TEACHING – LEARNING RESPONSE TO COVID 19: THE CASE OF MALAWI

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

• COVID 19 and closure of schools
• Efforts to provide teaching and learning during closure
• Challenges of online learning
• The impact of school closure
• Preparation for reopening
• Situation after reopening
COVID-19 AND CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

- The Government of Malawi declared a state of health emergency on 20\textsuperscript{th} March, 2020.
- On 23\textsuperscript{rd} March, Government ordered the closure of schools.
- The closure affected over 5 million learners most of whom (mostly primary and secondary school learners) remained with only two weeks.
- There was no immediate direction given on the way forward.
EFFORTS TO PROVIDE LEARNING DURING CLOSURE

- As days passed, it was felt there was need to explore alternative avenues for continued teaching and learning.
- The avenues included use of radio, online learning portals and teaching notes shared through WhatsApp and other social media platforms.
- Students, teachers and communities were sensitized on the proposed online teaching and learning.
- Some radios were procured and distributed to needy students.
CHALLENGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

• Few family households (33%) have radios and those (radios) procured were not adequate
• A lot of students did not have gadgets with which to access online materials
• Access to internet is very limited (only 16% of the population has access)
• Most students and even teachers were not digital literate – they could not use computers successfully
• Lack of parental support in the learning process as most parents are not computer literate
• Data bundles are very expensive
• Teaching and learning materials were not online friendly mode
THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE

• A lot of girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy
• Private schools had challenges to maintain their staff on the pay roll – this impacted a lot of families
• Students on study leave with time frame for their studies were affected
• Courses which are season dependent, were disturbed
• School calendar has been disturbed and it will take time to recover
REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

- Government ordered the reopening of schools from the 7th September, 2020
- To monitor the situation and to reduce congestion, reopening was done in a phased approach starting with examination classes
- In higher education, institutions were given freedom to decide which group should come first since they were at different stages of learning when they closed
PREPARATION FOR REOPENING

• Government developed guidelines for reopening of schools with emphasis on balancing the right to education and the right to life
• Health measures emphasized included; disinfecting facilities, masking all the time, physical distancing, hand washing, sanitizing etc.
• Psychosocial support was also emphasized very much
PREPARATION FOR REOPENING

• Head Teachers, Teachers, Parents, School Management Committees, Mother Groups, Community Leaders and Religious Leaders were all trained on how to manage schools amidst COVID 19

• In addition, the training covered mask making to make sure that needy students have masks

• Government in collaboration with GPE made resources available to schools (primary and secondary) for procurement of COVID 19 preventive materials

• Using the resources, schools were disinfected, hand washing facilities, hand sanitizers and cloth for masks were procured

• When the date for reopening came, schools were ready and students went back
LIFE AFTER REOPENING

• Enthusiasm among students, teachers and parents is very high

• Monitoring visits have been made and things are moving

• To avoid congestion, classes have been split

• To accommodate increased number of classes, some schools have introduced double shifting

So far, so good
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

May God Bless You All