UNESCO IICBA WEBINAR:
How transformative pedagogy can respond to learning needs during the COVID-19 and support the wellbeing and resilience of children during and after the pandemic?

Wednesday, 27 MAY, 2020 | 16:00hrs-17:30hrs East Africa Time

Click here to join the webinar: https://tinyurl.com/y7g7svv8 or https://bit.ly/3e4ze3O

Close to 90% of the world’s schoolchildren are not attending school at present and are being confined at home and places of shelter. 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 home1. 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 pandemic2. 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 poverty3. 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 education stakeholders have instituted some measures to promote the continuity of education from home. These have been successful in some ways, but challenges remain4.

As the world rallies to meet the challenge 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.5 There is a risk the current situation might undermine gains on peacebuilding and prevention of violent extremism including those made by the education sector.6

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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
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 during this period. Teachers who have the closest contacts to the children on behalf of the education sector, have the opportunities to work with parents and caregivers to support children to continue their learning. Learning opportunities in these context can also be built around their day to day activities and strengthened further by creative and sensitive pedagogical approaches that can contribute to building life competencies for the learners.

As children restart schooling, it is not sufficient for us to just take children back to “business as usual” and engage them only in regular academic work or in fact intensify the academic workload to catch up on missed curriculums and to prepare for exams. It is important to support their holistic well-being including their social and emotional learning needs and foster their resilience by providing safe learning environments for sharing their experiences and emotions; helping them to renew their social relationships with one another; discuss concerns; and by providing opportunities to reflect and engage with the new context we find ourselves in.

While we face the challenges of the current context, we must also look at the opportunities amid this crisis. Crises, by rupturing our normative frames of reference, invite the possibility of transforming the conditions that produced the crises. But crises are not transformative if they merely evoke feelings. Feeling, in the absence of thought and action, does nothing to challenge or change the conditions that illicit the feeling. Education should respond to this crisis by addressing the conditions that create uncertainty and disconnection in the learning of the learners, reflecting on how it affects their learning needs and well-being. This should lead to action and to creatively respond to the context to make it part of the learning, contributing to creating transformative experiences. Praxis requires both reflection and action.

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 strengthen the holistic learning, resilience and well-being of children.

This webinar invites us to reflect on how educators can make use of transformative pedagogy to meet the learning needs of learners during the Covid-19 pandemic and moving forward. 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, 27 MAY, 2020  
Time: 16:00hrs-17:30hrs East Africa Time (04:00-05:30pm)  
Duration: 90 minutes  

Objectives of the webinar:

- Discuss the role of transformative pedagogy in the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic.
- Recommend transformative pedagogical approaches that can be leveraged for the learning needs of children.
- Identify strategies to foster learner’s well-being and empower them to develop their competencies for resilience.

Programme and Speakers:

- Welcome and Key Note Remarks:
  - Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki  
    Director, UNESCO Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa

- Panel Discussion:
  - Ms. Mary Wanjiru Kangethe  
    Director, Education Programme  
    Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM)
  - Ms. Vera Leal  
    Arigatou International Geneva
  - Mr. Mohamed Said Abdi  
    Director of Training and Foundation  
    Somalia National University (SNU)

Q&A and Discussion  30 minutes

Webinar Moderator:  Eyerusalem Azmeraw UNESCO IICBA  
Chat Moderator:  Eleonora Mura  Arigatou International Geneva

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.