UNESCO IICBA WEBINAR:
The COVID-19 Pandemic and the ethical challenges for children and youth

Wednesday, 03 JUNE, 2020 | 16:00hrs-17:30hrs East Africa Time

Click here to join the webinar: https://tinyurl.com/yc8vu4du or https://bit.ly/3gw447I

While the education sector has responded to school closures by setting up online learning spaces and other innovative practices to support home-schooling, half of all students of the world are currently out of the classroom without access to a computer, and more than 40 per cent of children have no internet access at home\(^1\). Many children are being left behind with increasing disparities in access to education and learning, compromising their safety and well-being.

This is happening in a context where socio-economic inequalities are being exacerbated as the economic consequences of the pandemic are having a dramatic effect on the most vulnerable and marginalized children. According to the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) more than half a billion people — almost 8\% of the global population — could be pushed into poverty as a result of the pandemic\(^2\). The impact on African economies could be the slowing of growth to 1.8 per cent in the best case scenario or a contraction of 2.6 per cent in the worst case. This has the potential to push 29 million people into extreme poverty\(^3\). Further consequences are expected due to the disruptions to maternal and child health services during this period.

The pandemic has deepened and made more visible the many inequalities in our societies, including those related to access to health, food security and nutrition, shelter and living conditions and digital access. The marginalized continue to be the most vulnerable to the overall impacts of pandemic in many ways.

According to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), education is one of the sectors most heavily affected, with the closure of learning institutions in many African countries likely to negatively affect education in terms of access, quality and investments. In the last few weeks, African governments and key

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\(^2\) https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/will-covid-19-lead-half-billion-more-people-living-poverty-developing-countries
\(^3\) COVID-19 in Africa: Protecting Lives and Economies by the Economic Commission for Africa
education stakeholders have instituted some measures to promote the continuity of education from home. These have been successful in some ways, but challenges remain.

As restrictions on physical distancing are lifted, the economic impacts of the lockdowns and other restraints, are likely to put further stress on social dynamics, possibly enhancing the possibilities for conflict and violence in our communities.

As the world rallies to meet the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, extremist groups including those from West Africa have continued to carry out large-scale attacks and conduct cross-border activities. There is a risk the current situation might undermine gains on peacebuilding and prevention of violent extremism including those made by the education sector.

The lockdown period already highlighted an increase of domestic conflicts and violence. The need to live together full time, sometimes in limited spaces, has also put stress on relationships among family members. Due to the impacts of the pandemic, millions of learners will go back to school finding themselves poorer, more vulnerable and in some cases victims of violence. Even if not affected directly, learners will witness changes in their environment and ethical challenges arising in their contexts as a consequence of the pandemic.

Education should respond to the holistic needs of the learners, empower children to be resilient and equip them to cope with the context around them and positively respond to the challenges they face. While lockdowns, learning at home and online learning strategies continue, we must make use of dynamic approaches to support learners beyond their academic work. A special emphasis should be given to support learners socio-emotional learning and towards empowering them to meet the ethical challenges they encounter. By recognizing their potential to contribute towards positive social transformations, we no longer see them as passive recipients of knowledge but partners and contributors towards addressing shared challenges.

While the COVID 19 pandemic has put pressure on the education, it has also shown our interconnectedness and the power of human solidarity. Education can make use of transformative pedagogies to creatively address this opportunity and empower learners as agents of positive change in their communities.

This webinar invites educators to reflect on the COVID-19 Pandemic and the ethical challenges for children and youth, and how we can empower them to address these challenges. The webinar is part of a learning module that UNESCO IICBA is offering for educators to support learners during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Date: Wednesday, 03 June 2020  
Time: 16:00hrs-17:30hrs East Africa Time (04:00-05:30pm)  
Duration: 90 minutes

Objectives of the webinar:

- Discuss the ethical challenges arising in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in an interconnected world.
- Reflect on the impact on children and young people and how they can respond to ethical challenges.
- Identify strategies to empower children and young people through education responses to address the ethical challenges around them as global citizens.

Programme and Speakers :

- Welcome Remarks and Introduction of Theme: (5mins)
  
  Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki  
  UNESCOIICBA

- Key Note Remarks: (12mins)
  
  Dr. Obiora Ike  
  Executive Director Globethics.net

- Panel Discussion: (40mins)
  
  Dr. Rashied Omar  
  Research Scholar of Islamic Studies and Peacebuilding at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame and Imam of the Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town, South Africa.

  Ms. Anne Waichinga  
  Associate Director - Education and Child Protection  
  World Vision International

  Mr. Suchith Abeyewickreme  
  Ethics Education Programme Coordinator  
  Arigatou International

- Q&A and Discussion (30mins)

  Webinar Moderator: Eyerusalem Azmeraw  
  Chat Moderator: Vera Lean
Audience
The target audiences for the webinar are Teacher Educators, Teachers, Ministry of Education officials responsible for teacher development and management, government and non-government agents responsible for learning in primary and secondary schools teachers, education researchers, representatives of partner organizations, and UNESCO colleagues.

Technical specifications
The webinar will use Microsoft Teams as a technical platform. Kindly have a device with active web camera, microphone to contribute to the webinar.

You can access the webinar via the following links: