digital technology, greater involvement of parents and the community at large, especially for early learners, and strengthening teacher professional development. This will also entail the adaptation of new curricula and assessment models. It is important to explore alternative funding models while embracing greater peer learning and knowledge exchange amongst countries. There is also a need to specifically revisit existing norms and standards in delivering education towards the new normal and to introduce the Remote Education Benchmarking Toolkit to guide countries.

1 'Ubuntu' (I am because we are) is a philosophical concept from southern Africa that refers to the inextricable interconnections between all human beings. 'Utu' is a similar concept in Swahili referring to the inner being; the state of being human and acting humanely.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new reality that necessitates a rethinking of education delivery, with technology coming into sharp focus as an enabler to such a delivery. Addressing the challenge of delivering quality education equitably and inclusively, a ghost that perennially haunts most African countries, requires out-of-the-box ideas and strategies, least of which is the deployment of a multi-pronged approach as one solution does not fit all situations. In his opening speech during the virtual education forum organized by ADEA and the African Development Bank Group in July 2020, the Chairperson of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (AU STC-EST), Hon. Tumwesigye Elioda who is also the Chairperson of the ADEA Steering Committee, and the Uganda Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, observed that the COVID-19 pandemic will increase disparities in education between the African continent and the rest of the world, and widen the intra-African variability where some countries cannot afford to invest in digital learning infrastructure and platforms.

As McKinsey (2020) points out, effective primary and secondary education will be indispensable in a transition period to a more automated future in which innovation will play a key role, in addition to expanding vocational training and apprenticeships to ease transitions into work in a more digital world. The recently released UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (2020) casts a spotlight on inclusivity, recommending a deeper understanding of inclusive education to mean equal access for all learners, notwithstanding identity, background, or ability. The report observes that "the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed and deepened inequalities and the fragility of our societies."

Since March 2020, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) has been engaging African countries to appreciate the strategies they are implementing in the current situation and their level of effectiveness in ensuring that learning continues in a manner that is as inclusive as possible within the many constraints, and their plans regarding the reopening of learning institutions as well as future preparation for the sector based on the COVID-19 experience.

Hon. Tumwesingye Elioda

"Digital transformation is an indispensable prerequisite for economic transformation and the survival of our people. We need to see how to provide quickly digital education/ learning as a new normal in order to provide appropriate skills to knowledge transfer. And we also need to ensure support for innovative infrastructure, workspaces, and common user facilities."

Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Uganda.

Mr. Albert Nsengiyumva

"This report, and the virtual forum, is focused on the impact of COVID-19 on Africa's education system and the reflections on challenges and promising interventions toward a new normal. The main message is: no learner should be left behind."

Executive Sectretary, ADEA.

This report is a synopsis of the ongoing engagement and aims to create greater awareness of ongoing country-level initiatives. It also seeks to highlight what works, the gaps and the issues with which countries continue to grapple, and how to support countries as they move towards a new normal where they will be better positioned to manage a future COVID-19 like situation.

The report provides the update resulting from the already published report of the initial engagement with 14 African countries between April and May 2020, the feedback from 9 African countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Rwanda, and South Africa) in June 2020 coupled with the follow up virtual stakeholder engagement that ADEA and the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) organized in July 2020 involving Ministers and senior government officials comprising 6 African ministers of education (The Central African Republic, the Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda, and Uganda) and 7 government representatives (Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia), 5 development partners (GPE, IDRC, Mastercard Foundation, UNESCO-IICBA and GEMR, and World Bank), teachers, private sector players and civil society organizations as well as learning and research institutions.

MANAGEMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

In a scenario depicting a 4-month closure of learning institutions, accompanied by moderately effective mitigation measures, girls are most likely to be vulnerable, with exclusion and inequality exacerbated, particularly for persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups (World Bank, 2020). Based on reports filtering through from countries, especially in Africa, the gradual reopening of learning institutions will commence in September 2020 – and even so, only for learners in examination classes. This means more than 6 months of closure, considering that the actual opening of learning institutions will depend on the level of preparedness as per the health protocols outlined by the Ministry of Health, a situation that will further exacerbate the issues of equity and inclusion in learning.

This section of the report looks at the national strategies in place to support the continuity of learning with attention to the different vulnerable groups.

A National strategies for continued remote learning

National strategies in place for remote learning have generated mixed results.

1 Learners not reached by tech-enabled solutions

The nine countries have used either a single strategy or a combination of strategies that include the use of radio and television that incorporates sign language, coupled with the distribution of free printed self-study educational support materials. Few of the countries have also facilitated access to digital material online for this group of learners. Progress towards achieving total learner reach is mixed in the nine countries.

Mauritius has leveraged the use of its national television channels to cover 99.99% of this category of learners, while **Côte d'Ivoire** has deployed both radio and television to broadcast educational lessons.

Hon. Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun

"Leading to the closure of learning institutions, most African countries adopted a similar action of setting up of high-Level national steering committees to spearhead the education resilience strategy and to support the national awareness campaigns for social distancing, wearing of masks and washing of hands. The main challenge was to ensure that learning would not stop despite the closure."

Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, Mauritius.

The provision of free printed self-study pedagogic support materials, in addition to the use of national and regional radio channels, is a strategy in **Mali** and **Madagascar** with **Ghana**, **DRC**, and **Morocco** supplementing with television channels. Meanwhile, **Morocco** has also provided additional official electronic communication and access through portals of the Ministry, universities and public and private education establishments.

Rwanda has also distributed radio sets to this learner group, zero-rated internet access to the national eLearning portal and facilitated zero-fee payment for SMS to access quizzes, in addition to the use of the national radio and television channels. For the same group, **South Africa** is using online platforms in the provinces and at the national level to avail lessons and learning materials, including previous question papers.

The above strategies so far have produced different levels of results. **Ghana**'s efforts have been rewarded with a positive reception with appreciable gains and **Mauritius** recorded a full national coverage of all Grades 1 to 9 learners, except for the very few households (0.01% of the population) with no electricity or a television set. **Côte d'Ivoire** broadcasted 330 education lessons throughout the country covering the learners in non-urban areas and in marginalized communities, particularly for those in primary Grade 6 and secondary level. An evaluation of the performance of **Madagascar**'s strategy of providing individual self-study booklet for each learner is in progress. This is the same case with **Mali** that availed 495 audio resources for its primary and lower secondary school learners, except those in Grade 9, in non-urban areas.

The free educational support notebooks **Morocco** distributed in Arabic, English, and French reached one million primary school learners in the rural areas. These activity books are also accessible in digital format on the ministry portal.

The royal initiative also provided 1 million school bags and donated textbooks to 4 million learners as their first learning tools. The 4 television channels broadcasting 59 lessons per day for pre-primary to qualified secondary levels, and 12 lessons per day for higher education have achieved full national coverage. In total, 3,400 lessons were broadcast on Taqafia, Laayoune and Tamazight of SNRT between 16th March and 2nd June 2020. The lessons are re-broadcasted over the weekend for learners who have not been able to take the courses directly, or who wish to benefit from them a second time. For those who can access digital lessons and materials, 779,836 virtual classes have been created through a Massar service, which allows teachers to be in contact with their learners in a digital workspace.

In **Rwanda**, the use of radio has achieved a household coverage of 77%, and over 70% mobile phone reach, of the learners in this category, with television and internet covering 11% and 17% respectively. For **South Africa**, the SABC 1 and SABC 2 television channels, as well as the SABC radio stations broadcasted 266 lesson-hours and 55 lesson-hours per week, respectively, targeting learners and teachers across all the grades, in addition to using the online portal.

	Radio	TV	Print
Cote d'Ivoire	✓	✓	
DRC	✓	✓	✓
Ghana	✓	✓	✓
Madagascar	✓		✓
Mali	✓		✓
Mauritius		✓	
Morocco	✓	✓	✓
Rwanda	✓	✓	
South Africa	✓	✓	

2 Learners with special needs

Many of the strategies for this category of learners have mainly focused on learners with hearing and vision impairment, with a few exceptions such as the case of Mauritius that has a combination of strategies that include adapting and interpreting broadcasted lessons, teleconsulting with physiotherapists and involving occupational therapists in providing television lessons. It is an area that many countries continue to grapple with TEVET comprehensive strategies and solutions to address issues of exclusion.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the government has ensured the recording and dissemination of educational lessons in sign language for learners with partial or total hearing impairment. In addition, the government is providing courses translated into Braille for learners with partial or total vision impairment. The former category is benefitting from the 330 education lessons broadcasted throughout the country, while the latter has access to 52 training lessons translated into Braille.

