

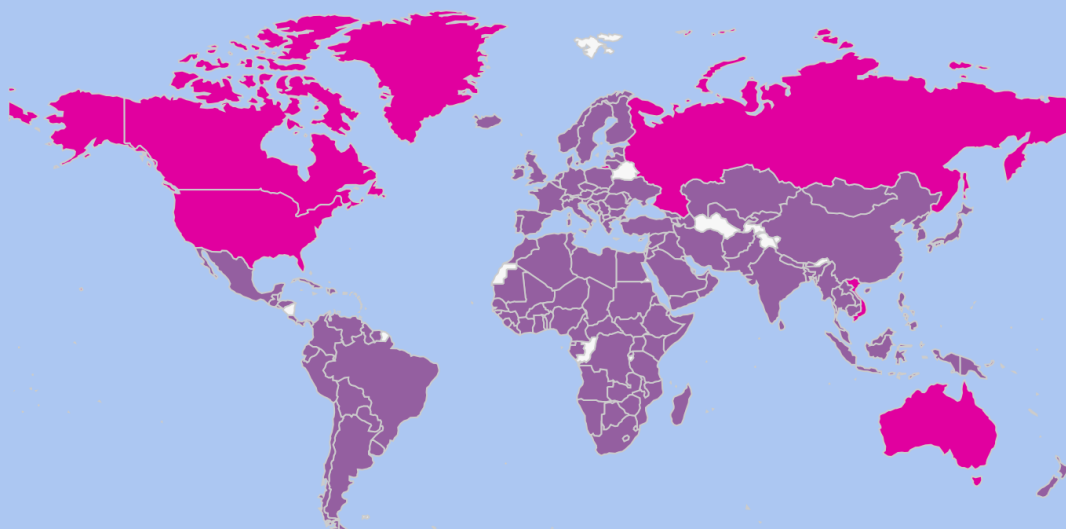
GROUP OF FRIENDS FOR EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

PRESS RELEASE

6 APRIL 2020

SPECIAL EDITION

COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response



● Localized ● Country-wide

Global monitoring of the schools closures caused by COVID-19

Launch of the Global Education Coalition

International organizations, civil society and private sector partners join forces to ensure **#LearningNeverStops**

- At a time of when over half a billion students and youth across the planet are affected by school and university closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak, UNESCO launched the Global Education Coalition with partners from various sectors to provide appropriate distance education for all learners, as envisaged during the meetings of Education Ministers.
- The Global Education Coalition will respond to countries' specific needs by matching the needs with free and secure solutions, bringing partners together to address connectivity and content challenges among others. It will provide digital tools and learning management solutions to upload national digitised educational resources, and curate resources for distance learning and strengthen technical expertise using a mix of technology and community approaches, depending on local contexts. In all interventions, special attention will be placed on ensuring data security and protecting the privacy of learners and teachers.

Multilateral partners: UN, ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, ITU, the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), OECD and the Asian Development Bank.

Private sector partners: Microsoft, GSMA, Weidong, Google, Facebook, Zoom, KPMG and Coursera.

Philanthropic and non-profit organizations: Khan Academy, Dubai Cares, Profuturo and Sesame Street.

Media partner: BBC

Join the Global Education Coalition

Become a part of the international community's effort to unlock education continuity for all

The Global Education Coalition is an open partnership, and UNESCO is inviting expressions of interest from organizations interested in helping countries assure the inclusive and equitable provision of distance education. Interested organizations are invited to communicate what free support, tools or services they can offer countries that might help them extend educational opportunities during periods of school closure. The coalition seeks to broker solutions with country needs and, in the current emergency context, all solutions listed on the coalition platform should be available free of charge.

Contact: COVID19taskforce@unesco.org

Leaders in action

Education ministers scale up approaches to ensure learning continuity, as more than 1.5 billion students now at home due to COVID-19 school closures

- In an effort to contain the global pandemic, 188 countries have implemented nationwide closures, impacting more than 90% of the world's student population worldwide. Some of these closures are recent, in others they have already been in place for months. In all cases, closures are placing unprecedented challenges on governments to ensure learning continuity, and on teachers, students, caregivers and parents.
- Following the [global videoconference of high education officials](#), on 24 March 2020 UNESCO convened an **online meeting of an ad hoc group of education ministers** who shared information about scaled-up measures deployed in their countries to support teachers, parents and students in coping with home learning.
- The ad hoc Group consists of 11 countries from all regions: **Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, France, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru and Senegal**. Participants emphasized the importance of collective response in addressing the emerging challenges and the need to accompany learners both academically and emotionally in these turbulent times. [More information](#)

