Impact of COVID on Education: A Call to Action

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Fig 2a: SADC Total Reported Cases as at 30 April 2020

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SADC ECONOMY
Duration of complete and partial school closures (in weeks)
by region

(until 25 January 2021)

WORLD AVERAGE:
22 weeks of complete & partial school closures
Deploying effective remote learning strategies
Key findings on remote learning

- All countries offered “something” to mitigate learning loss during school closures. Nearly 90% used online platforms or television.
- Though online was used in 64% of low-income countries – questions about national and socio-economic equity in access.
- 56% reported considerations for students with disabilities.
- 40% created self-paced learning platforms.
Actions taken to improve access and utility of remote learning

- High income countries focused on expansion of online learning – (education through mobile phones or internet fees subsidies).
- Options were limited for low-income countries (likely results of resources and infrastructure).
- Many countries dropped non-core subjects (arts, music, physical education, etc.)
Perceived effectiveness of remote learning

- Mixed reviews across, but online learning seemingly the most effective among the modes offered
- Low-income cohort did not consider remote learning effective, except for radio – likely due to this being most accessible tool in rural and economically disadvantaged communities.
Going forward: remote learning has changed the education landscape

Remote learning has expedited opportunities in some environments

- High Income countries (73%) considered remote learning sufficient to substitute as school days
- 91% are using or will incorporate it into learning this year.

Remote learning has also exacerbated disadvantages, and will likely widen gap

- Inequities in access to technology/resources has put some groups at greater disadvantage, and likely to fall even further behind.
SADC survey

• Collected during the months of April and May 2020, the responses consisted of 31 responses from the education sector of 13 Member States

• Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe
School Closures and Measures for School Reopening

• Average number of months of lost learning opportunity 3 months (around 13 weeks) for most SADC Member States, following lockdown restrictions.

• A divergence on the policy directives to resume classes is noted although most Member States have deferred the resumption of classes until June/July 2020.

• Most Member States (8 countries out of 13) have resumed classes after 5 weeks following the lifting of their lockdown restrictions.

• Gradual and phased approach in most Member States for a late reopening of Schools/Universities despite the falling cases of COVID-19 patients.
Govt Measures for the continuity of academic experience of students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support/Initiative/Actions</th>
<th>Frequency (Percentages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development and use of online materials and platforms</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing alternative offline methods of delivery- TV, Radio or print Media</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social assistance</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up of structures and taskforce</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership with Other Stakeholders</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of teachers</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Access</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructional resources for the continuity of academic experience

• The **types** of instructional resources used depend on the profile of learners.

• **Radio education** and **educational television**- most utilized medium for primary and secondary students.

• Universities and TVET- use more **online** and **distance learning resources**.
Support Measures to disadvantaged students in ensuring continuity of learning

More than 70% of the respondents indicated that actions were mainly targeted towards the provision of offline and printed materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support/Initiative/Actions</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provision of offline and printed materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining school feeding programme</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributing relief food to the vulnerable families in communities</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of social grants</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of tablets or PCs</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free internet access</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support provided to Teachers during the pandemic

• The professional support to teachers has been mainly geared towards **training on the use of online distance learning platforms** through Zoom.

• The organisation of the trainer of trainers’ sessions on the **use of the effective and efficient use of e-learning tools** with the objective of mass training of educators at different level.

• Furthermore, **online educational resources**, to support the current school curriculum, **were posted** and made accessible to teachers (for example Angola, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia).

• In addition, **infrastructural and technical IT support** to develop radio and TV educational programmes have been made available to teachers in some Member States (for example Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia).
Challenges in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

• The issues identified as very challenging by most respondents are the continuity of assessments and learning as well as the well being of students.

• Majority of the respondents indicated that ensuring continuity of academic learning was obviously more challenging for early and young learners than adult learners.
Implementation challenges across Member States

- Underdeveloped technological infrastructure (63%)
- Management of students’ emotional health (29%)
- Low capacity of parents/guardians to support learning at home (25%)
- Management of IT infrastructure (20%)
Education Silver Lining and COVID-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unexpected positive educational action changes</th>
<th>Frequency (Percentages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of distance learning education.</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and use of technology as a learning tool.</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up of e-learning policies in educational institutions.</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of hygiene conditions of learners.</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance and upgrade of internet broadband access for learners and educators.</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 9 Member States claim that the positive educational changes during the pandemic crisis were the development of distance learning education along with the use of technology as an important learning tool.
Best practices

• The majority of the Member States (for example Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe Tanzania, Mauritius amongst others) have developed radio lessons and collaborate with national TV Channels to ensure continuity of academic learning of the students.

• Provision of a platform for online teaching and learning to ensure the continuity of learning. (Malawi, Namibia, Angola, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia are few examples).

• Some Teachers and lecturers are also conducting Virtual Classrooms while others are using various conferencing applications and Student Portals in delivering education. (for example Zambia, Lesotho, Namibia, Mauritius)

• Developing and using own online platform. For example, Namibia provided a customized ICT resource aimed at providing learning materials, equipment and capacity development through KOPANO and NAMCOL (Namibian College of Open Learning).
## ODL Policy Status: Baseline 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of MS</th>
<th>No Dedicated ODL Policy yet</th>
<th>Draft ODL Policy</th>
<th>Adopted ODL Policy or National Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member States</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Union of Comoros</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Malawi (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eswatini</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mozambique (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Namibia (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seychelles (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Africa (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

7 are draft ODL policies awaiting approval
ODL Infrastructure: Baseline 2020

• Access to digital infrastructure is very uneven across all 16 MS and within respective MS.