Ghana indicated its plans to distribute pre-loaded devices to the learners with special needs.

Mauritius has deployed a multi-pronged strategy for this learner group involving the provision of online programme of activities designed to cater for the holistic development of all pupils, using sign language for the national television broadcasts, educators in Integrated Units and Special Education Needs Resource and Development Centers conducting online one-to-one classes via platforms such as WhatsApp, adapting and interpreting the broadcasted lessons for primary learners with hearing impairment with the officer-in-charge and the head of school for the blind and for the deaf following up with all their educators, and teleconsulting with physiotherapists via Zoom. Occupational therapists have also mounted television programmes with activities that develop fine motor and writing skills. The government has created a space for parents and teachers to send their queries in cases of any difficulties in doing the activities. A link from Bookshare has also been inserted for pupils who are print disabled and those who are blind, so that they are also engaged with learning during this period of confinement and beyond.

Dr. Shunmugam Padayachee

"We came up with plans to support learners who have core mobilities or are at risk in attending schools, in which the parents play their role while the government provides the learning materials. Parents have the option of sending their children to school or keeping them at home and doing home education. Psychosocial support needs to be strengthened because anxiety is continuing to grow among the learners and the educators."

Deputy Director-General, Department of Basic Education, South Africa.

Mauritius multi-pronged strategy

- Sign language with TV lessons
- One-to-one virtual classes
- Adapting and interpreting lessons
- Teleconsulting with physiotherapists
- Use of occupational therapists
- Space for parent-teacher interaction
- Link for print-disabled and blind learners

The strategy of developing and disseminating remote learning courses specific to pre-school learners and those with special needs is reported in **Morocco**. This diversification of the educational content started in April 2020 with new lessons gradually disseminated. The 11% of learners reached by **Rwanda**'s use of sign language in lessons broadcasted on television includes this group, while in **South Africa**, all the upper secondary school learners with hearing and visual impairment access lessons and other support materials in Braille and through broadcasting of recorded lessons in South African sign Language using platforms such as autism Western Cape and ObjectiveEd Blog.

Madagascar, **Mali**, and **DRC** did not record any specific provision for this group of learners.

3 Learners at pre-primary/ECD and basic education levels

Countries are using different methods to ensure the continuation of education at the ECD level. These include the introduction of pre-reading activities for parents to supervise the learners at home, deploying cartoon-based television lessons coupled with zero-rated eLearning material, and distributing weekly publications on COVID-19 lessons to parents, caregivers, social workers, and health care workers for children's learning and development. There is evidence of the involvement of private actors in providing lessons for this group. In some countries, however, there is no learning taking place. Learning in basic education continues through radio, television, and online platforms with varying levels of success. Again, many learners are still excluded.

All learning institutions for Early Childhood Education (ECD) in **Côte d'Ivoire** are still closed as part of the preventive measures against the spread of COVID 19 and no learning is ongoing. The country has recorded and broadcasted 182 educational lessons on radio, 330 on television, and 87 online courses for primary Grade 6 learners and those in lower and upper secondary.

In **Mauritius**, on the other hand, well-resourced private fee-paying pre-primary schools are providing online lessons to their learners. The country broadcasts educational programs daily on its national television channels for primary grade learners, covering all grades and all subject areas. A very small percentage of households neither have a television set nor electricity, hence coverage at this level is substantially comprehensive. For the secondary grade learners, lessons provision is categorized according to the grade levels, for all subjects: for Grades 7 to 9, lessons are available on a dedicated online portal as well as on national television channels.

For Grades 10 and 11, broadcast of lessons is solely via the dedicated national television channels, while for Grades 10 to 13, online teaching and learning take place through WhatsApp, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams.

The government of **Mali** has so far offered television broadcast of 23 pre-reading activities that includes pre-writing, pre-math and storytelling for parents to supervise the learners at home. It has also so far provided an estimated 490 audio resources and 3 video resources that include 63 video lessons for the Grade 9 learners in its primary schools, while those in secondary and technical high schools have benefited from 95 video lessons on television.

Like **Madagascar**, **DRC** did not have any specific provisions for learners at the ECD level but rolled out radio and television broadcast lessons and designed and published self-learning workbooks for those in basic education as well as in the TVET sub-sector, with **Madagascar** offering 90 radio and 30 television lesson broadcasts and distributing 636,000 self-study booklets to the learners in this group.

For **Ghana**, the learners in this group benefitted from the radio and television lessons as well as printed materials. Those in secondary schools complemented these with online lessons.

Morocco embraced diversity in providing lessons to learners in basic education. The TelmidTice portal presents courses, exercises, and exams according to the teaching cycle, level, subject, and the sector. It currently includes 7,000 free educational resources divided into 6,200 courses, 800 exercises, and 450 examination material. The television channels are accessible on Digital Terrestrial Television (TNT), the Nilesat satellite, or through the site of the National Society of Broadcasting and Television (SNRT), and the SNRT Live application. In addition, the virtual classes through the Microsoft Teams collaborative service has a total number of 779,836 virtual public classes representing a coverage rate of 96%, with that of virtual private classes reaching approximately 108,000 lessons representing a coverage rate of 70%. For private learning institutions, in addition to the devices made available to them by the Ministry, the establishments have their own communication platforms, and this also covers pre-school learners.

Hon. Ginette Amara Ali Mazicki

"We are in the process of launching bandwidth in the country which is only at the stage of installation work. Some partners gave their support for online and radio training for primary and secondary education but for technical and vocational education, there was not much and this is mainly because of an infrastructure problem as well as teaching and learning."

Minister of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation, Central Africa Republic.

Hon. Claudiana Ayo Cole

"We decided to embrace a distance education strategy and engaged media houses comprising 33 community radio stations, 4 television stations and and online platforms with the objective of "bringing the schools to homes" as a brand message. We also have our own Gambia education TV that belongs to the Ministry, which we are also using to broadcast lessons."

Minister of Basic and Secondary Education, The Gambia.

Rwanda has cartoon based television lessons coupled with zero-rated eLearning material for its ECD learner group with a reach of 11% and 17%, respectively. For basic education learners, the interventions that include zero-rated internet to access the online platform and Zero fee for SMS using short digits *134# to access quizzes, coverage is the same for television and internet, in addition to 77% of the households for radio and 71% accounting for the mobile phone reach.

Rwanda reach metrics

- Internet: 17%
- Radio: 77%
- Television: 11%
- Mobile phone: 71%
- Learners: 107,000

For ECD, **South Africa** deployed weekly publications on COVID-19 lessons to parents, caregivers, social workers, and health care workers for children's learning and development drawn from the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). This is to ensure that children are supported to learn while at home.

The publication/resource is titled: Tshwaragano Ka Bana (Working together for Children) and it was produced through the collaboration between the Departments of Basic Education and Social Development as well as with UNICEF. As mentioned earlier the resources available online, through various portals, applications, and radio and television broadcast lessons targeting learners and teachers across all the grades have resulted in 266 hours of television lessons and 55 hours of radio lessons per week, which have also benefitted learners in basic education.

4 Learners in TVET and higher education

For these two subsectors, countries have used different strategies towards ensuring that learning continues in the COVID-19 environment, from digital courses to the use of radio and television broadcasts. For TVET, a recent study by AfDB in support of Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) in African countries in light of COVID-19 shows that there are numerous limitations in the path of digitalization of the education and skills development fields.

The study, which covered 15 African countries, reiterates the urgency of combining the knowledge transfer with traditional skills development best practices to improve their methodology and align the TVET offered to the market needs considering new technology transfer and use.

Côte d'Ivoire has put in place an online training system designed by the Center for the Promotion of ICTs (CPNTIC) in which teachers produced digital courses under the supervision of the inspectorate and the central directorates (DFPI and DAIP). A call center has also been set up to support learners using the platform. This strategy allowed learners to log in and download the more than 800 online courses on the platform for continuous learning and revisions, with an average of 2,000 connections per day. For learners in higher education, a broadcasting system of courses has been set up with the support of the Virtual University of Abidjan Cocody, in addition to the alternative teaching and learning being offered by teachers via the «Microsoft Teams» software coupled with in-situ subgroup learner cohorts.

Learners enrolled in TVET in **Mali** have participated in 66 television broadcast lessons while their counterparts in higher education have accessed 55 video lessons via online courses. Lessons are provided online and via television and radio for learners in TVET while those at the higher education level use Online and Learning Management Systems (LMS) in **Ghana**.