Multilateral partners in action

Principals of Multilateral Education Partners to join hands in education response to COVID-19 pandemic

- The principals of Multilateral Education Partners (MEP) met virtually on 24 March 2020 at UNESCO's call to an emergency meeting of on COVID-19 education response. The MEP is a strategic forum action platform of 12 key multilateral partners (alphabetically: Education Cannot Wait, Education Commission, EC-DEVCO, Global Partnership for Education, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP and the World Bank), aimed at accelerating progress towards the SDG4.
- The representatives stressed that **equity is the principal concern** as school closures hurt disproportionately vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. Alternative, distance learning modalities might even exacerbate learning inequities due to the gaps in technology access and in the resources and capacities of schools and teachers. According to the **OECD** representative, even in OECD countries only 53% of teachers are estimated to have any experience with online, digital delivery in their classrooms.
- Members expressed deep concern that the foreseen recession will have **negative impact on domestic budget allocations and international aid dedicated to education**. UNESCO appealed for unity in support of countries to manage the emergency and build more resilient and inclusive education systems, to put the world back on track toward the SDG 4.
- **WFP** estimates that 356 million children are not receiving school meals as a result of school closures. **UNHCR** and **Education Cannot Wait** shared their immediate responses to support the most vulnerable groups such as refugees, migrants and internally displaced people, while **UN Women** is providing support on gender analysis of the pandemic's impact. The **Global Partnership for Education** has provided financial support through **UNICEF** for governments' contingency planning and will open a specific accelerated funding window focused on early recovery. Beyond the immediate public health emergency and education disruption, the participants discussed the longer-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. **ILO** estimates that nearly 25 million jobs will be lost. [More information](#)

Case studies

Wuhan and Turin, two members of UNESCO Global Network of Learning cities, share distance-learning approaches

During [webinars](#) organized by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning on 19 and 24 March, UNESCO Learning cities such as Beijing (People's Republic of China), Shanghai (People's Republic of China), Fermo (Italy), Kashan (Iran) and Manizales (Colombia), Osan (Republic of Korea), Wuhan (People's Republic of China), Turin (Italy) and São Paulo (Brazil) shared their contingency plans and distance-learning approaches to over 200 representatives of other cities.

Since February, the **city of Wuhan** has provided air classes to over 1 million primary and secondary school students in the city by establishing an "air classroom platform" to address technical issues and fully support online learning. The city of Wuhan gives special attention to the children of health workers and those without access to digital devices by coordinating the provision of computers and other electronic devices as well as offering targeted distance tutoring and technical support. The city of Wuhan, in close collaboration with local libraries, has also promoted lifelong learning for the general public by offering free courses in counseling psychology, intangible cultural heritage, personal health care, etc. on WeChat.

In spite of a variety of challenges, the **city of Turin** has taken important measures to support schools in accessing online learning while fully respecting their autonomy. For example, the "Foundation for the School" initiative aims to prepare schools with better technical capacity and offers webinars to teachers to prepare them with the essential knowledge and skills necessary to carry out online classes. Similarly, the Torino City Love project has been established to call together the technological partners of the City of Turin to offer health information, digital services and training to support citizens and businesses in the city's area during the health emergency by counting on resources and services made available free of charge by companies such as TIM, Cisco and Microsoft.

As schools close, teachers in Dadaab refugee camps connect with students by radio

At least 35% of refugee children were not attending primary school and at least 75% of adolescents were not getting secondary education in according to UNHCR and the numbers are rising with the global spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 has closed schools at Dadaab, a complex of refugee camps in Kenya that is home to more than 200,000 refugees and asylum seekers. As shared by UNHCR, teachers in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camps are giving live English lesson to refugee and host community students at a local radio station. Radio education programmes are an alternative platform for +100,000 children there, as schools remain closed due to COVID-19.



The number of students affected by school and university closures in 188 countries has reached more than 1.57 billion, which counts for 91.3% of total enrolled learners worldwide

Scientific response to the global health crisis

Virtual Ministerial Dialogue COVID- 19 and 'Open Science'

The current COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the critical role science plays at the forefront of global responses to prevailing threats and challenges. Ministers of Science are key decision makers at the frontline of this global health crisis. With a view to provide an online platform for Ministers and scientists to share their experiences and lessons learnt on the role of 'open science' and international scientific collaboration in addressing this global crisis, on 30 March UNESCO hosted an online meeting of representatives of ministries in charge of science all over the world. Participants included 77 ministers, including governmental secretaries representing a total of 122 countries, featuring as well as participation by the leading global scientists. [More information](#)

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