

NEW DIMENSIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE POST COVID-19

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed in at least one optimistic thing: a much greater gratitude for the importance of public schools. As parents struggle to work with their pupils at home due to school closures, public recognition of the important caretaking role schools play in humanity has skyrocketed. As young people fight to learn from home, parents' gratitude for teachers, their skills, and their invaluable role in student well-being, has risen. The impact of COVID-19 has refurbished all features of human life counting learning sector, and it has completely changed the educational atmosphere across the world. Due to the pandemic, the systematic functions of educational organizations have stopped, and new ages have started like online class, online assessment, and indoor activities. Pupils are the vital players in schooling sector, and their thoughts play an essential role while formulating the strategies by the government. New dimensions are progress roots for the higher education to make change the world society through changed strategies.

Keywords: Dimensions, Higher, Education, Post Covid-19.

Introduction :

The disruption caused by the current Covid-19 pandemic is exceptional, and the resulting economic and social measures have brought massive change. many political, psychological, sociocultural and economic problems, the COVID-19 pandemic has also led to radical changes in education systems worldwide, and the current pandemic has probably revealed the biggest education crisis in social history. The scale of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented in the 21st century. As of October 1, 2020, more than 34 million people had been infected and more than a million had died, worldwide. As country after country imposed partial or total lockdowns in February and March, the number of universities and colleges closing down their campus, interrupting face-to face activities, and switching to e-learning soared on a daily basis, eventually affecting more than 200 million students globally. The impact of COVID-19 has restored all aspects of human life including education sector, and it has completely changed the educational atmosphere across the world. Due to the pandemic, the methodical functions of educational institutions have stopped, and new stages have started like online class, online assessment, and indoor activities. Students are the vital players in education sector, and their ideas play an necessary role while formulating the policies by the government.

Impact of COVID-19: Short-Term Effects and Reactions

- ❖ **Closures and Transition to Online Education.** Despite repeated warnings from the World Health Organization, few countries were prepared for a possible pandemic in February 2020.
- ❖ **Universities Rising to the COVID-19 Challenge.** One positive short-term development is that universities worldwide have responded dynamically to the pandemic, generously contributing their scientific knowledge and resources to help fight COVID-19
- ❖ **Assessment and Exams in Transition.** Almost immediately after moving to online teaching and learning, higher education institutions had to make decisions about assessment, examinations, and graduation.
- ❖ **Impact on Students.** The abrupt closure of campuses and the rapid switch to online education have disrupted students' lives all over the world.

Long-Term Effects and Reactions

- **Impact on Research and Internationalization.** As universities continue to operate online, research activities will lag in many countries.
- **Reopening in the fall.** The debate about whether colleges and universities can reopen safely at the beginning of academic year 2020-21 has been shaped, in each country, by two factors: the evolution of the pandemic and political priorities.

- **Reduced Resources, Shifting Demand, Closures, and Restructuring.** The higher education sector has been hit by both the health emergency and the economic recession, as universities, students, and most households have suffered substantial income loss.
- **Diminished Learning and Increased Student Failure.** Despite a lack of statistics documenting the pandemic's impact on student learning, it is safe to assume that many students all over the world will have had an incomplete learning experience in the 2019-20 academic year, either for lack of technology, inadequate internet access, or insufficient training for online education.