The design of radio shows, video tutorials, and self-study booklets in three basic subjects for the TVET examination classes is ongoing in **Madagascar** and in addition to this sub-sector, 5 subjects will be treated for 5 priority areas.

Public Training Centres in **Mauritius** use existing platforms such as Google classroom, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp Group, and Microsoft Team to deliver the theoretical components of the TVET curriculum such as Tourism and Hospitality Management, ICT, Building Construction and Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Mechanical and Automotive Engineering, and Printing. So far, seven out of the 14 MITD Training Centres have used the different platforms covering 29 courses ranging from National Certificate Level 3, 4, 5, and Diploma/Higher National Diploma.

Ms. Hendrina C. Doroba

"Yes, there is a pandemic, but the impact is beyond health and it is necessary to look into educational and skills development, in particular in the area of TEVET for skills development and empowerment for economic transformation of the continent. Education and technology are extremely important for economic recovery, job generation, population reskilling and upskilling, and adjustment to a new digital era."

Manager for Education, Human Capital and Employment, African Development Bank.

In higher education, the Open University of Mauritius offers national-level courses through remote learning. Other public HEIs such as the University of Mauritius (UoM), however, normally use a mix-mode of face to face and remote learning to deliver courses. Considering COVID 19, six of the seven public HEIs have moved their programmes online as well as the monitoring of dissertations. For the private HEIs, 23 out of 41 institutions have reported that online teaching has been ongoing during the confinement period.

Rwanda has set up an eLearning platform and uploaded training content which is expected to benefit 107,000 learners enrolled in TVET.

Remote education is provided at all levels of TVET across multiple channels in **Morocco**. An online platform is available with courses uploaded as and when virtual training groups are set up. Access is via a computer, tablet, or telephone and provided free of charge. The practical work is filmed and projected to the trainees.

In addition, other available means are used such as email and social media applications, brochures, and provision of 40,000 reference documents covering the various fields. Training of foreign languages has benefitted 280,000 trainees, while the number of trainees benefiting from training through the participatory service «TEAMS» reached 85,000. Private vocational training establishments are also supported to set up their own eLearning solutions. For higher education, each university already has a recording studio and one or more remote education teaching platforms and have produced more than 100,000 varied digital resources in total. These digital resources published on the electronic portals of universities and affiliated institutions represent between 80% and 100% of the educational content programmed according to the universities. All the learners have been given interactive digital platforms, such as edX, Moodle and Google Classroom, MS Teams, Adobe Connect, offering whole courses with sequences and assignments. These are in addition to the use of national radio and television channels, also accessible via the national platform, particularly for those of the LICENSE cycle which absorb more than 90% of the total number of learners.

Hon. Matthew Opoku Prempeh

"We closed all schools, affecting about 10 million people in the sector - the teaching workforce and learners. Those who suffer most are the vulnerables groups, especially the girl-child who suffers a lot through unwanted pregnancies, sexual exploitation, etc. The government deployed online and traditional media sources, especially for learners in the secondary and TVET sub-sectors, impacting 1.2 million learners. If we do not open quickly, then vulnerable learners are going to continue suffering more. Parents should get more involved in the education of their children."

Minister for Education, Ghana.

This measure ensured, in addition to 13 symposia and round tables on the Covid19 pandemic, the dissemination of 12 lessons, at a rate of 6 hours per day. Regarding scholarships, the country has provided learners with an electronic platform to monitor the status of their scholarships, and an e-complaint electronic service for receiving problems linked to scholarships.

Achievement metrics for Morocco

- 40,000 reference documents
- 280,000 trainees
- 100,000 digital resources
- 6 hours per day, 12 lessons, 13 symposia

5 Learners in non-formal education

The resumption of literacy courses for adults in **Côte d'Ivoire** was accompanied by strict implementation of the barrier measures decided by the National Security Council. In **Ghana**, this learner population accesses the lessons on television.

The rest of the countries did not indicate any provisions for learners outside the formal education system. This area continues to create a challenge to most of the countries, especially in the current situation.

B Recording protection-related risks to learners and taking remedial action

Recording of protection-related risks to learners is not consistent and evidence of remedial action is limited.

Covid-19 has prematurely reinforced social practices such as household chores, early marriage, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, or transactional sex, which has led to early pregnancies and/or sexually transmitted diseases with psychological and health consequences, gender discrimination and child labor. Children are social beings from the beginning and must thrive in a constant network of care and support. School closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has made it necessary to focus on learner well-being due to the risk of the learners becoming the biggest victims of the pandemic through a lifelong impact on their education and safety.

A paper by Malala Fund (2020) notes that the educational consequences of COVID-19 will last beyond the period of school closures, disproportionately affecting marginalized girls. It finds that marginalized girls are more at risk than boys of dropping out of school altogether following school closures and that women and girls are more vulnerable to the worst effects of the current pandemic, estimating that approximately 10 million more secondary school-aged girls could be out of school after the crisis has passed, if dropouts increase by the same rate. It is therefore important for governments to institute appropriate gender-sensitive responses to the current and future education challenges for education.

ADEA sought to find out any protection-related risks that learners have encountered during the remote learning situation.

The nine countries did not record any declared protection-related risks to learners. However, countries such as **Rwanda** and **South Africa** have taken remedial actions to avoid the increase of these various forms of violence through awareness campaigns. One of the remedial actions, as an example for household care, was to focus on the sensitization of parents and caregivers for which the two countries issued awareness messages that insist on parents' responsibilities regarding their role in helping children to study at home. More specifically, using the COVID-19 online learning program, South Africa appealed to parents and caregivers to afford time and space for learners to engage with their learning and reading exercises whilst at home by describing the lockdown period as a learning time as opposed to a holiday or time to increase household chores.

In order to amplify the violence prevention agenda in the COVID-19 lockdown narrative, **South Africa** also launched multimedia campaign for domestic violence and sexual exploitation to end gender-based violence (GBV), violence against children (VAC), sexual abuse and other forms of abuse.

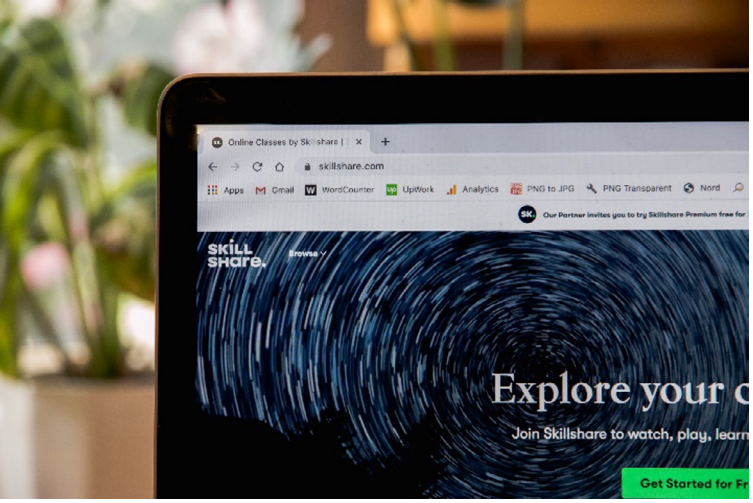
C Recent development or adoption of new online/ offline learning tools/ platforms

The use of new online and offline learning tools, platforms, and materials is positive but still benefits a comparatively smaller number of the learner population.

Countries have put in place various online and offline tools and platforms for the continuation of learning during the COVID-19 period, although evidence shows that these tools and platforms still reach a comparatively smaller number of the learner population.

Côte d'Ivoire has put in place an online platform called My school at home which contains educational resources of the Ivorian education system for preschool, primary, middle and high school students. It aims to support students outside of the classroom in the different disciplines taught at school. Regarding the Technical Education and Vocational Training, an online training system has been designed by the Center for the Promotion of NTIC. Teachers were asked to produce digital courses under the supervision of the inspectorate and the central directorates. A call center has been set up to support learners for using the platform.

The **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** developed a digital platform for continuous and distance teacher training, and a digital platform for learning mathematics and online self-assessment.



Ghana developed the iCampusgh elearning platform which delivers the most comprehensive online resource for senior high school students. Ranging from lesson notes to video lessons, interactive lessons, and examiners' lesson discussions, icampusgh aims in making education fun and accessible to all.