• The most basic infrastructural challenges prevail such as lack of access to radio signals, lack of access to reliable quality electricity, especially in rural areas in most MS.

• At institutional level, a range of innovative digital access approaches are under way.
### ODL Infrastructure: Baseline 2020

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>12.71</td>
<td>52.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>16.92</td>
<td>137.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eswatini</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
<td>156.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>212.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>210.99</td>
<td>343.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>36.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>30.28</td>
<td>117.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>132.85</td>
<td>507.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>159.9</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>130.11</td>
<td>368.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>239.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>25.43</td>
<td>110.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>89.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National COVID 19 responses

- COVID 19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for the adoption of ODL strategies in the region
- Used connected mobile devices to impart learning
- More partnerships between MS/institutions and network service providers to zero rate digital learning content
- Leveraging existing radio and television education broadcast programmes
- Innovative use of print media distributed to learners
- Urgent attention to the provision of psycho-social support and Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) is required
MS Challenges during COVID 19

• The risk of systemic, long-term learning loss is due to education disruption has increased under COVID
• Anticipated increase in drop-out of formal education institutions by youth
• Limited access to connected digital devices
• Limited broadband infrastructure coverage
• Inability to reach all groups of students and staff
• Limited locally-relevant open education resources and digital learning content
• Lack of institutional and system capacity
• Lack of teacher preparedness for remote teaching
Recommendations

•Capacity building of national stakeholders
  – Teachers to be trained in pedagogy and technologies of ODL
  – Enhance capacities of administrative and managerial personnel

•Improving digital access and digital integration in ODL programs

•Measuring, reporting and monitoring
Background on ‘Teachers Readiness on Remote Teaching during COVID 19 emergency’

• Immediate school closures created teaching and learning crisis.
• Need to rethink and reimagine education systems that can be more resilient and adaptable, flexible in times of disruptions.
• Providing alternative instructional modes quickly and reliably during an emergency is known as Emergency Remote Teaching.
• The distinction is important – provision of temporary, effective remote teaching and learning done in a hurry with bare minimum resources and scant time (Hodges, Moore, Locke, Trust and Bond (2020).
• Scarcity of empirical data in SADC countries with regards to teachers’ readiness to facilitate remote teaching using delivery modes, methods and instructional resources that speak to rapidly changing demands, provided the need to conduct this study
Findings: Emergency Remote Practices

Teachers and teacher educators:

• Huge learning curve to change and adapt to virtual teaching space in such a short period of time
• Quality ERT hampered by limited access to electricity, connectivity and training on how to support students and learners.
• Despite little to no training, those who participated in ERT, mostly used WhatsApp to send summaries, or PPT slides, voice notes and video clips. Many made use of e-learning platforms like Moodle, Panopto, Microsoft 365, or used Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, MS Teams. Some teachers prepared hardcopy materials which parents or learners would fetch from schools and bring back after a week.
These challenges were there before COVID 19, but the pandemic is bringing the continued **unequal access to quality education** to the spotlight.

- Limited training for ERT
- Limited access to IT infrastructure, equipment and connectivity, unstable electricity, inequalities that existed before COVID-19 especially if you come from rural/township schools
- Limited interaction between teachers and learners and with online learning content
- **Inadequate psycho-social support for both teachers and learners**
- Poor motivation and self-discipline to do ERT on the part of both groups
- Questionable quality and integrity of academic programmes
- Profiteers exploiting the learning crisis
Findings: Successes

• Teaching and learning continued albeit not at the same level for all students and learners
• Staff and students explored and engaged in new forms of learning
• Many acquired IT equipment and some limited improvement in IT infrastructure were reported
• More on-line learning materials became available
• Partnerships were forged to improve ERT planning and training, to develop ERT materials, build ERT centres and infrastructure, purchase equipment
• Engage in discussions with IT companies to provide data at cheaper rates and to address obvious inequalities
• Parents became more involved in their children’s education.
Continuous Teacher Professional Development: Baseline 2020

• Before Covid, 64 per cent of primary and 50 per cent of secondary teachers received minimum training in Sub Saharan Africa, which often does not include basic digital skills (UNESCO, 2020a, p2).

• Many Ministries of Education and institutions have CPD plans in place and many struggle to implement their plans

• The need for continued support to MS on CPD
Forms of exclusion in learning experiences of youth amidst COVID-19

A. Access

1. Lack of access to all e-learning infrastructure (i.e. android phone, TV and internet connectivity, power)
2. e-Learning has become exclusively expensive and there no meaningful online learning for learners in government schools
3. Lack of learning Apps for persons with disabilities & intimidating online Learning platform
4. Youth excluded from accessing the library during lockdown and reduce hours for learning after partial lifting of the lockdown for examination classes
5. There is shortage of text books because each pupil needs his or her own text book
6. Inability to buy a mask because the learners are poor

B. Knowledge and Capacities

1. Lack of knowledge on how to use internet and new technologies
2. Difficulty in learning without teacher’s explanation
1) Girls are given more attention/resources so men could easily get COVID 19
2) Girls have more bursaries.
3) It is common for boys/men not to wash their hands
4) Men don’t consider fetching water as their task, so washing hands is affected
5) It is said that women don’t wear masks as it hides their beauty
6) Structures are too small to have social distancing
7) Girls will face more discrimination if they exhibit some symptoms
8) Women/girls do not like to wear work suits
1. Position EDUCATION as a key investment priority amidst COVID 19
2. Advocate for continuity of learning WITH focus on safety of learners and teachers
3. Ensure a wholistic approach – physical, mental and social health
4. Addressing INEQUITIES in its many forms
5. Strengthen collection/analysis of evidence to guide our actions
6. Sharing of practices in addressing 1-5
THANK YOU