Main Messages and Policy Lessons

- With the pandemic interrupting face-to-face education on campuses all over the world a possibility very few colleges and universities were prepared for higher education institutions and students have experienced unprecedented disruption and face significant new challenges.
- Substantial changes are needed in the economic models of higher education systems and institutions to increase their resilience. Systems with higher proportions of public funding are less vulnerable to health and economic crises.
- Many institutions managed to switch to online education very rapidly and have done their best to provide continuity in teaching.
- In the medium to long term, COVID-19 is likely to negatively affect the learning outcomes, graduation rates, employability, and job prospects of traditionally underrepresented students.
- The move to online education poses significant opportunities for transforming the learning experience, whether remote or in person. Curricular and pedagogical practices could be reshaped to promote active, interactive, and experiential education, supported by aligned innovations in assessment and more flexible pathways and qualifications.
- It is a myth that COVID-19 has been a great equalizer. The digital gap and the lack of preparation for online instruction have actually increased educational disparities and created social distress, especially among vulnerable students.
- Higher education institutions need to integrate risk analysis and contingency planning more systematically. Comprehensive support (financial, academic, and psychological) for vulnerable students and faculty is necessary to foster inclusion and reduce inequalities.
- COVID-19 has helped colleges and universities demonstrate their "public good" contributions through relevant training, dissemination of scientific evidence, and direct help to government and local communities in combating the pandemic.

Policy Lessons At The Institutional Level

- ↔ Professional networks within and beyond higher education institutions are important platforms that can support instructors who struggle to adapt to online education.
- ↔ Having a well-developed and experienced Teaching and Learning Services department can help facilitate the transition to online education and introduce innovative curricular and pedagogical practices.
- ↔ Implementing a transparent communication strategy raises the level of awareness and ownership among the entire academic community during times of crisis.
- ↔ In the post-pandemic era, colleges and universities should embrace adult learners as an essential component of their target student population and offer appropriate programs to meet their learning needs.
- ↔ Effective governance during the pandemic requires compassion from leaders, flexibility in management, and delegation of decision-making to empower all academic and administrative actors.
- ↔ To prepare for the post-pandemic era, leaders of colleges and universities should define a bold vision that accelerates the introduction of innovative approaches in the educational and economic models of their institutions.
- ↔ The crisis reinforces the need for more systematic risk analysis and implementation of preventive measures as part of strategic planning.
- ↔ Effective support for vulnerable students requires comprehensive sets of measures that encompass their financial, technological, educational, and health needs.

Possible Trends And Their Implications For Higher Education

- ❖ Growing student acceptance of online study
- ❖ Less philanthropy and external research funding
- ❖ Reorganisation of universities and their workforces
- ❖ Uncertain future opportunities for research collaboration
- ❖ Diminishing attractiveness of certain degrees and programs
- ❖ Uncertain prospects for university-delivered transnational education
- ❖ Diminishing capacity for governments to invest in higher education and research
- ❖ Diminishing student capacity and preference for travel to undertake international education
- ❖ In the near-term there will potentially be fewer students travelling internationally for doctoral study
- ❖ Government and public reliance on areas of expertise deemed relevant to economic and social recovery

Four Emerging Global Trends in Education from Covid-19

- **Accelerating education inequality:** Education inequality is accelerating in an unprecedented fashion, especially where before the pandemic it was already high
- **A leapfrog moment:** Innovation has suddenly moved from the margins to the center of many education systems, and there is an opportunity to identify new strategies, that if sustained, can help young people get an education that prepares them for our changing times.
- **Rising public support:** There is newfound public recognition of how essential schools are in society and a window of opportunity to leverage this support for making them stronger
- **New education allies:** The pandemic has galvanized new actors in the community from parents to social welfare organizations to support children's learning like never before.

Five Proposed Actions to Transformation of Education Systems

- Parent engagement: Forge stronger, more trusting relationships between parents and teachers.
- A laser focus on the instructional core: Emphasize the instructional core, the heart of the teaching and learning process.
- Leverage public schools: Put public schools at the centre of education systems given their essential role in equalizing opportunity across dimensions within society
- An iterative approach: Embrace the principles of improvement science required to evaluate, course correct, document, and scale new approaches that can help power up schools over time.
- Harness education technology: Deploy education technology to power up schools long term in a way that meets the teaching and learning needs of students and educators; otherwise, technology risks becoming a costly distraction.