Madagascar put in place a numerical library accessible from the Ministry of Education website. The library is available for free and contains learning resources, support resources for teachers and resources to ensure the quality of education and educational practices for educators, students and learners.

In **Mali**, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research developed an eLearning platform for all educational institutions in the country. The platform has been developed with Moodle. The platform contains resources for General secondary, Fundamental II, Fundamental I, Professional and technical secondary, Normal education and Universities.

Mauritius encourages the use of Microsoft Office 365 to all educational practitioners. Guidelines for online learning platforms are available at the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology website.

A variety of means of access to learning materials is also in use, such as SMS, phone calls, university websites and Facebook pages as well as the existing e-learning platform. The learning materials including notes, assessments, videos, and past exam papers are available on Moodle, coupled with Zoom. Google Meet and Google Classroom amongst others, are being used to conduct classes online. Hon. Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun – Minister of Education & Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research – notes, however, that Mauritius still has similar challenges in terms of lack of connectivity, inability for teachers to reach into to online mode and the difficulty of providing learners with digital devices to access lessons from home.

Moroco adopted the use of different online system such as the platform TelmidTICE, since 2015; the Massar system with integration of Microsoft Teams; and the E-Takwine teacher training. In addition, new digital platforms has been developed: Distance learning higher education platform; Multiple platforms: Universities and higher education institutions have their own internally developed platforms. Some electronic platforms that facilitate the administration and scholarships at the institution has been put in place: A platform to follow the situation of scholarships online; An electronic e-complaint service relating to problems related to scholarships, and a platform responsible for providing students with services such as accommodation, catering, health coverage or even the scholarship.

Rwanda developed some online learning platforms: Rwanda Education Board (REB) e-learning platform where a teacher can create a class, create

lessons and enrol students to be able to read and do the formative assessments and get feedback automatically; the eLearning-Rwanda Polytechnic that can enhance existing learning environments. It is designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalized learning environments; and the University of Rwanda eLearning platform which contains online resources, online tools and a portal for students.

In **South Africa**, the Department of Basic Education has put in place some guidelines and procedures for schools. Those materials are available online: (i) Coronavirus orientation guidelines for schools; (ii) Guidelines for schools on maintaining hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic; and (iii) Standard operating procedures for the prevention, containment and management of COVID-19 in schools and school communities.

D Observed changes in learning by providing online and offline learning materials

Overall, teachers and learners in public basic education have expressed some degree of satisfaction, enthusiasm and commitment in adapting to the new mode of education, with a gradual development of online research skills by learners and teachers. Private education players have been proactive and dynamic in deploying online teaching. In university education, the lecturers and learners have been generally positive to the shift from face-to-face to online delivery and some countries have taken this cue and have planned for delivering some of the theory parts of the modules online and using face-to-face for tutorials, practicals and lab work. This is in addition to online continuous assessments and completion assignment for non-graduating learners and submitting of dissertations online by those in their final year.

"In Rwanda, we have started assessing the teachers before the reopening... We also expect to recruit around 8,000 new ones, review the training of teachers and offer refresher courses."

Hon. Valentine Uwamariya, Minister of Education, Rwanda.

"Reagarding The Gambia, the ministry is satisfied with the content provided through the support of competent teachers."

Hon. Claudiana Ayo Cole, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education, The Gambia.

"For the Central African Republic, indeed, some teachers are not connected and do not know how to use the internet and new technologies."

Hon. Ginette Amara Ali Mazicki, Minister of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation, CAR.

Given the increase in the platform's attendance rate observed, about 3,000 connections per day, **Côte d'Ivoire** adopted the integration of remote education, including Internet, into the traditional training and learning system as a solution to ensure sustainable inclusive education for the future.

The Ministry of education in **Mauritius** quickly shifted from face-to-face to remote education provision at scale to cover all levels of education. Commitment of a few teachers who, albeit with low level of technological preparedness and pedagogical preparedness to deliver online lessons, willing to prepare video lessons in a sustained manner, has been observed. Well-resourced private learning institutions have been very proactive with a remarkable dynamism in deploying online teaching. In higher education, moving from face-to-face to online delivery overnight was very challenging but has yielded positive results. Feedback received from lecturers and students have been generally positive.

This experience allows the University of Mauritius (UoM) to confidently move forward with its plans to introduce a reasonable percentage (up to 50%) of online delivery of all modules as part of its strategy for learning and teaching – i.e. theory parts being delivered online and tutorials, practicals and lab work conducted face-to-face. Similar positive results have been experienced regarding the online submission of dissertations through dedicated Google Classrooms by final year students which has been introduced this year due to COVID-19 (instead of hard copy and CD as per existing regulations). With this new measure, UoM has witnessed very few cases of late submissions of the dissertation. This proves that the learners are in favour of online submission to the hassle of having hard copies bound and physically deposited at the Faculty Registry. Non-final year students assessed via Continuous Assessments and completion of one additional assignment during the lockdown. Although not implemented this year, the UoM is exploring the possibility of introducing online examinations, where possible. Online Meetings are very successful – UoM has decided to implement paperless meetings.

Hon. Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun

"Equity issues remain the main challenges and the ministry came up with schemes to make sure teachers can have these devices for the future. There was a lot of apprehension from the teachers because they believed they were not prepared enough to switch to online courses but the ministry provided them with support through webinars with stakeholders who are used to those devices (e.g. Microsoft). The Ministry also provided access to all the teachers to its digital platform to connect with their learners."

Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, Mauritius.

To evaluate such a new experience, the ministry of education in **Morocco** launched in a first phase an expanded «opinion poll» among learners, teachers, and families, through distance learning platforms as well as through its official website. The results of this survey will be analysed to identify possible improvements to enrich this experience. In a second phase, the general education inspectorate is currently assessing the achievements of distance education. A detailed report will be prepared highlighting the results of this study and the suggestions and recommendations for developing this teaching mechanism. Each university has conducted its own assessment. In this regard, the Mohamed V University of Rabat conducted a study with its students and teachers, in order to measure the degree of satisfaction and adaptation with the new model of education. The results showed that 71% of learners and 84% of teachers are satisfied with varying degrees with this model.

Some positive results have been observed in **Rwanda**. These include parents' role in supervising children at home; quick adoption of using ICT including but not limited to mobile phones; and increased inscription on REB's e-learning platform and resources. There is also a gradual adaptation of learners and teachers to the use of IT tools and gradual development of online research skills by learners and teachers, like the case in **DRC**.

In some countries like **Mali** and **Madagascar**, no evaluation has been done yet, but plans are underway to have an impact assessment for the current academic year within the framework of the national COVID-19 responses. However, a positive appreciation from teachers in terms of the opportunity to improve the quality of teaching practices and populations has been observed.

Internet connectivity is a driving factor for eLearning. Unfortunately, most teachers and learners do not have access to internet, while many have a very limited access, as observed by the Hon. Minister of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation of the Central Africa Republic. In addition to that, remoteness, and affordability of data has been observed because of poverty, unemployment, and accessibility. However, countries are making effort to push teachers and learners to use IT tools as best they can.

E Role of reading materials in national responses to COVID-19

The provision of reading materials helped to reach vulnerable groups. In **Ghana**, the availability of reading materials facilitated access to hard-to-reach communities that do not have access to radio, television, or internet. The government of **South Africa** availed reading materials to all Grades and made it easy for teachers to provide resources online and the workbooks follow the curriculum and assessment policy statements. The reading materials provided in **Madagascar** ensure the continuity of apprenticeship training during the quarantine period. In **Rwanda**, the learning materials are accessible and offer the opportunity for continuous learning. For TVET, the reading materials contributed to the awareness of the public on the importance of technical and vocational education.

F Additional financial support for the education sector to manage COVID-19

Most countries rely on external financing already mobilized or at the stage of processing, mainly for ECD, primary, and secondary education sub-sectors. This occurrence is rare for higher education and TVET, while non-formal education appears not to be a priority. However, in **Mauritius**, the national budget for FY 2020/21 makes provision for embedding digital technologies in the system. It includes among others, wireless local area networks in all secondary schools, financing facilities to households for the acquisition of IT equipment for educational purpose, provision of tablets to Grade 10 to 13 learners from vulnerable families.

In **Morocco**, a special fund for the management of COVID-19 has been created and includes support to the education and training sectors.

G Existence of a crisis management framework for the sector and its effectiveness

There is often an institutional set up for the management of the impact of COVID-19 in the form of crisis units, coordination units, inter-governmental coordination entities, task forces, or education clusters. To guide and support the newly created crisis management bodies, **South Africa** developed a Risk-Adjusted Strategy Plan and **Rwanda** a Response Plan successfully implemented by the Ministry of Education.

