Webinar concept note:
School reopening, knowledge and experience sharing for teachers in Africa: The Case of Rwanda

Wednesday 28 October 2020
15:30-17:00 Addis Ababa time (GMT+3)
Link: Microsoft Teams: https://tinyurl.com/y3ajktqt or https://shorturl.at/sBDS6

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the world into an unprecedented health, economic and societal crisis. This pandemic has kept 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries out of the classroom, with almost half of them without any learning opportunities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the analysis conducted by UNESCO during the last week of April 2020, 53 of the 55 African Union member countries have decided to close their schools in order to stem the spread of the virus.

In the face of school closures, countries have been making remarkable efforts in introducing or strengthening distance education through various modalities to enable learning continuity. Distance education has been working well for some students but not for all. In many cases, disadvantaged learners have been further left behind in learning during school closures as they lack conditions for effective at-home learning, such as access to technologies, Internet connectivity, electric power and the presence of supportive caregivers.

As countries are preparing for school reopening in a context that remains uncertain and unpredictable, it will be necessary to consider a combination of pedagogical approaches that meet differing learning needs and capacities of learners, provided through a mix of distance and in-person teaching. This will not only help tackle the current situation but also strengthen the resilience of education systems to deal with future resurgence that may call for sporadic school closures or partial reopening. Particularly, it will be important to ensure an inclusive reopening whereby disadvantaged learners, at risk of experiencing learning difficulties and dropout, are supported to enable a safe return to school and to successfully engage in learning.

In the preparation for school reopening, teachers and school leaders may be concerned about how to organise learning environments, timetables and pedagogical activities in ways that are safe and secure, and that prevent the spread of the virus. The webinar may help answer these questions:

- What sanitary gestures should be adopted?
- How can safe classroom arrangements and school routines be established to ensure social distancing?
• How can the curriculum be adjusted to enable learning from anywhere the learners are located?
• What learning objectives should be prioritized?
• How can school infrastructure be upgraded to support a safe return to school?
• What kinds of psychosocial support would learners need and how should it be provided to them?

Addressing these questions effectively requires reopening plans that are evidence-informed, financed adequately, and resulting from consultation of different stakeholders, including teachers, school leaders, parents and communities. Provision of appropriate training and support for teachers and school leaders is a key element in the operationalisation of these plans.

Since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO IICBA, in its mandate of strengthening teacher policy and teacher development in Africa, has organized a number of webinars for teachers, teacher trainers, education leaders and authorities across Africa to share their experience and learn from their peers from different countries. It is in this context that this webinar is organised to provide a platform for different stakeholders, including teachers, to reflect on the questions above.

**Objectives**

This webinar aims at strengthening the capacity of teachers and teacher educators in reopening schools through sharing knowledge, experience and lessons among teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, government officials and other education stakeholders. The webinar deals with issues related to the reopening of schools under the guidance of the questions raised above.

**Target participants**

The target participants are teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, professionals and leaders working in education inspection and central and local government offices in Africa. Other stakeholders concerned with the theme of the webinar, such as professionals from civil society and international organizations, are most welcome to participate.

**Expected outcomes of the webinar**

It is hoped that at the end of the webinar, the following outcomes will accrue:

• Reflection on sanitary gestures, classroom arrangement and school routines that need to be adopted to ensure safety during and after school reopening;

• Inventories of different classroom arrangements and learning objective prioritisation to enable safe learning from anywhere;

• Insight on institutional/school infrastructure upgrade to enable safety during and after school reopening
- Inventories of potential psychosocial support for learners, teachers and teacher educators after school reopening;

**Agenda**

The webinar will last for 1.5 hours, and provide webinar participants with opportunities to learn, ask questions, interact with the speakers, panelists and other participants, and share concerns and good practices.

**Moderator: Dr Bernard Nkuyubwatsi**, Project Officer, UNESCO IICBA

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<th>Duration</th>
<th>Item/ Speakers - panelists</th>
<th>Moderator/Facilitator</th>
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<td>15:30-15:35</td>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Introduction by a moderator</td>
<td>Dr. Bernard Nkuyubwatsi, Project Officer, UNESCO IICBA</td>
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<td>15:35-15:45</td>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Opening remarks</td>
<td>Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki, Director, UNESCO IICBA</td>
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<td>15:45-16:20</td>
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<td>Sharing the school reopening plan and experiences</td>
<td>Dr. Bernard Nkuyubwatsi, Project Officer, UNESCO IICBA</td>
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**Guidelines and strategy for safe reopening**

**Dr Florien Nsanganwimana**: Principal, the University of Rwanda College of Education, Rwanda (15 min)

**Teacher and teacher trainees’ protection during and after school reopening: the pedagogical aspects**

**Dr Edwidge Kampire**, Teacher Educator, the University of Rwanda College of Education (10 min)

**Teachers’ experience in school reopening preparation**

**Mr Alexis Habineza**: Deputy Head Teacher, Institut Sainte Famille, Nyamasheke District, Western Province, Rwanda (5 min)
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<td>16:20-16:50</td>
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<td>Q &amp; A, comments, sharing of good practices</td>
<td>Ms. Ruixi Liu, IICBA</td>
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<td>16:50-17:00</td>
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<td>Mr. Saliou Sall, Senior</td>
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