Future of Education

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides many of the necessary signposts and guidelines. In this report, the **International Commission on the Futures of Education** established by UNESCO in 2019 and composed of thought leaders from the worlds of academia, science, government, business and education presents **nine ideas for concrete actions today that will advance education tomorrow.**

1. Commit to **strengthen education as a common good.** Education is a bulwark against inequalities. In education as in health, we are safe when everybody is safe; we flourish when everybody flourishes.
2. Promote **student, youth and children's participation and rights.** Intergenerational justice and democratic principles should compel us to prioritize the participation of students and young people broadly in the co-construction of desirable change.
3. Expand the definition of **the right to education** so that it addresses the importance of connectivity and access to knowledge and information. The Commission calls for a global public discussion that includes, among others, learners of all ages on ways the right to education needs to be expanded.
4. Value **the teaching profession and teacher collaboration.** There has been remarkable innovation in the responses of educators to the COVID-19 crisis, with those systems most

- engaged with families and communities showing the most resilience. We must encourage conditions that give frontline educators autonomy and flexibility to act collaboratively.
5. Ensure **scientific literacy within the curriculum**. This is the right time for deep reflection on curriculum, particularly as we struggle against the denial of scientific knowledge and actively fight misinformation.
 6. Protect the **social spaces provided by schools** as we transform education. The school as a physical space is indispensable. Traditional classroom organization must give way to a variety of ways of 'doing school' but the school as a separate space-time of collective living, specific and different from other spaces of learning must be preserved.
 7. Protect **domestic and international financing of public education**. The pandemic has the power to undermine several decades of advances. National governments, international organizations, and all education and development partners must recognize the need to strengthen public health and social services but simultaneously mobilize around the protection of public education and its financing.
 8. Make **free and open source technologies available to teachers and students**. Open educational resources and open access digital tools must be supported. Education cannot thrive with ready-made content built outside of the pedagogical space and outside of human relationships between teachers and students. Nor can education be dependent on digital platforms controlled by private companies.
 9. Advance **global solidarity to end current levels of inequality**. COVID-19 has shown us the extent to which our societies exploit power imbalances and our global system exploits inequalities. The Commission calls for renewed commitments to international cooperation and multilateralism, together with a revitalized global solidarity that has empathy and an appreciation of our common humanity at its core.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The following were identified as priority issues for governments and authorities to address:

- ❖ There was no low-cost solution per se. Some solutions are less costly than others, but the fact remains that formal education is not designed to be adaptable to the medium of delivery or to the financial means of the family. Some families cannot afford television sets and for others internet connectivity is still a major hurdle. Governments should ensure equity prevails in terms of access to educational services and digital technology.
- ❖ Curricula have not been adequately designed and customised for remote teaching or for broadcast media. There is therefore a need to either rethink the curriculum or design an alternative model that can be activated when remote teaching is needed.
- ❖ Teachers should be trained in remote teaching and have access to teaching technologies. Teacher training models and programmes should be revised and aligned with curriculum needs in crisis situations, such as pandemics, when adapted or customised teaching is needed. Teachers should also be appropriately equipped in terms of facilities (for example, computers and internet connectivity).
- ❖ Governments should have policies on how to include parents and involve them more in the education of their children, including appropriate financial support, especially for those in underserved areas.
- ❖ Technology-enabled learning should be assessed to ensure that in addition to promoting better learning experiences, it contributes to the resilience of the educational system to expand learning beyond the classroom. The team in Kyangwali planned to scale up their learning adaptations, and to support other organisations in the community to ensure that school children did not drop out due to the crisis. To achieve this, the team planned to:
- ❖ Develop a Kyangwali Education Task Force with head teachers, academic heads of refugee schools and community leaders to oversee education content preparation and delivery, while ensuring that health guidelines on COVID-19 are observed.
- ❖ Recruit and train community educators and volunteers. Teachers, refugee high school and college graduates would develop lessons and deliver home schooling at the village level to reach all children, in partnership with parents and guardians.