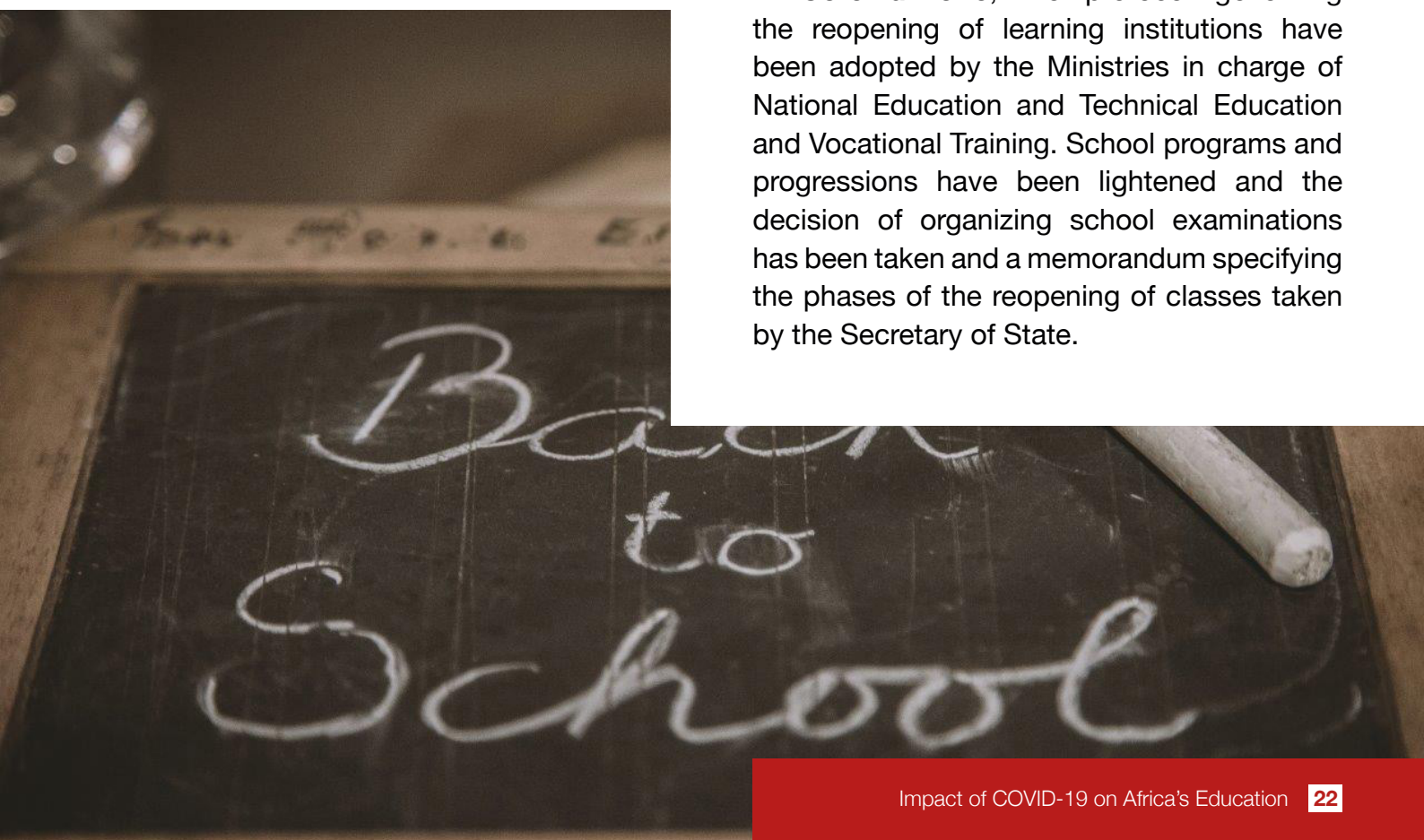
Dr. Khaled Raouani

"ADEA and AfDB should consider carrying out a study on the advantages linked to moving from classic infrastructure to digital infrastructure. This is because of the necessity to convince technical and financial partners to invest if they are convinced that going digital could foster achievement of SDGs and CESA, being inclusiveness and scale up training, etc. There are pedagogical experiences and the switch to digital requires other paradigm shift in terms of thinking, organization, evaluation, assessment and coaching."

Director-General, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, Tunisia.

REOPENING OF LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Most countries are grappling with getting the right balance between saving the economy or life when considering reopening the different sectors. This is due to the strong nexus between the level of a sector's economic relevance and the infection risk level for COVID-19. Opening of service sectors such as education, transportation, and the hospitality industry is most likely to pose a high risk of infection even though their immediate economic relevance may not be as high when compared to low-infection risk sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. Thus, reopening the education sector requires careful planning – a major dilemma for countries considering the resources required to meet the stringent measures and protocols set by Ministries of Health – and a phased approach may be the best option to allow governments to put in place all that is necessary for a full reopening, depending on the readiness of their health systems to cope with increased severity resulting from the spread of the pandemic.



A Policies and procedures or protocols for the reopening of learning institutions

Most countries are grappling with getting the right balance between saving the economy or life when considering reopening the different sectors.

1 Policies

In most of the countries, the policies for reopening learning institutions are guided by the risk level of the country. However, all the countries have put in place policies depending on their education context and organization.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the protocol governing the reopening of learning institutions have been adopted by the Ministries in charge of National Education and Technical Education and Vocational Training. School programs and progressions have been lightened and the decision of organizing school examinations has been taken and a memorandum specifying the phases of the reopening of classes taken by the Secretary of State.

Mali has adopted a gradual opening starting with the examination classes, reorganization of the school calendar, condensed program, support and remediation courses, and the reorganization of timetables. On its part, **Madagascar** has reopened schools for learners in the final years sitting for the end of cycle examinations (5th year, 9th year, and terminal).

In **Mauritius**, remote education has become an integral part of education provision at all levels. The Education Act, amongst several other laws, has been amended to mitigate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. An education Ministerial Committee is working on a national plan. For the reopening of learning institutions in **Morocco**, the Ministry has adopted a participatory approach involving all public and private actors at the central and regional levels. The consultations took into account elements such as (i) preventive priority aimed at protecting the health of learners and trainees, and administrative and teaching staff; (ii) completion of 70 to 75% of courses and training programs before the suspension of studies on 16th March 2020, (iii) ensuring equity and equal opportunities for all learners, and (iv) factoring the disparities that exist between families in the area of supervision and monitoring of their children.

In **Ghana**, learning institutions have reopened for the examination classes in the junior and senior secondary schools. Some learners (less than 0.01% of the learner population) in secondary schools got infected and are being monitored. Those in the boarding schools have been isolated and are being monitored. We must continue even with COVID-19 because we do not know when it will end. If we do not open quickly, then vulnerable learners are going to continue suffering more. Parents should be more involved in the education of their children.

The government Gazette Notice no. 43258 published on 29th April 2020 placed **South Africa** on Level 4 alert – i.e. moderate to high virus spread, with low to moderate readiness. Due to this situation, learning institutions were still closed then, a situation that has evolved with some institutions now opening in a phased approach guided by the reality on the ground.

Hon. Matthew Opoku Prempeh

"Learning institutions have reopened for the examination classes in the junior and senior secondary schools. Some learners (less than 0.01% of the learner population) in secondary schools got infected and are being monitored. Those in the boarding schools have been isolated and are being monitored. We must continue even with COVID-19 because we do not know when it will end. If we do not open quickly, then vulnerable learners are going to continue suffering more. Parents should be more involved in the education of their children."

Minister of Education, Ghana.

The Ministry has implemented compulsory measures that include observing the health protocols as well as guidelines such as having alternate days per week, weekly rotational attendance and the need to maintain a least 50% capacity of face-to-face learning, with remaining half learning at home through self-study. Highlighting the importance of communication, the Deputy Director in the Department of Basic Education said that they try to reach all schools and communities through radio, television, and social media channels. The Ministry consults with all its partners on an ongoing basis, including the organized labor unions, school governing bodies, civil society, and NGOs.

In **Rwanda**, the response plan of the Ministry of Education to the COVID-19 outbreak and reopening strategy for learning institutions is in place. The re-opening was set to take place in September 2020 but has been postponed to a later date due. However, there is no clear policy in place as reported by **DRC** although the Ministry plans to propose a redesigned calendar for learning institutions allowing a resumption and completion of the current school year.

