

Webinar concept note: School reopening, knowledge and experience sharing for teachers in Africa

Wednesday 23 September 2020

14:30-16:00 Addis Ababa time (GMT+3)

Link: Microsoft Teams: <https://tinyurl.com/y3m7blrd> or shorturl.at/pzHST

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 provide for 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 teachers 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 in training and experience sharing among Africa educators. 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, 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 primary target participants are teachers and school leaders working at basic and secondary education levels in Africa.

The secondary target participants are professionals working at teacher training institutions, inspection and central and local government offices. Other stakeholders concerned with the theme of the webinar, such as professionals from civil society and international organizations, are most welcome to participate.

Agenda

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

Moderator: Dr Yumiko Yokozeke, Director UNESCO IICBA

Time (GMT +3: Ethiopia time)	Duration	Item	Speakers / panelists
Webinar: School reopening, knowledge and experience sharing for teachers in Africa			
14:30-14:40	10 min	Introduction by a moderator	Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki , Director UNESCO IICBA
14:40-14:55	15min	Key note on reopening schools in Africa and teachers' roles	Prof. Kwame Akyeampong , Open University (TBD)
14:55-15:35	40 min	<p>Sharing the school reopening plan and experiences</p> <p><i>Guidelines/Strategy for safe reopening of schools</i> Mr Ismael Mulindwa, Director Basic and Secondary Education and Chairman of the Task Team for the National Education Response to Covid-19 at the Ministry of Education and Sport, Uganda (10 min)</p> <p><i>Teacher preparation for school reopening</i> Mr Filbert Baguma, Secretary General, Teachers Union of Uganda (10 min)</p> <p><i>Teachers' experience (Malawi)</i> Charles H.M. Kumchenga, Secretary General, Teachers Union of Malawi (10 min)</p> <p><i>Teacher's experience (South Africa)</i> Mr Prudence Mujiyambere, Educator, Head of the Life Science subject and Member of the School Covid-19 Committee at John Ross College, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa (10 min)</p>	Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki , Director UNESCO IICBA
15 :35-15 :55	20 min	Q & A, comments, sharing of good practices	Dr. Bernard Nkuyubwatsi , Project Officer, IICBA
15:55-16:00	5 min	closing	Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki , Director UNESCO IICBA