- ❖ Conduct scheduled communal story telling for lower primary school learners, guided by the curriculum and the contextual environment of the refugee camps.
- ❖ Work with refugee tech-scholars to create an e-learning platform. This would be a smaller tech-enabled school model that worked in the context of refugee learners.

Activities included the following:

- designing new methods to facilitate distance learning (radio and TV education broadcasting in areas without internet access); distributing print materials in local communities;
- providing mentoring to girls by phone to support them emotionally through the crisis, encouraging them to continue their studies at home, informing them on how to stay safe and healthy, and helping them navigate challenges related to returning to school;
- revising the organisation’s risk and response tool; using an early warning system that helped staff identify and immediately act on risk factors for girls who may be forced to cut their education short;
- expanding their book supply chains, government partnerships and other local relationships to find ways to get books to children who could not visit libraries;
- launching their digital learning platform, Literacy Cloud, a rich online library of storybooks sorted by reading level and language, plus read aloud videos and professional development resources for teachers all for free;
- preparing to support schools, educators and students to adjust timelines and close any learning gaps when schools reopened;
- supporting its own technological infrastructure, which allowed the organisation to work remotely and continue to support its programmes across the globe; and
- ensuring its financial integrity and transparency by continuing to deliver financial audits in times of office closures.

Table 1 Public role of universities during the pandemic

Areas of Intervention	Activities
Making Physical and Scientific Infrastructure Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of dormitories to host people in quarantine • Transformation of facilities into hospital wards • Adaptation of university labs for testing and blood donation on behalf of local hospitals and health authorities • Use of simulation facilities for training purposes • Free parking for hospital staff • Free rooms for hospital staff
Donations to Local Hospitals and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical equipment and supplies • Personal protective equipment • Free driving service for health workers • Volunteering hub for university staff and students • Food and money donations to needy families and families of health ca
Design and Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitizing liquid • Masks and visors • Stretchers with protective walls • Ventilators • Robots • Educational resources for learners in lock-down
Medical Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast-tracking training of medical and nursing students to work in ICUs • Training, preparation and up-skilling of medical staff and non-clinical health workers

Medical Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free treatment of patients in university clinics • Free testing for the public • Involvement of medical students and clinical staff in treatment of patients
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid testing of COVID-19 • Mapping of COVID-19 genome • Research and trialing of treatment for infected patients • Vaccine development • Mathematical modelling of COVID-19 (geographical spread, effectiveness of public health measures and medical treatments) • Involvement of students in open science research (molecular folding using gaming) • Deployment of drones and robots for disinfection • App development (self-reporting; contact tracing) • Social and mental impact of COVID-19
Scientific Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy advice to government and health authorities • Participation in public consultations / debates • Guidance to medical doctors and health workers • Hotline / website for COVID-19 patients and general public

University Governance Be Affected

- University leaders will partner with other groups of universities to facilitate The mobility of students, the sharing of infrastructure and services, and to increase the attractiveness of the institution for students and staff. This will facilitate the recognition of studies abroad or online and will increase the offer that students can have.
- Methods of decision making will need to be streamlined and directed towards efficient digital engagement with teaching staff. Leaders of universities will require strong trust in their staff.
- Timely and accurate communication with the university community will become more important. Support units to develop adequate communication structures will be needed.
- Universities will continue pursuing the achievement of excellence in teaching and research within a very competitive environment, although questions about the role and position of universities in the following years will be discussed and increased beyond teaching and research.
- Given the increased volume of online content and communication, universities will have put in place strategies and cyber security and emergency management teams to assess risks and vulnerabilities for cyberattacks.
- Teaching staff will be trained and plans on education and safety use of online tools will have to be put in place.
- More activities and strategies for professional development will be organised in order to improve the quality of the learning experience and educational content facilitated by academic staff and universities will look to invest in central support units with expertise in the design of online and blended delivery. Staff with these specialised skills will be highly demanded..

Conclusion:

Having a vision of the change we want to see matters and can help guide discussion, debate, and ultimately action.

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