Hon. Valentine Uwamariya

"The government is undertaking an assessment to see how the learning went on during this period because we want to conduct remedial lessons when school will reopen for learners who were in remote areas and could not follow lessons online using TV and radio channels. The government, in partnership with the communities, is also using unconventional methods to construct more than 22,000 classrooms in line with the social distancing protocols."

Minister of Education, Rwanda.

2 Procedures / Protocols

Most of the policies developed by the nine countries are followed by a concrete implementation procedures / guidelines and steps around (i) preventive measures like-disinfection of school every day, respect of social distancing, provision of masks to administrative and teaching staff and students, (ii) sensitization of parents, students, teachers, and communities and (iii) and reduction of class size.

Côte d'Ivoire has adopted the following steps:

- Week from 11th to 15th May 2020: preparation of learning institutions for the admission of learners, support in kits, sanitation of premises, preparatory meetings, the return of staff, teachers, and learners to their duty locations.
- From 18th May 2020: courses started in learning institutions in the interior of the country coupled with multiple shifts for large class size to comply with social distance measures.
- Opening of establishments in Greater Abidjan from 25th May 2020.

- The organization of establishments and classes is designed to adapt to compliance with the social distance measures imposed by COVID-19.

Mali has put in place the following protocols: disinfection of learning institutions, awareness of the institutions' partners, installation of handwashing kits, provision of masks to administrative and teaching staff and pupils, 25 learners per class, and one per table for the respect of social distance. Protocols in **DRC** include reopening of learning institutions in the provinces not affected by COVID-19, enacting particularly rigorous biomedical measures (barrier gestures) to protect learners, teachers and school administrative staff from the virus, and raising awareness on biomedical measures against COVID-19 in learning institutions.

Mauritius amended its education regulations while **Morocco** has made several decisions for each sub-sector to prepare for the reopening of its learning institutions. For basic education, the learners will not join before September 2020. Face-to-face activities will be limited to the organization of the final baccalaureate examinations. The regional examinations for the first year of the baccalaureate are postponed to September 2020 and in the interest of equal opportunities, only the courses delivered before the suspension of studies in March 2020 will be examined. Intensive support courses will be scheduled remotely to help learners to review and get prepared for their examinations. For the other school levels, continuous assessment marks prior to the suspension of face to face learning will be considered for promotion. For higher education, as part of the autonomy of universities, the ministry decided, based on a proposal from the Conference of Presidents of the Universities and in consultation with the unions, to also postpone examinations to September 2020. This due to the difficulties that their organization presents in the current conditions due to the large number of students.

As for establishments with limited access and university courses with limited access also (professional license and master), the examinations will be held from mid-July in a flexible setting, including the possibility of postponing them to September for certain levels or courses if they deem it appropriate. Likewise, for the defense of theses, some universities have opted for the remote organization (video conference) while others in certain disciplines have chosen the presentation in face-to-face "behind closed doors."

For Moroccan students who continue their studies abroad as part of bilateral cooperation between the kingdom and other countries, and who are currently stranded in Morocco, the ministry plans to organize examinations at the local level, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic representations of the concerned countries. TVET learning institutions are closed until September 2020, with the exit exam for the technician, specialized technician and qualification levels also postponed to the same month while the final exam for the qualification and specialization levels will be organized in November 2020 after having completed the usual practical internships. Finally, **Morocco** has planned several necessary preventive measures including: (i) sterilization of establishments every day, (ii) supply of masks, hydro-alcoholic gels, and equipment to measure the temperature, (iii) respect for social distancing, (iv) use of very large rooms or spaces, such as sports complexes, and

(v) support for learners (accommodation, transport, and food).

South Africa has developed guidelines for the re-opening of learning institutions. A differentiated approach will be followed to manage the re-opening considering the capacity of facilities to handle the number of learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff. Protocol guidelines are in place for the phased-in reopening of the education sector. A risk-adjusted approach aligned to the alert level of the country will be followed. An inclusive and collaboration process with all stakeholders and other departments is held on a continuous basis.

B Additional financial and/or material resources for reopening learning institutions

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, material resources including health and sanitary kits (handwashing, hydro-alcoholic gel) for all learning institutions, and 80 million masks are being conveyed to the institutions by the government while **South Africa** reported that there are no additional financial or material resources allocated by the government. **Rwanda** has allocated USD 39, 450 (30 % of Ministry budget) to the reopening of learning institutions. **Mauritius** has undertaken the procurement of materials and equipment for distribution to learning institutions for the safe resumption of face-to-face learning. These include hand and shoe sanitizer, forehead thermometers, liquid soap and disinfectant, provision of additional taps where needed, and general cleaning and disinfection of learning institutions. In **South Africa**, the basic hygiene and sanitation package for all public learning institutions will be procured. Items include face masks, soap and hand sanitizers, thermometers, gloves for cleaners, and disinfectants. The government has developed a standard operating procedure for learning institutions.

C Addressing class size, social distancing, and sanitary and health requirements

Most of the countries has adopted double shift system by splitting existing classes into two with one meter away between the learners in the classrooms. In terms of health and sanitary requirements, handwashing materials at the entrance of the class, wearing of face masks and classroom disinfection are mandatory for each school and learning institution.

Ghana has split existing classes into two and the 1-meter rule on distancing is in force. Cote d'Ivoire has adopted a double shift system for large class sizes (25 to 30 learners per class) while **Mali** has 25 learners per class for examination classes with 1 learner per table. The same protocol has been adopted by **Madagascar** with learners sitting in a zigzag arrangement. **South Africa** has planned for approximately 20 learners per class with 1.5 meters between them both inside the classroom and on the grounds for learning institutions. The learning institutions are envisaged to operate at 50% capacity or less, with differentiated timetabling approaches. Orientation guidelines for teachers and learners have been developed that include health and sanitary requirements. Guidelines for learning institutions on maintaining

hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic have also been made available. They will also be reproduced by the provinces and used during staff orientation, in addition to being placed on the Ministry website. The government of **DRC** has adopted the following measures: (i) display of biomedical recommendations in learning institutions, (ii) broadcasting of audio and video the protocols on radio and television, (iii) conducting media interventions, (iv) undertaking tours in learning institutions wearing Task Force vests to supervise the enforcement of the protocols.

D Monitoring psychological and psychosocial support for teachers and learners

There is some evidence of monitoring of psychological and psychosocial support for the well-being of teachers and learners, particularly those affected by COVID-19, but it is not robust enough.

Wellbeing, emotions, and learning are all interconnected. The prolonged school closures have disrupted essential school-based services such as school feeding, and mental health and psychosocial support, and can cause stress and anxiety due to the loss of peers. As many learning institutions in Africa start to reopen, it is important to consider the psycho-emotional factors that could disrupt teaching, learning, and social interactions among peers due to possible post-traumatic syndrome. Countries are either implementing or have developed some mitigation measures to ensure a minimum of normality in this "new normal" way of teaching and learning. They are also engaging all stakeholders, especially teachers and learners, to ensure they play their roles in the future of education.

Countries are using several ways to monitor psychological and psychosocial support to learners and teachers that include collaboration with other Ministries, conducting training and focus group discussions, providing social support, using human resources in the learning institutions, and deploying multimedia in community engagement.

Regarding the training and focus group discussions, **Mauritius** organized training awareness sessions between June and July 2020 with the managers and trainers of MITD Training Centres on 'mental preparedness following COVID 19' while in **Rwanda**, the discussions have been organized with the teachers. Rwanda has also made provision for social support to those specifically affected by the loss of relatives, neighbours or peers but no single case has been recorded yet. There is a psychosocial support training mechanism in **Mali** as well to those specifically affected. **Morocco** is using the skills competencies training program entitled e-Takwine for the development of skills necessary for remote education and management of virtual classrooms.

In terms of collaboration with other ministries, the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene of **Côte d'Ivoire** has put in place mechanisms to monitor the medical and psychological conditions of teachers and learners and a specific system for a referral to the nearest hospitals and health centres. **Ghana** is using guidance and counselling teams that coordinate with district-level psychologists to support teachers and learners, including those specifically affected by the loss of close relatives, neighbours, or peers. In using multimedia, **Madagascar**, designed psychological support program to be broadcasted on television for learners and teachers and to stimulate community dialogue, especially in the rural areas.

Hon. Valentine Uwamariya

"We came up with plans to support learners who have core mobilities or are at risk in attending schools, in which the parents play their role while the government provides the learning materials. Parents have the option of sending their children to school or keeping them at home and doing home education. Psychosocial support needs to be strengthened because anxiety is continuing to grow among the learners and the educators."

Minister of Education, Rwanda.

The Department of Basic Education of the Ministry of Education in **South Africa** has deployed a holistic approach, using different mechanisms together with provincial departments and developed context-specific provincial plans to bolster the existing capacity and provide psychosocial support to learners and educators, in anticipation of the increased need to re-open due to anxiety, fear, and distress related to the COVID-19 pandemic, amongst others. Some of the activities include (i) strengthening of school/learning institution and district-based support teams to implement and monitor the psychosocial support services, (ii) identification of stakeholders and partners such as NGOs and universities to support learning institutions, (ii) strengthening intergovernmental relations with the Departments of Health and Social Development, (iii) including psychosocial support services in the teacher orientation manual, (iv) identification and support to employees and learners with Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), (v) providing each school and learning institution with a list of available free counselling services, and (vi) sharing materials among provinces and on provincial education department websites.

E Assessment strategies put in place during COVID-19 and for the future

Strategies for assessments, examinations, and evaluations require review based on the COVID-19 experience.

The current shutdown and re-opening of education institutions are affecting the education quality due to disruptions in learning, difficulties in conducting assessments and examinations, ineffective use of the syllabus since the contents would not have been comprehensively covered in due time, and reduced length of the school year in many countries. COVID-19 will not disappear in the next few weeks or months and, unfortunately, its aftermath will last even for years. To this end, it is time to deliberately look at assessments, and less at examinations, as a way of determining authentic demonstrations of knowledge, skills, and competences.

Assessments indeed could be on multiple methods including projects, discussions, simulations, videos, podcasts, and essays. These approaches are useful options to ensure high-quality assessments in online environments built on safe delivery and a sound pedagogical setup.

Hon. Claudiana Ayo Cole, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education of **The Gambia** said that the closure of learning institutions took place on 17th March 2020. The Ministry then constituted a technical committee which, among other functions of spearheading the continuity of education at home, also focused on overseeing the reopening of learning institutions, especially for the examination classes in upper basic education level (Grade 9 and Grade 12). The Grade 9 class resumed face-to-face lessons on 24th June 2020 and sat for their examinations in the six days that followed their resumption. Learners in Grade 12 resumed on 15th July 2020 and will sit their final examinations around mid-August 2020. The Ministry is ensuring that all protocols are in place (handwashing, wearing of face masks, and social distancing) and each class has 25 learners instead of the usual 45. All classes are also regularly fumigated to make the school environment safe. The Ministry will decide when the rest of the grades will go back to school based on the guidelines from the Ministry of Health.

Based on the different education sub-sectors, the nine countries surveyed have used single and/or combined assessments in several occasions. **Rwanda**, for instance, has been leveraging the use of e-learning assessment on e-learning platforms for all the education sub-sectors. This has resulted in the delivery of result slips for ECD and basic education; certificates for TVET and end of primary, the first cycle of secondary equivalents and upper secondary / equivalents; and degrees for the first, second and third cycle of university education.

Côte d'Ivoire also opted for online assessments of learner work in higher education and a timetable for submission of works per learner will be conceived. In addition, on the third cycle of university education, in order to ensure better management of learner flows and greater efficiency in their supervision during the thesis preparation, each teacher will oversee five learners per year.

Hon. Claudiana Ayo Cole

"The Ministry is ensuring that all protocols are in place (handwashing, wearing of face masks and social distancing) and each class has 25 learners instead of the usual 45. All classes are also regularly fumigated to make the school environment safe. The Ministry will decide when the rest of the grades will go back to school based on the guidelines from the Ministry of Health."

Minister of Basic and Secondary Education, The Gambia.

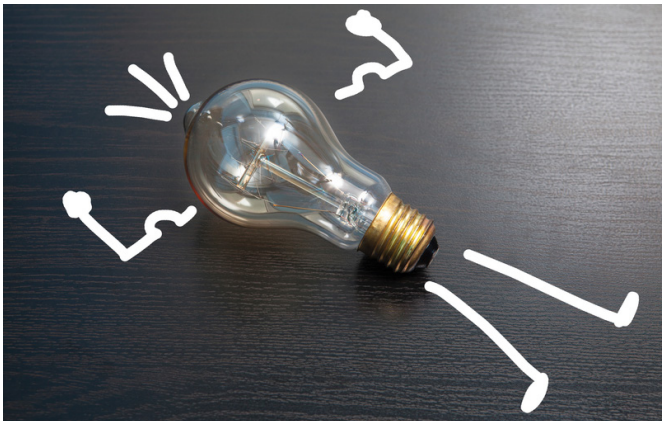
The table below shows the proposed approach by **South Africa**. The Ministry does not expect any formal assessment at the ECD level; however, informal formative assessments will be conducted according to the revised national curriculum framework for this level. For primary and lower secondary education, the country stressed that there are different weightings to be applied for specific grades, as shown in the table below, with the proposal for 2020 of reducing the weightings on examinations in favour of formal assessments (tests and assignments), with only one assessment per term expected to be conducted for the recording of marks. An adjusted school-based assessment will be sent to the schools to mitigate risks. Information on the two formative assessments for Grades 1-7 will be considered in the end of year reports issued to learners and parents. In Grades 10 and 11, formative assessment is encouraged to be integrated into teaching and learning but does not contribute to the reporting on learner progression. For Grade 12, no changes are expected to the formal assessment programme.

The academic year will be extended to the end of December 2020 to ensure the formal assessment requirements are fulfilled by each candidate. For now, there is no information available concerning assessments at TVET and higher education levels.

Regarding TVET in **Mauritius**, the country proposes to review the training calendar for delivery of training and assessment/ examinations while catch-up sessions will also be organized. However, the progress has been slow due to the disruption of on-the-job training for the national apprenticeship programs as well as delays in certification, enrolment on higher level courses, securing employment, and enrolment of new students. Concerning higher education, it has been reported that public HEIs have their own policies regarding assessment/examination. Lastly, **Ghana**, **Madagascar**, **Mali**, and **Morocco**, adopted a combination of summative and formative assessments as the main option for the different education sub-sectors, with some exceptions.

COVID 19-Triggered Proposals for 2020	Primary			Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	
	Grade 1-3	Grade 4-7	Grade 1-7	Grade 8 & 9	Grade 10 & 11	Grade 12
100% school-based assessment, no exams	✓					
Reduced weighting on exams, conduct one formal assessment/term for marks recording		✓		✓		
Two formative assessments			✓			
One formal assessment / term / subject & a formal all-subjects exam at end of 4th term					✓	
National Senior Certificate Examination (external)						✓

PREPAREDNESS OF EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE



Globally, the education sector in many developing countries was already reeling under a myriad of challenges even before COVID-19 came knocking with projections at the time showing that full primary and secondary completion will not be possible by 2030 at the current rate. According to the UNESCO-UIS-GEM report (2019), only 89% of children will complete primary school globally, 81% lower secondary school, and just 58% upper secondary school.

Robinson, Curtiss Hannahan (2020) observe that beyond the unprecedented disruptions to learning, the potential devastating longer-term implications on children's well-being and learning are vast. While much about this crisis remains uncertain, it seems inescapable that it will have lasting negative impacts on children's right to quality education and deepen inequities.

Africa should turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity for accelerating its digital transformation as this will have an impact on key sectors such as education, trade, ICT, finance, and healthcare, as well as the running of government operations. This needs to be accompanied by a sustained momentum on regional integration. As pointed in the first ADEA report in June 2020, Africa's education sector needs a well-resourced Ubuntu or Utu Education Plan to insulate the sector from disruptions due to disasters and emergencies. This plan could comprise many aspects, including having a benchmarking tool or framework guiding preparations for remote education.

Dr. Khaled Raouani

"There is no specific strategy to face this pandemic but rather reactions from countries to this emergency and countries have taken advantage of what they have in terms of infrastructure and resources to support education and training and deploy the various efforts especially in health and food. Remote education, and therefore the switch to digital technology, is imperative. The ADEA report has given a roadmap for moving towards remote learning - the challenge is how to convince decision-makers and interrogate financial capacity to use the remote education infrastructure once it is developed."

Director-General, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, Tunisia.

Mr. Shem Bodo

"The ADEA Remote Education Benchmarking Toolkit, which comprises 11 norms and a set of standards for each norm, aims to strengthen a country's readiness to deploy remote education as a sole or complementary learning option in future."

Senior Programs Officer, ADEA.

A Development of a remote education policy

There is a need to develop a comprehensive remote education policy.

The shift from face-to-face to remote teaching and learning did not come without challenges, the main ones being access to technical infrastructure, lack of enough educator competencies, and pedagogies for remote learning and requirements in specific fields of study and appropriate assessment tools aligned with remote learning delivery model.

Having said that, the feedback which stemmed from the individual country questionnaires showed that six countries (**Côte d'Ivoire**, **Ghana**, **Madagascar**, **Morocco**, **Rwanda**, and **South Africa**) have developed a remote education policy while three (**DRC**, **Mali**, and **Mauritius**) are still planning to formulate one. Amongst the most critical aspects highlighted by the countries, the most common ones are: a) setting up an IT and multimedia structure for the digitalization of teaching and learning (e.g. creation of a recording studio, knowledge and learning management platforms, television channels, digital libraries, etc.), b) training of teachers, techno-pedagogues and capacity building of actors to use and produce digital educational resources, and c) integration of ICT in education.

Strategic partnerships remain instrumental in launching effective remote learning projects as indicated by Côte d'Ivoire, which provided some key collaborations underway between the ministry and other institutions.

B Strategies for incorporating critical aspects of the COVID-19 experience in EMIS

Investing in and strengthening the resilience of education systems is key to mitigating the unfavorable impacts of all types of crises, hence the need to learn from past experiences. Furthermore, well-coordinated national responses and systems are needed to 'build back better', creating safer and more equitable education systems in all situations. It is vital to promote an understanding of EMIS that is holistic and sector-wide, and goes beyond the infrastructure utilized for the collection, management, analysis, and utilization of data.

Such EMIS should encompass the entire 'data eco-system' at all levels of a national education system. In order to build and continue to enhance a holistic EMIS, the highlighted set of actions which need to be strengthened in the current, and post, COVID-19 crisis include the following:

1. Consider statistics on TVET and digital resources (video modules, digital course materials, business software used, etc.)
2. Monitor computer usage and the attendance rate of computer-hosted platforms.
3. Measure the effectiveness of online course systems through learners' achievement.
4. Compile statistical data on teacher training and mapping of resource centers for teachers and highlight areas that do not have them.
5. Set up a mechanism for capturing remote learning and mapping the national coverage of mobile telephony networks and/or internet access.

Mauritius highlighted that currently, in higher education, it has proposed that each public HEI conduct surveys of its own learners following courses at home during the COVID-19 crisis, to learn about their online experiences and the challenges they encounter. This feedback will assist each institution to know their own weaknesses regarding the present system of online teaching and learning and come up with ways and means of improvement. Other countries like **Rwanda** highlighted that they are planning to strengthen the continuity of online, radio, and television learning programs even after COVID-19 and enhance the availability and accessibility of eLearning materials to all learners, including TVET.

C Partnerships and collaborations with education sector actors: lessons learnt

" We are working on innovative projects linked to ending learning poverty. The impact of COVID-19 cannot be ignored. We need teachers and parents to be better trained and to ensure that no one is left behind"

Reema Nayar, Head of Special Initiatives, Education Global Practice, World Bank.

"One of the key responses that GPE provides to its 40 partner countries in Africa facing challenges due to school closures is: Supporting education systems and teachers during the crisis, safe reopening and closing of learning gaps, and safeguarding education spending."

Jean-Marc Bernard, Senior Education Economist, GPE.

"We are partnering with ADEA to produce the Spotlight Report, a new country-oriented series focussing on monitoring learning and completion in basic education in Africa, especially in the context of COVID-19. It will begin in the 4th quarter of 2020 with the first report to be released in the 2nd quarter of 2022."

Manos Antoninis, Director, UNESCO GEMR.

Governments, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector players, learners, and teachers have realized how strenuous it is to learn and teach remotely. Remote learning has reminded everyone to strengthen collaboration and to realize that powerful learning can only happen when all are engaged, energetic, and focused to provide support to one another. This section summarizes some of the good practices and lessons learnt that can be shared and, if well adopted, can inform the future of education in Africa.

1 Public stakeholders

During the COVID-19 crisis, in order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, with the concept of "leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest first", it is vital to address the education needs of communities affected by, and exposed to, crises.

- In general, the countries highlighted the strong need for community mobilization and partners' involvement in monitoring, promoting, and assessing the measures taken to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This collaboration should be strengthened and continued after the recovery.
- In most cases, during the current crisis, it is important to actively engage all relevant line Ministries and government departments, such as those responsible for health, water and sanitation, transport, and social services. This entails leading a sector-wide consultation and planning process that includes all sub-national departments; school governing bodies, researchers, teacher unions; parents; international development agencies; as well as other ministries of education from across the globe. The example from **South Africa** underscores this lesson.

- As a good practice, using qualified volunteer teachers in television and radio broadcasts helps to enhance remote learning, especially in cases of shortages, as seen in **DRC**.

2 Private sector

- Public private partnership is of crucial importance in this kind of emergency. It was noted with great satisfaction the involvement of the private sector in addressing the impact of this crisis on education. For example, the three telecommunications companies operating in Morocco have decided to temporarily offer free access to all the sites and platforms of «distance education and training», set up by the ministry of national education, vocational training, higher education and scientific research.

- Considering low income countries, the ICT infrastructure plus the cost of internet need to be comparatively low and accessible, to facilitate the digitalization of learning materials for both teachers and learners. For example, Rwanda has adopted the social corporate services implementation, where for the moment it is zero rating internet for education resources and continues to mobilize more efforts for investment in ICT promotion especially internet connectivity across the territory. Côte d'Ivoire also has enabled its Ministry of National Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training to broaden the horizon for the delivery of its home courses by providing free online learning platforms. This is in addition to providing the learning institutions with health kits.

3 Civil Society Organizations and Faith-Based organization

- In most countries, CSOs and FBOs have been a vehicle for raising awareness – among populations in general and for parents, guardians and learners in particular – of the dangers of the pandemic, who became agents promoting the implementation of barrier measures.
- The government of **Côte d'Ivoire** acknowledged the support of United Nations Agencies such as UNICEF in the development of exercise manuals for learners.
- Support for the provision of face masks and funds from ISESCO for the recording studio equipment were received by **Mali** from FBOs and CSOs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Morocco** received support from the Mohammed VI Foundation for the Protection of the Environment, Mohammed VI Polytechnic University of Benguerir, the Maghreb Arab News Agency, the National Initiative for Human Development, The Moroccan Foundation for the Promotion of Preschool Education, and elected officials.

CONCLUSION

This report has synthesized the feedback received from nine African countries regarding strategies for the different aspects of ensuring the continuity of learning from home and particularly for the different categories of learners. It has also highlighted issues around financing, partnership, and addressing the needs of vulnerable learner groups, to address the challenge of exclusion, equity, and inequality. The outcome is expected to inform the ongoing discourse around 'leaving no learner behind' even with remote education, and the issues to focus on as countries prepare for reopening of learning institutions in the post-COVID 19 scenario that calls for a more comprehensive preparedness to mitigate crises such as the current pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In planning for the reopening of learning institutions, it is important to carefully consider all proposed measures in the final decisions, with the learners' and educators' safety as a priority.
2. Parents and guardians need to strongly assist both learning and assessments of early grade learners, with close supervision for those in senior grades.
3. Integrate ICT and internet infrastructure in TVET to develop smart classrooms in a manner that responds to remote education delivery and embraces 4IR skills and competencies.
4. Review overall policy and regulatory guidelines to mainstream digital technology as an integral part of education delivery bearing in mind the issues associated with access, particularly in under-served communities.
5. Strengthen teacher professional development to embrace the new education delivery approaches where parents and the community at large play their part to ensure continuity of education at home, especially for early learners.
6. Adapt curriculum and assessment to the new delivery model to ensure that learning outcomes are measured on a regular basis so that mitigation measures can be taken accordingly.
7. Engage in a regular national dialogue with key education stakeholders to deliberate on alternative funding models to ensure that countries can achieve their ambitious goals with much higher results in terms of access, quality and relevance.
8. Last, but not least, ADEA strongly supports peer learning and knowledge exchange amongst countries as they can facilitate the acceleration of the required reforms and execution capabilities to fast track positive changes in the African education systems.

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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
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